

The Workshop Meeting for the Moore Township Board of Supervisors (BOS) was called to order on Wednesday, August 24, 2022 by Township Manager Nicholas Steiner at 7:00 PM. The meeting was conducted at the municipal building. Members present included Chairman Daniel Piorkowski, Vice Chair David Shaffer, Supervisor Michael Tirrell, and Township Manager Nicholas Steiner. Land and Environmental Protection Board (LEPB) chairman Bob Romano, Recreation Chair Jodi Hartzell, Recreation Commission member David Ball, and Zoning Hearing Board alternate Zachary Zeitner were also present for the meeting.

Benefits of a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

Ms. Sherry Acevedo, Conservation Coordinator of Northampton County Parks & Recreation, gave a presentation focused on the importance of such a plan for planning purposes and applying for county and state grants related to our parks and open space. She provided the county's vision, types of parks and recreation the county focuses on, and the county's accomplishments. Improvements at the Township made using county grant funds were summarized and the changes in grant programs were explained. Ms. Acevedo explained grant funding opportunities at the state and county levels as well as the expectations of each entity. She explained how grant funding can be used to update the current open space plan to incorporate the Township's parks and other types of recreations including the process to apply and form a steering committee. Ms. Acevedo also made comments about the Township's open space plan, including the referendum process and entities involved with creating the Township open space plan in 2011. When the plan was first implemented, the biggest threat of development was housing. It should be re-evaluated as trends change to address existing trends and anticipate future trends in development.

She also spoke of other municipalities including efforts by E. Allen Township and Lower Nazareth. Lower Nazareth's first open space plan included parks and recreation. Mr. Romano and Mr. Shaffer asked if the Township is doing the plan in reverse because Moore already has an open space plan. Ms. Acevedo explained in the past, the Township received funding from the county through automatic allocations. Now the county requires a plan for their competitive grant opportunities. Open space was the priority when the open space plan was put together. This would get the Township caught up with the rest of its parks and recreation facilities. It is also time to evaluate to see if anything needs to be improved in the open space plan due to the age of the plan. Mr. Romano asked if this is all about grants. Ms. Acevedo explained it helps with getting grants and ensuring everyone is on the same page and has the same common goals. As supervisors and board members change, priorities may change. Without a plan with stated goals, it's difficult to say if a proposed project is part of the Township's goals.

Mr. Steiner and Mr. Tirrell asked about the process for getting an estimate to apply for funding to put together a grant request to update the open space plan. Using E. Allen as an example, the recreation direction, township manager, and zoning officer took the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) sample scope of work to their engineer who gave them an estimate to update the plan. Ultimately, it will go through the RFP process. Knowing specifics will allow to keep costs down. E. Allen is now forming their steering committee comprised of representatives from interested groups to come up with the goals of the plan to be communicated with the consultant creating the plan.

Ms. Jodi Hartzell asked how much input the steering committee should give before reaching out to consultant. Ms. Acevedo said it's up to the manager and supervisors. The steering committee could craft

the goals for the RFP. The committee cannot, however, serve as the consultant. Mr. Steiner asked confirmation they could start one at any time to build a scope for the grant. Ms. Hartzell said that would also help with the cost of the consultant. Ms. Acevedo also recommended doing research and getting all the documentation needed to prevent consultant costs associated with doing the research. Ms. Hartzell asked about how long it takes for the entire process. Ms. Acevedo said it took Lower Nazareth about two years, but it all depends on the accepted contract and the committees involved. In addition, being prepared helps with the grant application in a competitive grant environment. It is likely to rank higher if a project is ready to go upon approval of the grant.

Mr. Tirrell asked if with the passing of Act 14, EIT funds could be used for the grant. Ms. Acevedo said that is a question for the solicitor. She explained the change allows up to 25% used on park maintenance and recreation. Planning is what she is unsure about. She also recommended checking with Mr. Kerry Reider at Bushkill Township and using the professional network to assist in the process noting other municipalities are also working on this.

Ms. Acevedo complimented the Township on its farmland preservation efforts. Mr. Romano said they are also doing well with open space, but they don't use the county because of the public access requirement. He spoke of some possible open space applications being reviewed. Ms. Acevedo also reminded attendees of the Township's ability to purchase properties to preserve open space. She also recommended using Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) as a conservation planning tool when reviewing properties to preserve.

Ms. Acevedo also encouraged using wording from the open space plan in their evaluations. The evaluation form doesn't match. Focusing on the zoning question, she said whether there's a major threat of development is more important than the zoning district. She explained how the evaluation is used to approve or deny a property which makes it very important to match the open space plan. The Township can then point to aspects of the plan showing why a property was approved or denied. Ms. Acevedo also explained how an updated plan can be used to make recommendations to the Board on what should be attached to certain types of development including trails, land for recreation, or a conservation easement for portions of the property.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas C. Steiner
Township Manager

Not intended to be word for word, but a synopsis of the meeting.