

BETHLEHEM LAND TRUST BOARD MEETING
Minutes—February 14, 2014

Present: Emily Eisen, Mary Hawvermale, Doug Mahard, Jean Melita, Mark Miller, Beverly Mosch, Stuart Rabinowitz, Vera Rosa, Steve Sabatini, Carol Spier, Bob Ueberbacher;

Call to Order: 7:35 p.m.

Secretary's report: The January 2014 minutes were approved.

Treasurer's report: Materials for the 2013 tax return are nearly ready for the accountant. There are sufficient funds in the checking account that it may make sense to move some to the Sherlock account for future maintenance and some to a savings account. (N.B. Shortly after this meeting the septic system at Sherlock required pumping and there may be unexpected immediate costs associated with this.)

Old Business:

Planning goals: We briefly reviewed the Strategic Plan and agreed that a fresh look at it will inform our goals for the upcoming year. Attached is a copy of the plan annotated to reflect the discussion. To be addressed at the March 12 meeting!

Cabbage Lane Property: The owner believes the eastern border of this property is 10 feet from the end of the old Town Line Road. The driveway into the adjacent property at the current end of the road appears to incorporate a portion of the old road. When last we looked at this property we were unable to determine which town the road is in or how this driveway relates to it (we did not go to great lengths to determine at that time). Bob says the unused portion of the road is in Bethlehem and the town abandoned it some time ago but he believes it could be reopened (which would make the property more attractive).

Steve volunteered to go to the Watertown Town Hall to see if he can learn anything about Watertown claims to the road.

The owner is asking \$230K for the two lots and would possibly hold a mortgage. The BLT land acquisition committee will look for recent sales information and current listings of comparable properties.

Jerry Assard Farm Easement: The town Conservation Commission has \$200K available. Will pay \$1,000 per acre for an easement on the Jerry Assard farm (house and some surrounding land excepted). A survey is needed before the process can move forward, BLT has been asked to provide \$1,000 for this. A motion was made and passed that we contribute \$1,000 for this survey. (N.B.: past minutes reveal the Conservation Commission must have town meeting or referendum approval before expending funds.)

New Business:

Option to manage 5 acres open space in Cheshire:

A contact of Stuart and Cynthia's is a developer and has a 5-acre parcel (mandated open space) in a housing development in Cheshire that he has offered to the BLT; he proposes to donate funds that would provide for stewardship and monitoring. We looked at a map; the property is long, irregular in shape, bordered by numerous houses, and has a gas line running through it. Initial reaction is that Cheshire is far away, that our mission is to care for property in Bethlehem, and the potential cost of monitoring and defending this property against infraction or gas line catastrophe is large. However, we appreciate the developer's concern and offer; Stuart will find out what sort of financial donation the developer is prepared to make on the off chance it would be sufficient to not only defend the property but also benefit the BLT. (N.B.: The donation would be \$100K and via email discussion the consensus appears to be the responsibility would be a distraction and the liability too great.)

CT Land Conservation Conference: Sponsored by the CT Land Conservation Council, this annual conference will be held March 15 at Wesleyan University. BLT will donate \$100.00 in support. Theme is "The Economic Benefits of Open Space"; there are 24 workshops. <http://www.ctconservation.org/2014-Conference>

Pomperaug Watershed: Is looking for someone to attend their quarterly meetings to represent Bethlehem. Mary will find out more about what is wanted and responsibilities to be fulfilled.

Motion to adjourn at 8:55 . . . all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted: Carol Spier