

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Shirley Yannich, Chairwoman
Date: July 10, 2016
Re: Open Space Plan Update

Background:

The township has an updated Open Space Plan dated October 2010.

In November 2012 the voters approved a referendum to bond \$3million for the acquisition and improvement of open space and historic places.

October 31, 2013 the township sent a letter to Ms. Joanne Throwe, Director Environmental Finance Center (EFC) University of Maryland expressing our interest of working with them. The EFC, brought to us by our Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), offered to prepare a report on the “Green Infrastructure Approach to Leveraging Local Priorities in Warrington Township, PA.” There was no charge for this service.

Early in 2014 the EAC prepared a map identifying fifty (50) potential open spaces that was used by the EFC.

On September 23, 2014 the EFC presented their report to the BOS. In doing so they recommended that the township hire a lands trust organization to negotiate open space with landowners and prepare grants that could leverage the \$3million bond.

On the recommendation of the Open Space Land Preservation Task Force (OSLPTF) the township contracted with Natural Lands Trust (NLT) and on January 27, 2015 the NLT, using the parcels identified by the EAC presented their recommendations to the BOS and suggested that the township hire a Recreation Consultant. We hired Ann Toole in August 2015.

In 2014, Open Space funds were used to acquire property and demolish a house on to allow for the expansion of the Barness parking lot. In 2016, the Township also acquired the six (6) acre DiPrato property on Stump Road. The DiPrato land is bordered on three sides by township open space land. Presently, we are awaiting the decision from Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) regarding our application to acquire sixty-six (66+) acres of Morrissey owned lands on Pickertown Road, adjacent to the land that Mr.

Morrissey previously donated where the new Public Works and Fire House #78 are now located.

Fast Forward to Today:

Ann Toole has toured the township, completed gathering data and is mid way through interviews with supervisors, staff, businesses and the general public. An Open Space Plan Update Subcommittee has been formed under the guidance of the OSLPTF. Ms. Toole plans for six meetings with the subcommittee. To date three meetings have occurred, one of which was a public workshop wherein approximately 30 residents attended.

To prepare for drafting the plan, Ms. Toole will be meeting with the OSLPTF and Parks and Recreation Board (P&RB) in July. She will meet with the Planning commission on August 18th and the BOS on August 23rd. Ms. Toole expects the plan to ready for public meetings and adoption before the end of the year.

Miscellaneous:

The review and update of the Comprehensive Plan is moving right along. The Planning Commission chairman and Bill Connolly, a PC member along with staff and Carol Baker will be meeting with the County representatives on July 15th to move the updating process forward. They will be discussing the possibility of conservation zoning within the township and the feasibility of identifying locations for Park 'n Ride lots in the western section to give the residents using the New Britain and Warminster SEPTA rail stations an alternative from driving across Routes 611 or 202 to reach the trains.

In preparation for the meeting with the County the Township Engineer has provided a draft Comp Plan map showing all the publicly owned properties in bright white, the existing, proposed and private trails and all the parcels of land in the RA zoning district that are non conforming – less than 3 acres. This map was reviewed by the PC at their July 7th meeting.

Cc: Barry Luber, Interim Township Manager
Barbara Livrone, Township Secretary
Rick Rycharski, PC Chairman
Ruth Schemm, OSLPTF Chairwoman
Richard Weiss, Jr., P&RB Chairman
Lynn Bush, Director Bucks County Planning Commission
Township Website if approved by BOS