

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING-MINUTES
FEBRUARY 10, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lorin Nauman (present by Zoom) called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. Other members present were Ron Hoover (present by Zoom), Jim Smith (present by Zoom), Christine Bracken-Piper (present by Zoom), Reed Moyer (present by Zoom), Patti Hartle (present by Zoom) and Joanne Fisher (arrived at 6:30 p.m., present by Zoom). Staff present was Denise Gembusia, Township Manager (present by Zoom), Amy Smith, OSPB Administrator (present by Zoom), and Rebekah Laird, Recording Secretary (present by Zoom). No audience was present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

There were no citizen's comments.

4. MINUTES

- ***MOTION: Mr. Moyer moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 13th, 2021 as submitted; Mr. Hoover seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.***

5. DEFINITION OF OPEN SPACE AND FACTORS THAT INCREASE ITS VALUE TO THE PUBLIC

Ms. Hartle asked if there were any objectives with the following definitions for open space and open land:

Open Space -- lands that are in primarily a natural state, contain few or no structures, and on which significant further development is prohibited by legislation, deed restriction or other mechanism.

Open Land – per RPD zoning legislation.

The OSPB had no objections to the clarified definitions presented. Ms. Gembusia stated that she forwarded the Parkland Fee-In-Lieu revised Ordinance to the Centre County Planning Commission and Centre Region Planning Commission for comment and is currently waiting on their reply.

Mr. Nauman reviewed the following proposed list of public benefits provided by Mr. Moyer as talking points to determine the value a property might have to the public:
Rating Factors for the Permanent Preservation of Open Space in Halfmoon Twp.

1. Public Benefit

- Provides public access for passive enjoyment, sport, recreation or hunting
- Provides scenic viewshed and aesthetic features for the community

- Enhances the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, or other open space
- Provides open space in an area in the Township that does not otherwise have a large amount of preserved open space.
- Provides a buffer between residential neighborhoods and other residences or commercial structures.
- Helps to protect water resources and watershed areas, including natural covers which help prevent floods and soil erosion thereby protecting water quality and replenishing surface water and groundwater supplies

2. **Consistency with Municipal Open Space Plan**

- Protects local water supply
- Promotes conservation of fields, wetlands, streams, ponds and other wildlife habitat
- Preserves historic sites
- Protects or encourages native flora and fauna
- Promotes agriculture
- Provides or helps to provide a corridor from the Game Lands to Bald Eagle Ridge
- Ensures through its preservation other lands remain open (e.g., hinders road or other utility access to nearby lands) or otherwise helps manage Halfmoon Township's growth

Mr. Moyer commented that he had researched ways to flesh out these two factors on the rating scale to help give them some more objectivity since they were more subjective. Ms. Hartle stated that what he had come up with was good for stimulating conversation to assist in giving a rating for both factors. Mr. Moyer commented that he had removed the public access bullet since there had been a liability concern that had arisen in previous conversations when talking about drafting these factors. Ms. Hartle suggested possibly making it a separate scoring item on the scale since public access could make a property stand out when considering for permanent easement. Mr. Nauman and Mr. Moyer both agreed they liked this suggestion. Mr. Hoover suggested having the township solicitor read through the public benefits and perhaps make suggestions or comments about the liability concern with public access. Ms. Gembusia stated she would ask the solicitor about possible liability issues with public access. Ms. Bracken-Piper questioned if the landowner would have to post their property for public access. There was discussion on how to score the two factors. Ms. Gembusia commented that there should be a clear public benefit. Mr. Moyer stated the bullets are meant to be as objective as possible.

Ms. Gembusia welcomed Joanne Fisher as a new board member.

Ms. Hartle requested staff revise the permanent easement scoring system with the public benefit factors and the Board could complete some dry runs on the interested properties and see how they played out.

Mr. Hoover then questioned the following bullet as contradictory since in the past land rating system for leases there were properties where land was given special merit points for abutting properties already in the preservation program:

- Provides open space in an area in the Township that does not otherwise have a large amount of preserved open space.

Ms. Hartle stated that she did notice it was a little contradictory to visions in the past but at this time it was more a talking point to get a general score.

Mr. Nauman stated that the current objectives for this year would be to finalize updates to the rating scale, determine when to rate interested properties and create a budget plan for purchasing permanent easements.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Moyer stated the DCNR grant only supports acquisitions of land that is not being leased or park ground and must be land available to the public. Ms. Gembusia stated at this time, the township could not take on any more park debt. Ms. Gembusia thanked Mr. Moyer for his work on researching the grant. Mr. Moyer commented that he enjoyed working on this potential grant and would be willing to work on another grant if the opportunity arises.

Staff should revise the land rating scoring criteria and provide that to the OSPB along with the map for review at the next meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.

- ***MOTION: Mr. Hoover moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:19pm; Ms. Hartle seconded; Vote 7-0-0; Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted,



Rebekah Laird,
OSPB Recording Secretary