

West Rockhill Township
Conservation Committee Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2014

Call to Order:

The November 20 Conservation Committee meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. at the West Rockhill Township municipal building.

Elected Officials:

*Absent

Supervisors: *Donald Duvall
*Jay Keyser
*John Mann

Appointed Officials Conservation Committee members:

Elizabeth (Betsy) Branson
Vera Cole
David Collingwood
Karina Rilling
*Michael Schrameyer

Township Manager:

Greg Lippincott

Visitors Registered:

John and Patrice Sweriduk

Conservation Committee Activity:

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of the September 18, 2014 meeting were approved as submitted.

Old Business:

1. Michael Schrameyer will update our database by the next meeting.
2. Open space signs:

The Lichty open space signs have been damaged but will be replaced- one sign on the southwest side of Ridge Road was hit by a car. Apparently the car was stolen and if there is a police report a claim can be submitted to the township's insurance company for the purchase of a new sign; the other's insert with conservation information was shattered by an unknown element. The metal structure was intact

Although it needed welding. It was removed and taken to the township shed where it resided until repairs could be completed. Before it could be welded and reinstalled, the whole structure was stolen. Replacement signs will be installed at a later date.

The Bates property's oversized sign will be installed along the northbound side of the Rt. 309 Bypass.

3. Vera Cole led a comprehensive and lengthy discussion regarding the log cabin on the conserved Shaffer property. To reiterate- the main problems are:
 - a. the septic system (which has never been tested)

- b. the well water contamination by the septic system
- c. the electrical system with its low lying wires next to the cabin (an approximate cost of \$10,000 to fix the problem)
- e. the large trees looming over the cabin
- f. the lack of occupancy for the past 2 years

Vera outlined possible solutions:

- a. investing approximately \$50,000 to make it livable (*see above*). A carpenter has been asked to give an estimate for minor fixes- gutters, chinking.
- b. hiring a caretaker(s) to live in the cabin rent-free with responsibility for minor repairs, payment of utilities, all care of the conserved property, ex. mowing
- c. selling it at auction with the new owner responsible for physically moving the cabin from the conserved property
- d. hiring a rental property manager to rent at market value for a short-term vacation spot or long-term residence (first it must be made livable).
- d. exploring the possibility of forming a partnership with a non- profit or third party for meetings, nature exploration, projects, other events (weddings, day camps, etc.)
- e. doing nothing after completing minor repairs so deterioration is stopped and then leaving it to the next generation for solutions

Vera will compile all the discussions into a comprehensive and cohesive document and will submit it to the Board of Supervisors before their next official meeting.

4. Letter sent to property owners after the Conservation Committee members have evaluated and recommended a direction for the Board of Supervisors: Betsy will write a prototype for Greg to follow. The CC will become more involved in the information included in the letter. It will reflect a warmer, more engaging style and will definitely include an invitation to the property owners to meet with the CC for discussion if they wish.

5. The James barn will be evaluated by a local carpenter. It needs some work to stabilize it so that any decision to ‘Save the Barn’ can be initiated in the future.

New Business:

1. One newspaper article was presented- PA House Bill #1565 passed with Rep. Paul Clymer voting for the bill. The bill alters stream buffer restrictions on some Pennsylvania streams. To read the bill, please go to the PA government website.

2. Manderfield Preserve:

Judy Decker sent a letter from Maryanne Noonan regarding signs and trails at the Manderfield Preserve. Ms. Noonan will be invited to attend our January meeting to discuss planned improvements.

To date, Judy has blazed a number of trails but still needs to blaze the ‘yellow’ trail designation.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned to Executive Session.

Next regularly scheduled meeting – Thursday, January 15, at 7 PM.