

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING-MINUTES
DECEMBER 5, 2018**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lorin Nauman called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. Other members present were Christine Bracken-Piper, Joe Tylka and Ron Hoover. Staff present was Susan Steele, Township Manager, Amy Smith, OSPB Administrator and Rebekah Laird, Recording Secretary. Guest speakers present were Sarah Walter, Centre County Farmland Preservation Program, Deborah Nardone, Clearwater Conservancy, Kevin Abbey, Clearwater Conservancy and Michael Knoop, Western PA Conservancy (all guest speakers left at 8:43p). No audience was present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. MINUTES

Mr. Hoover suggested the following revisions to the minutes of November 14, 2018:

- Ms. Smith stated that the board was to review the 5-year review committee's recommendations and comments from the BOS **and see what can be done to make a plan for them to be done.** (bolded portion to be removed).
- Mr. Nauman stated that maybe something to look into was that they could take the buyout over multiple years instead of just one lump sum to entice **them more to take it.** (bolded to change to "more to consider it")
- There was a brief discussion on funding and payments over time **in** lease and purchase payments. (bolded changed to "for")
- Mr. Tylka asked if the board felt it was worth the time to investigate the viability of **the** (remove) exploring adding these two programs before moving forward with recommendations on one last **push** (change to "more") to landowners.

- ***MOTION: Mr. Tylka moved to approve the meeting minutes with above corrections of November 14, 2018 as submitted; Mr. Hoover seconded; Vote 4-0-0; Motion carried.***

4. PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

The OSPB and guest speakers introduced themselves and what organizations that they represented before beginning. Mr. Tylka gave a brief overview to the presenters of the goals for the program and stated the intention of hearing these presentations was to see if working in conjunction with these organizations would help the program move toward permanently preserving land in the township.

Ms. Walters stated to keep in mind that her program deals mainly with preserving ag land. Ms. Walters reviewed benefits of doing agricultural conservation easements for landowners where the landowner still maintains ownership and control of the property but gives up development rights in exchange for compensation or tax benefits. Ms. Walters reviewed the PACE program where the county and state use funds to purchase agricultural conservation easements each year from a list of farms according to ranking. Ms. Walters reviewed the Municipal Partnership Program where a municipality commits

funding to preserve farmland which is matched with state money to purchase a conservation easement in that same municipality. There was a brief discussion about the success with Thomson property in which the County, Halfmoon Township and the Western PA Conservancy worked together to accomplish permanent preservation. There was brief discussion about the possible effects of conservation easements on the equity loan value of the land which might require more research to answer as many banks differ in their practices. Ms. Walters reviewed an analysis of Halfmoon Township and stated that there are approximately 27 parcels that are possibly eligible to apply for the program and that there is currently one active application from Halfmoon Township. There was a brief discussion about the impact of soil classification on eligibility and rank in program.

Ms. Nardone stated that Clearwater Conservancy's goal is to preserve ecosystems and environment, and are working to add onto the Scotia Barrens as well as to work with landowners to improve water quality in the Riparian Buffers. Ms. Nardone stated that Halfmoon Creek is listed as a priority for funding at this time to improve water quality. Ms. Nardone shared a website to show the possible changes in migratory patterns of different animal species in the changing environments and how resilient communities can help ease the movement or migration of these animals as they adapt to the changes to survive. Ms. Nardone reviewed the importance of having all these preserved open spaces connected so that movement and migration of the animals is promoted through the preservation. Mr. Tylka asked if hunting is allowed on these preserved areas. Ms. Nardone stated that hunters are the best conservationists as managing wildlife and preserving the environment tend to go hand in hand. Ms. Nardone further explained that ultimately, since most of the preserved areas are privately owned, it is up to the landowner if they were to allow hunting in that area or not. There was brief discussion about the different options in the program to promote preserving the habitats. Ms. Nardone talked about a strategic plan of short- and long-term stewardship of the land. Ms. Nardone listed options that Clearwater Conservancy can work with landowners to help make this plan happen in Halfmoon Township. Mr. Abbey reviewed that the Scotia Barrens has always been a priority for Clearwater Conservancy to preserve land that buffers around that area and reviewed the wildlife corridor preservation's importance to their strategic plan in preserving habitats. Ms. Steele asked for they could create a map of some areas of interest for Clearwater to which Mr. Abbey stated they could. There was a brief discussion about the differences in vision and approach between Ms. Walter's program and the Clearwater Conservancy's.

Mr. Knoop stated that Western PA Conservancy works with both Ms. Walters and Clearwater Conservancy. Mr. Knoop reviewed the history of the Western PA Conservancy and their goals of preserving open space in general. Ms. Bracken-Piper asked if the preserved land that Western PA Conservancy owns is open to the public to which Mr. Knoop stated they all were open to the public and further explained that any land that is purchased in the program and turned over to state agencies is with the expectation that it will be open to the public, outside of private easements that are at the discretion of the landowner. Mr. Knoop reviewed the different funding sources available to the program. Mr. Knoop stated that funds are usually raised per the project that they are working on at the time. Ms. Steele asked if Mr. Knoop could also make a map of possible land that might be of interest to Western PA Conservancy to which Mr. Knoop

stated that any areas of interest to Clearwater Conservancy would be the same for them as well. Mr. Abbey stated that getting land for the conservancy programs can either be acquired, donated or a combination of both and it is up to the landowner what route they wish to go. There was a brief discussion of tax benefits of the different routes for a landowner when preserving the land and different options for payment to the landowner. There was a brief discussion over how to move forward with maps from each organization of priorities of land in the Township and to complete some outreach to landowners based on these shared priorities.

Mr. Nauman suggested that using a current applicant who is interested in preserving her land to present what each organization can offer as options to which the board members agreed. There was a brief discussion on setting up a way to see how best to present the options to the landowner.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Nauman suggested for next meeting looking over HB 1523 that provides modifications to Act 153 for preserving open space and looking over land rating systems for Lancaster County. There was a brief discussion about adding the items to the agenda for next meeting and possibly discussing some code changes at the reorganization meeting.

6. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

There were no citizen's comments.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm.

- ***MOTION: Mr. Tylka moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:59pm; Mr. Hoover seconded; Vote 4-0-0; Motion carried.***