

WILLISTOWN TOWNSHIP OPEN SPACE REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Willistown Trust Rushton Conservation Center

March 25, 2019 AT 5:30 pm

The Regular Meeting of the Willistown Township Open Space Review Board came to order at 5:30 PM. The following members were present: Ted Leisenring; Brook Gardner; Mike Devine; Jeannette Lindvig; Jeff Vincent, Bob Kacergis, and Nancy Moyer. Also present were Township Manager David R. Burman and Parks & Recreation Director Mary N. Hundt.

Ted Leisenring introduced Erik Hetzel, Bill Hartman, and Tripp Way of the Willistown Conservation Trust and thanked them for hosting the meeting at their Rushton Conservation Center.

Minutes

Jeannette Lindvig moved to approve the minutes of January 28, 2019. Brook Gardner seconded the motion. There were no comments from the Board or the public, and the motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mike Devine reviewed the Open Space Fund financial reports and reported that some funds will be moved to Santander Bank and will earn an interest rate of 2.4%.

Presentation of Potential Projects

Erik Hetzel, Willistown Conservation Trust (WCT), discussed the following:

WCT Protected Lands Map

WCT Redline Map

Past Partnerships with Willistown Township

Mary Hundt spoke about the cross-referenced planning among the Township Comprehensive Plan, the Township Official Map, and the WCT Red Line Map

WCT's Interests in passive recreation and environmental protection

Mary spoke to the weaving of WCT and Township interests and gave the example of the active recreation area included in the Okehocking Preserve WCT easement. Erik spoke to compromise and partnership being an important component of land protection.

New Business

67 & 69 Devon Road property review procedure: Ted Leisenring asked each Board member for their thoughts.

Brook Gardner – Brook wondered why the Board was looking at it at this price. Appraised value as residential property has the cost very high. David Burman stated that the appraisal had to be done for the “highest and best use” of the property. Mary Hundt stated that the majority of the properties that are viable for acquisition up north will have residential as the highest and best use.

Jeff Vincent – This is a huge expenditure, cannot envision as open space.

Mary Hundt reported that the Parks & Recreation Board voted to recommend that the Board of Supervisors pursue the property's potential as parkland acquisition. She reviewed a number of concepts about the potential use of the property and connections to neighborhoods and existing park assets.

Bob Kacergis – Stated the importance of discussing the pros and cons. Access would make it more attractive. Likes proximity to Fox Hollow Trail. Not ideal but has positive attributes. Worth considering thoroughly.

Nancy Moyer – Crum watershed is high value. Traffic speed is a concern on Devon Road. This is high priced and low Township value. Active recreation not envisioned. How would the current tenants vacate the property, would that be up to the Township?

Ted Leisenring – There are 5 building which is more of a liability. If the Township were to retain the historic structure there are significant questions of ADA compliance and cost. The water on the property is of high value.

Jeanette Lindvig – Headwaters do not need protecting, the Township Code does that already. General Wayne recreational facilities are nearby. Open space funding is to secure open space in Willistown and is not for active recreation. Historic structure with ADA concerns. Historic ordinance requires maintaining the street view of the structure. Plants are invasive. Strongly opposed.

Mary Hundt informed the Board that the Open Space Referendum was to raise funds for the protection of land for recreation, the protection of the Township's natural and agricultural resources, and the protection of the Township's scenic and historic resources. She reported that the legislative guidance behind open space referendums included these purposes and the referendum was presented to the Willistown Residents in this manner.

Mike Devine – Does not see it as an open space acquisition. Completely against it.

Final recommendation after hearing from the public: Mike Devine motioned that the Open Space Review Board state, "The OSRB reviewed the property and resolved to take no further action and not recommend it." Jeanette Lindvig suggested that if it were reconfigured, a pocket park would be possible, but you'd have to cut out the main house. Even if it were reconfigured it would be too much money. Jeanette Lindvig seconded the motion and Ted Leisenring asked for Board and public comment.

Andrew Vaskas, Paoli Pike: Where else will you find 5 to 7 acres in the north end of Willistown? It doesn't seem right to shut down the acquisition because the residential values are the basis for the price. If you are looking at the bigger picture, saving \$2 million dollars by not purchasing this property is not going to buy White Manor Golf Club. This property has very attractive value to the northern residents.

Mike Devine stated that the Board will keep looking for properties.

Betsy Allinson, Wistar Road: I am concerned that you are passing on this. I don't see 5 to 7 acres available any time soon and certainly not within my lifetime. I just heard about this meeting today, why aren't the agendas sent out well in advance? I would like to know what the area neighbors think of it.

Kate Renali, Woodview Road: Thank you for your thorough work. Your expertise and concern comes through. I'd offer the potential for looking at it in a different way...perhaps a pocket park? Maybe pull it

apart and take one more stab at it in some other configuration. We want to be able to do something in the north where it is crowded and there are not many opportunities. I am very proud of this group. Bob Kacergis stated that he didn't like the property as proposed, but if they came back it would be more attractive.

Jeanette Lindvig stated that if it were subdivided it would be more attractive. Townships don't like to purchase historic structures. It would be a great community center for a non-profit organization.

Ted Leisenring asked for further comments from the Board or the public, and hearing none, Mike Devine motioned that the Open Space Review Board state, "The OSRB reviewed the property and resolved to take no further action and not recommend it in its current configuration." Jeanette Lindvig seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Mike Devine motioned to adjourn the meeting and Bob Kacergis seconded. The motion carried unanimously.