

London Grove Township Open Space Committee
Meeting Notes: June 11, 2015

Attending: *Members* – Eric Brown, Anne Hannum, Jock Hannum
Guests – Erin McCormick, Natural Lands Trust; Seung Ah Byun and John Goodall, Brandywine Conservancy
Staff – David Sweet

1. Riparian buffer protection/creation. The Committee and guests had an extended discussion of various possible approaches to protecting forested riparian buffers and encouraging an increase in such areas. In addition to the Township's work on regulatory language, points included:

- a. Need to determine the general value of a purchased riparian easement; an easement could create loss of value if the corridor extends into developable land (including retained house sites on already eased land) or if agricultural activity is diminished or curtailed.
- b. Where riparian corridors exist on land that already is under a full-property easement, the terms of such an easement probably can be strengthened in relation to the specific protection of the riparian corridor. This, too, might result in a loss of value that could be donated or purchased.
- c. Also on such an eased property, contact with the landowner re: riparian buffers might expand to consider adjustments to other aspects of the easement terms, e.g., eliminating one or more reserved house sites.
- d. The Conservancy will review the easements currently held on London Grove properties re: the degree of protection afforded to riparian corridors and, perhaps, the current on-the-ground conditions of those corridors. From this, there may emerge a group of 1st-priority candidates for contact about additional easement donation or purchase.
- e. An easement purchase program would not be limited to already forested segments of a corridor. It would establish a consistent width on a property; this width might vary among properties, depending in part on the landowner's needs and use of the ground.
- f. Where segments of the corridor are not forested, the Township can encourage participation in CREP or other programs that provide trees for installation.
- g. The Township may be able to apply successes with this program against its MS4 and TMDL obligations, as non-structural solutions.
- h. Re: the Inniscrone golf course, the Township and its management agent should be approached about adding trees to the course's riparian corridors. The eligibility to use Open Space Fund monies for this, as improvements to park land, can be explored. Can/should this approach be applied at Goddard Park, as well?
- i. Whether CREP is available to a homeowners' association will be explored.

j. Maintenance of installed trees, whether through CREP or other planting programs, is key and frequently does not occur. Can this be addressed through the monitoring function, where the corridor is placed under easement?

k. Are there other potential funding sources for an easement purchase program, e.g., water supply companies, White Clay Scenic Rivers Program, Stroud Water Research Center?

1. For easements limited to a riparian corridor, will there become the need for a London Grove Twp. Land Trust to hold them?

2. Status of Open Space Fund. Balance as of June 8: \$1,180,721. This compares to the May 11 balance of \$1,094,717.

3. Updates on landowner contacts

a. Klotzbach. Chester County has resumed work on a potential agricultural conservation easement for this property; the survey currently is under way. Barring unforeseen problems, settlement could occur in November, which would be preceded by the Township's commitment of funds under the Challenge Grant Program.

b. Hutchison. It was agreed that a representative of the family should be invited to a Committee meeting to discuss interest in preserving the London Grove portion of their holdings.

c. Boddorff. Erin reported that a signed proposal for the easement has not yet been returned to her.

d. Brosius. John Goodall reported the Conservancy is working on both a conservation plan and a draft easement.

e. Henshaw. John will be meeting with them next week.

Next meeting: to be determined