

I. OPENING

CALL TO ORDER: The Environmental Advisory Council meeting of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Tuesday, October 10, 2017 at 7:00 p.m., at 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, PA, with Sandra Yerger, Chairman, presiding.

ROLL CALL: Members: Sandy Yerger, Chair; Hazem Hijazi, Vice Chairman; Ted Beardsley, Dru Germanoski, Allan Johnson; **Absent:** Laura Ray & Sarah Stanlick. **Associate Members:** Thomas Carocci, Jordan Davco, and Michael Boyle; **Absent:** David Jauregui & Glenn Kaye. **Hellertown Liaison:** **Absent:** Terry Boos. Jr. Council Members: Katie French and Brynn Bambu (7:42 p.m.), **Absent:** Ben Szydlow.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION – No Executive Session.

II. OPEN SPACE SUB-COMMITTEE

A. PROPERTY UPDATES

1. PROPERTY NO. 2017-1

The property owner was present. Mr. Beardsley said the property owner has property that adjoins the Hellertown Watershed and it's near Polk Valley Park, and it's some of the things we are interested in protecting. The property owner explained where his property was, and said that his family has lots around his property and they already have or will be sending in their applications for by next week. He went over each of his family's properties and how it ties in with his property, the Saucon Valley School District, Polk Valley Park, and the Hellertown Reservoir.

MOTION BY: Mr. Beardsley moved to recommend to the Council that Property No. 2017-1 be considered for a conservation easement.

SECOND BY: Mr. Johnson

ROLL CALL: 5-0 (Absent: Ms. Ray and Ms. Stanlick)

2. PROPERTY NO. 2017-3

Mr. Beardsley said the former property owner from Property No. 2017-3 will speak about this property. The former property owner said this is currently 25 acres and used to be owned by his sister, brother and himself and they sold it earlier this year to his niece and her husband. It's a great piece of land in terms of a couple of things. It shares the Hellertown watershed area, as well as that exists on Silver Creek Road. There is a significant amount of land with much of it in open fields/farmland, about 18 acres. The balance is forest and wetlands. You would have continuity with Charles Martin and the current watershed of the Borough. Her niece and husband want to definitely preserve the land.

MOTION BY: Mr. Germanoski moved to recommend to the Council that Property No. 2017-3 be considered for a conservation easement.

SECOND BY: Mr. Beardsley

ROLL CALL: 5-0 (Absent: Ms. Ray and Ms. Stanlick)

3. PROPERTY NO. 2017-4

Mr. Germanoski said this is a relatively gently sloping property. That looked to be developable to them. The Black River channels runs through much of the property. There's some riparian corridor that runs along the Black River stream valley and there's an ordinance issue of whether houses could be put in along the road, but certainly the field would be developable. They scored this 21 out of 30 and felt they should recommend it to be preserved.

Mr. Beardsley said there is a question they aren't sure at this time whether the conservation easement is going to be enough for them or whether they want to sell it outright. They only saw one of the members of the association.

The landowner was present and said in the mid-80's, there was a proposal to put 40+ condos in the field and that's when we got together and formed an S-corporation to protect the land. It's been an S-corporation for 30 years and now most of them think it's time to do something. A number of them would like to keep it as land and some want to see the dollar, a mixed feeling. It will have to be sold one way or the other.

The property owner said the first issue is does the Township want it? Then he will go back to the association. Mr. Carocci said it scored well. In the past 30 years, has there been any maintenance to those two roads and bridges? Mr. Martocci said the one bridge was redone. Neither he nor the association paid for the bridge; he's thinking the people who lived there paid for it.

Mr. Carocci said he would recommend a motion that we said it scored well and the EAC would like to conserve it subject to certain conditions of whether it's a conservation easement or whether it's for sale. Maybe Chris Garges could weigh in on the bridges and roads.

MOTION BY: Mr. Germanoski moved to recommend to the Council that Property No. 2017-4 be considered for conservation.

SECOND BY: Mr. Beardsley

ROLL CALL: 5-0 (Absent: Ms. Ray and Ms. Stanlick)

Mr. Hijazi asked if the Sub-Committee evaluates if the property can be developed. If it can't be developed, would there be an interest to conserve it and wouldn't it be a moot point. From a land development, this is a challenging side, it's a floodplain, the river is in front of it; even if it is developable, and sometimes the cost can be a lot.

Mrs. Yerger said those decisions are made between staff and Council and this is a recommendation on its conservation value in terms of resources, as per the guidelines and score sheet set up by our Open Space Plan. The appraised value goes hand in glove with the development and how much. If they can get a house on 30 acres, it still won't appraise as high as if they could get 10-20 houses on 30 acres.

Mr. Germanoski said maybe we should amend our recommendations as subject to the outcome of the appraisal and then we are recommending it and we are clear. Mrs. Yerger said it is case and point.

Mr. Carocci said the EAC should have some type of recommendation to Council whether that money should be spent on pieces of property.

4. PROPERTY NO. 2017-5 – Must score this property

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. MS4 UPDATES

Mrs. Yerger said Chris Garges met with Jason Smith from HEA on October 4, 2017. They are going to go over the mapping for the discharge points. Once they are ironed out, HEA will begin preparing Pollution Reduction Plans. Hopefully, if the maps are finished, they will have them for the November EAC meeting.

B. DISCUSSION ON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE PUBLIC

The EAC reviewed the Open Space Committee report and has several corrections. Mrs. Yerger said on page 5 in the chart "Other", she would like it explained. She would also like the colors to be changed.

Mrs. Yerger said on the Open Space Map, we need to designate, what properties were donated.

Mr. Germanoski said on page 3, the last paragraph, the second sentence, “None of them have asked for recognition, but the impact of what they accomplished has been nothing short of astonishing”. He said he would suggest we say something like “the impact of what they accomplished will have long term benefits for the Township”.

Mr. Germanoski said on page 4, the bottom paragraph, first sentence, we should say “The magnitude of the accomplishments becomes much clearer when depicted graphically”. Take out the word “effort”.

Mrs. Yerger said since this current EIT paid down the debt they talk about, on Polk Valley Park, she thinks Polk Valley Park should be put on the map or not. It wasn’t initially purchased with open space money and doesn’t want to confuse the issue. Mr. Carocci said he thinks it should be put on the map and it should be listed next to the other properties with another footnote that says Polk Valley Park and it explains the percentage of the amount of money spent on the open space purchase.

Mrs. Yerger wants to bring this back to the next meeting because we are closing relatively soon on the Seifert property up on Martins Lane and once it closes we can demonstrate a significant match by the Federal Government through the Highlands money as they are paying half of that. Everything is in place and the sale of agreement is coming in place. Mr. Carocci said he’d like to wait on this report until we get this in place.

Mrs. Yerger said in the report, she’d like to see something about the cooperativeness of Springfield Township. We preserved some significant portions of their headwaters and that needs to be called out. It’s their source water and that will happen when Seifert comes through. That is an enormously important property. We’ve done four projects with Springfield, the Mease Farm, Seifert-Ray, Seifert, and Reimann properties. It’s significant that we worked with them cooperatively to protect our portion of a dual county resource.

Mr. Beardsley said on page 1, third paragraph, it says most typical method involves the purchase or donation of a conservation easement, where it says “landowners retain full ownership and use of their land”. That’s a little misleading because they don’t retain full use of their land it’s restricted. He would say “landowners retain ownership of their land”.

C. WOODLAND HILLS – REVIEW OF NEXT PHASE OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

Mrs. Yerger said there are a couple of things she didn’t think were that important to do. Having walked it a lot, she has worked her way through the undergrowth and if you go down to “PHASE 2 IMPROVEMENTS”, the “Kingston Park Trail Connection”, that’s going to be a bear doing that one. That one needs to be reconsidered. It’s all wetlands from the back of Woodland Hills to the edge of the road. That used to be a little spring the kids used to get water from for the schoolhouse. It’s going to be extensive. This one needs to be thought about and moved down. She’s a little hesitant as she walked it with our Planner and she’s not sure the use would warrant it, and as much as she’s involved with the Lutz-Franklin Schoolhouse, and she loves it, she thinks that one has to be looked at.

Mr. Germanoski said do we make a recommendation to re-evaluate it? Mrs. Yerger said yes. Mr. Germanoski said he knows that real estate very well too and he agrees you are not way out there with that opinion. That would be very challenging to do. Then it stretches the imagination that people would really use it. Mrs. Yerger said it can be done, but the amount of use to warrant this cost doesn’t equate.

Mrs. Yerger said the “Bird Blinds”, she has tons of friends and they want to be able to go out and get their binoculars and she doesn’t know the value of those.

Mrs. Yerger said the “Pond Boardwalk Access” – maybe. She tends to like to leave things fairly natural. Mr. Germanoski said there’s nowhere in here where there would be an assessment of the fish ponds and approving \$37,000 for a fishing dock without first evaluating the fish potential of the ponds, is really irresponsible. He had a question about \$20,000 for Wildlife and Vegetation Survey. The Vegetation Survey makes some sense to him if they were going to invest to remove invasive species and replace them with native species, but when he looked at the Wildlife Survey, his first question was to what end. Mrs. Yerger said she’s walked it fairly often and she sees a fox once in a while, geese, deer, turkeys, but they are everywhere in the Township. Mrs. Yerger said there’s lot of concerns.

Mr. Hijazi said on the educational signage, \$50,000.00 is high. Mrs. Yerger said all of this is pretty high. This was brought to us so they opened the door for us to comment on it. She doesn’t know if these are cost-effective. One of the things she does think, she would love to have a small portion ADA accessible. There’s a pavilion there and if we could make that short loop, which would allow it to be ADA accessible.

Mr. Carocci said he’s concerned about monies expended come out of the Open Space Fund, and be reimbursed by the grant. You don’t have the grant in hand yet. There is also that 10% limit which was in the ballot question and this would exceed the 10% yearly that comes in on this alone, which means there would be no money for anything else. Mrs. Yerger said it needs to be listed in terms of criteria and maybe go back and relook at dollar-wise, but a lot of this is pie in the sky. There is one immediate concern, there’s a bridge that goes over one of the little waterways which is broken, let’s fix that which is minimal. Mr. Carocci said the ADA comes to \$11,000 and that would be fine.

Mrs. Yerger said she’d like to get some clarity where these figures came from. Mr. Germanoski said the question of being wise stewards of this fund and in our previous conversations, and you look at this, if we want criticism, this is the way to get it and irresponsible comes to mind. Mrs. Yerger said it’s a little over blown. This needs to be revisited and reconsidered on what is really reasonable and necessary at Woodland Hill Park.

MOTION BY: Mrs. Yerger moved to recommend to Council that the “Woodland Hills Opinion of Probable Costs for Planning and Construction” need to be revisited and reconsidered on what is really reasonable and necessary at this park.

SECOND BY: Mr. Hijazi

ROLL CALL: 5-0 (Absent: Ms. Ray and Ms. Stanlick)

IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS – None

V. UPDATES/REPORTS

A. TERRY BOOS – HELLERTOWN REPRESENTATIVE – Absent

B. STUFF THE TRUCK EVENT RESULTS

Mrs. Yerger said two residents helped and they had five donors drop off stuff, and filled up about 1/4th of a truck. It may not seem like a lot, but it usually takes a couple of times to get it going. They appreciate the support of the Township.

C. PICK A DATE FOR ADOPT-A-ROAD CLEAN-UP

The EAC picked October 28th meeting at the Old Mill Bridge at 9:00 a.m. Mrs. Stanlick will pick up the supplies at the Township.

VI. OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

A. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2017 MINUTES

MOTION BY: Mr. Germanoski moved for approval of September 12, 2017 minutes.

SECOND BY: Mr. Hijazi

ROLL CALL: 5-0 (Absent – Laura Ray and Sarah Stanlick)

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: Mr. Hijazi moved for adjournment. The time was 8:27 p.m.

SECOND BY: Mr. Beardsley

ROLL CALL: 5-0 (Absent – Laura Ray and Sarah Stanlick)

Sandra Yerger, Chair