

**I. OPENING**

**CALL TO ORDER:** The Environmental Advisory Council meeting of Lower Saucon Township was called to order on Tuesday, October 9, at 7:05 p.m., at 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, PA, with Sandra Yerger, Chairman, presiding.

**ROLL CALL:** **Members:** Sandra Yerger, Chairman; Ted Beardsley (7:10 p.m.), Allan Johnson, Dru Germanoski, Sarah Stanlick. **Associate Members:** Thomas Carocci & Cindy Oatis. **Staff:** Diane Palik. Jr. Council Members: Sydney Oskin, Madeline Lohr, Maclaine Oskin. **Absent:** Members, Hazem Hijazi & Laura Ray; Associate Members, David Jauregui, Michael Boyle & Glenn Kaye; Hellertown Representative, Terry Boos; and Jr. Council Member, Katie French.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**INTRODUCTION OF JR. COUNCIL MEMBERS:** Sydney Oskin said she is on the Environmental Club at school. She previously was on the P&R Board and wanted to try and get more experience with the EAC as she wants to see what the community is doing and try to be a part of that. Madeline Lohr said recently she joined the Environmental Club and she helped out with the butterfly garden and the youth watershed project. She wants to see what we can do in our community because they aren't the last generation to be on this earth. They have to make sure we hand it off to the future generations. Maclaine Oskin said she wanted to join for the well-being of our community and learn about our local government's conservation efforts and to help contribute to the health and sustainability of our community.

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**II. OPEN SPACE SUB-COMMITTEE**

**A. PROPERTY UPDATES**

**1. PROPERTY NO. 2018-1**

Mr. Germanoski said we recommended to Council to conserve this property. Mrs. Yerger said because of some questions with the first appraisal with this particular property, the Council requested that a second appraisal be done just to make sure that the numbers are right. The site visit and second appraisal has been done and they are finalizing it now.

**2. PROPERTY NO. 2018-12**

Mr. Germanoski said the last he recalled we weren't going to score this property as we were going to wait and see what the County did. Mrs. Yerger said she did see they are doing parts of the same farm that are in Williams Township. This will be taken by Northampton County Ag, and unofficially it should score high.

**3. PROPERTY NO. 2017-1**

Mrs. Yerger said this property is under review and a conservation easement is being drawn up for the property owner to review and he's in the process of doing that. It's in its final stages. Ms. Sydney Oskin asked what are these properties waiting for approval on. Mrs. Yerger explained the entire process for preserving a resident's property for conservation. Mr. Carocci said next meeting we should have an updated map. Mrs. Yerger said we will get the Jr. Council members a map of all the properties preserved. A lot have woodlands, streams, all those important factors.

**4. DRAVECZ PARCEL**

Mr. Beardsley said the realtors are working with Mrs. Dravec, without an appraisal of her property, and are having a little difficulty with the values of the portion we might want to buy. They are trying to figure out what's left and a per acre value. He thought it's not all that a dissimilar property acreage-wise and location-wise from George Savitske's, and he's wondering if we could share that appraisal with her realtors. Mrs. Yerger said that would be up to the property owner and Council. She said we don't like to put it out there until it's a done deal and until the landowner is comfortable. Then it is public as its public funds we are spending. She's confused why this would affect Mrs. Dravec on how much she wants to hold out. That's what was holding up the appraisal as we can't appraise it until she determines how much land she wants to keep and put a house on. Mr. Beardsley said she knows how much she wants to keep and put a house on, it's two acres and she knows the location. There's an issue with whether the soils in that area would support a septic system.

They got a soils maps from Zoning and they are being evaluated. He thinks what the realtors are concerned with is if they can't put her house on those two acres, what it is going to do the rest of the property and the house she wants to sell. They are trying to get a handle on the value. Mrs. Yerger said she would almost have to go through the subdivision process and see if it's a buildable lot if she wants absolute figures. Mr. Beardsley said he assumes they would do a soil test before they would subdivide.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. MS4 UPDATES**

Mrs. Yerger explained the MS4 to the Jr. Council members. She said a lot of townships have had storm water issues. They passed state regulations that we have to comply with a certain amount of regulations and you have to be certified every couple of years so you are in compliance. We are going through that process right now and coming to our deadline. We have to help educate landowners on smart ways to deal with storm water and runoff. We put a lot of information on our website.

#### **B. RECOMMENDATION FOR USING OPEN SPACE FUNDS TOWARDS MAINTENANCE**

Mrs. Yerger said there is a memo from Cathy Gorman, our Director of Finance. Everyone is aware that the state said if you purchase a property with open space funding, you can allocate a certain percentage of your open space monies to help manage and maintain that property. The Township has decided to do this on a case-by-case basis instead of just taking a blanket percentage. They are coming to the EAC for recommendations. It's Act 115 Open Space Funding. They are asking for \$35,000 to be put into the budget for 2019 for lawn mowing and treatments on Polk Valley Park, Easton Road Ballfields, Saucon Rail Trailhead and Woodland Hills Preserve. Those were the areas we used open space money and actual acquisitions that the Township owns.

Mr. Johnson said there's another property that the Township owns, the Townsend-Savitske properties and it's right across Polk Valley Road from the SVSD football practice field and extends down to Reservoir Road. It's approximately 19 acres. The Township has owned them since 2013 and they have not mowed them since that time. In the intervening time, all kinds of invasive weeds and little trees have grown up and the land is prime ag land. One of the reasons we have an open space program is to preserve prime farmland. If we continue to allow vegetation to grow on this property without it being mowed, it's going to grow up into a tangled mess. Any farmer who would think about farming it in the future would have to clean up that tangled mess and it would cost a lot of money. We are damaging the future use of this property. He suggests we ask Council to go out for bids and find somebody to mow that property at least once a year and that money should be put into the 2019 budget. The money can be taken out of the \$35,000 of open space funds that they calculated for maintenance on open space property. Mr. Germanoski agreed with Mr. Johnson that this is important. Mrs. Yerger said we have not had a farmer lease this yet, and it doesn't damage the soil if you keep it mowed. It would be a native meadow if we mow it once a year.

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Germanoski moved to recommend to Council to approve that \$35,000 from the Open Space Funds be put into the 2019 budget for maintenance at Polk Valley Park, Easton Road Ballfields, the Saucon Valley Rail Trailhead and Woodland Hills Preserve.

**SECOND BY:** Mr. Johnson

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0 (Absent: Hazem Hijazi & Laura Ray)

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Johnson moved to recommend to Council to approve going out for bids to mow the Townsend-Savitske properties that the Township owns because they haven't been mowed in a long time and if they are not mowed, the property will eventually lose value as farmland and the money required to mow the property come from the \$35,000 of the Open Space Fund maintenance money.

**SECOND BY:** Ms. Stanlick

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0 (Absent: Hazem Hijazi & Laura Ray)

**IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS** – None

**V. UPDATES/REPORTS**

- A. TERRY BOOS REPORT – HELLERTOWN REPRESENTATIVE** – Absent
- B. PICK A DATE FOR ADOPT-A-ROAD CLEAN-UP** – The EAC picked Saturday, November 3, 2018 for their adopt-a-road clean-up with Sarah Stanlick picking up the supplies.
- C. TOWN HALL MEETING – CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH – PA 7<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT – SUSAN WILD & MARTY NOTHSTEIN** – Mrs. Yerger said there is a Town Hall tomorrow night with Susan Wild and one on November November 1<sup>st</sup> with Marty Nothstein.
- D. SAUCON HARVEST FESTIVAL – OCTOBER 13, 2018 @ DIMMICK PARK – NOON TO 7 P.M.** - Mrs. Yerger said this festival is this Saturday. All four of our Jr. Council members are volunteering for this event, Sydney & Maclaine Oskin, Maddy Lohr and Katie French. This benefits the Saucon Valley Youth sports program.

**VI. OLD/MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

- A. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AUGUST 14, 2018 MINUTES**

**MOTION BY:** Ms. Stanlick moved for approval of August 14, 2018 minutes.

**SECOND BY:** Mr. Germanoski

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0 (Absent: Hazem Hijazi & Laura Ray)

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

- Cindy Oatis said the USDA has started making their way through the eight quarantined communities. Their plan is they are going to insert an insecticide/herbicide type cocktail of some sort into the base of these Tree of Heaven, the Ailanthus Altissima tree. As they are making these presentations, they are asking the municipalities to sign an agreement and it delineates liability. They go in with this cocktail, which will ultimately kill the tree, and then the tree becomes vulnerable and can fall. If it's on municipal property the Township assumes that liability and if it's on an individual lot or a resident's property, they assume it. There was one community having a bit of an issue with that agreement and they are trying to tweak it in some way. They are looking at starting this winter with identifying the trees in all eight communities and then the idea is to start in the spring with the process. Mrs. Yerger said Bethlehem has a lot of Tree of Heaven's. Mr. Johnson said it's taking down big trees is a big expense and he doesn't think the Township should go along with that. Mrs. Yerger said we haven't been approached yet. Mr. Johnson said we also have these ash tree borers, which are all over the Township and nobody proposed cutting those trees down. How come all of a sudden another fly comes around that damages trees and they want to go through a big deal like this and cause all kinds of expense for landowners. Ms. Oatis said her understanding is the ash borer is not putting fruit in jeopardy where the lantern fly is going to have a big impact in PA on at least the wine growers and maybe more. Mrs. Yerger said they are spreading beyond Ailanthus trees into produce; and that's the biggest issue and the difference. She knows the Townships are also coming together and putting together legislation regarding Bamboo trees because it spreads and it's so dense.
- Ms. Oatis said she volunteered for the paper shredding event last weekend in Hellertown. Most of the residents were definitely Hellertown and only a handful from LST. When she left, they were still under 50, which is a disappointing number. We had discussions how we could better advertise it earlier assuming they decide to do it again. They did a great job and it was very well organized.
- Mrs. Yerger said the Spirit Parade is on Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup> starting at 2:00 p.m.; and Trick-or-Treat in LST is Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY:** Mr. Johnson moved for adjournment. The time was 7:50 p.m.

**SECOND BY:** Mr. Beardsley

**ROLL CALL:** 5-0 (Absent – Hazem Hijazi & Laura Ray)