

**HALFMOON TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING-MINUTES
MAY 10, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Reed Moyer (present at the Municipal building) called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m. Other members present were Christine Bracken-Piper (present at the Municipal building), Ron Hoover (present at the Municipal building), Patti Hartle (present at the Municipal building), Mark Hartle (present at the Municipal building), and Joanne Fisher (present at the Municipal building). Staff present was Amy Smith, OSPB Administrator (present at the Municipal building), and Rebekah Laird, Recording Secretary (present at the Municipal building). Audience present was Ryan Hamilton, Land Conservation Manager from Clearwater Conservancy.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

There were no citizen's comments.

4. MINUTES

- ***MOTION: Ms. Hartle moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 12th, 2023 as submitted; Mr. Hoover seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.***

5. FISHER WOODLAND ACQUISITION UPDATE

Mr. Hamilton introduced himself to the board and gave a brief overview of Clearwater Conservancy's interest in the permanent conservation easement of the Fisher property for the 53 acres that was not prime ag land covered under the county ag easement. Mr. Hamilton provided a letter of interest to the OSPB, requesting a commitment of 50% of the acquisition cost for a permanent easement on the property, totaling up to \$26,500. Mr. Hamilton reviewed a map highlighting the area they were interested in and stated that at this point Clearwater Conservancy is currently looking for funds to take the steps for permanent conservation easement.

Mr. Hartle questioned what the legal fees and other costs were outside of the acquisition price. Mr. Hamilton answered that he did not have specific numbers, but they budget for due diligence costs but also, they place money in a stewardship endowment to maintain the property, approximately \$13,000-\$14,000, and also another fund for possible legal defense, approximately \$4,000-\$5,000. Mr. Moyer asked if that was the same amount for each land regardless of acreage or if it differed. Mr. Hamilton answered that it differed, and amounts were determined by a calculator that took into account multiple factors. Ms. Hartle asked if Western PA Conservancy might also be a funding source for them for this property. Mr. Hamilton said they are interested, and he will inquire with them to see if they could contribute some funding for this acquisition. There was then brief discussion about funding sources for the current proposed acquisition and for possible future acquisitions.

- **MOTION:** *Mr. Hartle moved to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the township commit up to \$26,500 in partnership with Clearwater Conservancy to acquire a permanent easement on the 53 wooded acres of land owned by Ms. Joanne Fisher; Ms. Bracken-Piper seconded; Vote 5-0-1; Mr. Hartle, yea; Mr. Moyer, yea; Ms. Bracken-Piper, yea; Ms. Hartle, yea; Mr. Hoover, yea; No Nays; Ms. Fisher abstained; Motion carried.*

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Moyer reviewed a financial forecast model that looked at the program's funding amounts historically from 2000 until the end of the current 99-year leases. Mr. Moyer stated that currently the OSPP funding was sustainable. There was some discussion about the model and numbers were calculated using a few different scenarios working with permanent conservation easements.

7. PODGURSKI ADVANCED PAYMENT REQUEST

The board held a brief discussion about whether to provide a 10-year advance payment to Ms. Podgurski and decided that after reviewing the financial model that funds were available and agreed to recommend that the advance payment be provided.

- **MOTION:** *Ms. Hartle moved to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to pay a 10-year advance on the Sandra Podgurski property; Ms. Fisher seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

8. PERMENANT PURCHASE INTEREST LETTER DISCUSSION

The board reviewed and discussed the draft letter presented by Mr. Moyer, making a few modifications. There was then discussion about possibly sending out a follow up letter to those who had shown interest in the past with the initial interest letter to provide an update on the progress and reaffirm interest in a permanent conservation easement. At this time Ms. Bracken-Piper volunteered to draft a letter to present to the OSPB to review. Ms. Bracken-Piper suggested that a letter be sent to any eligible landowners who are not in the program to see if there is interest in a 99-year lease.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

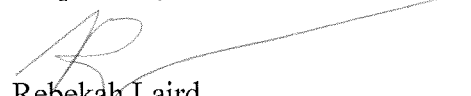
There was no other business.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

- **MOTION:** *Mr. Hoover moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.; Mr. Hartle seconded; Vote 6-0-0; Motion carried.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Rebekah Laird
OSPB Recording Secretary