

BETHLEHEM LAND TRUST BOARD MEETING
Minutes—March 12, 2014

Present: Lynn Baker, Emily Eisen, Mary Hawvermale, Doug Mahard, Jean Melita, Mark Miller, Beverly Mosch, Vera Rosa, Sandra Ruzicka, Steve Sabatini, Carol Spier, John Swendsen, Bob Ueberbacher;

Call to Order: 7:35 p.m.

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

Treasurer's report: Scott Blum's bill for clearing along the Bellamy wall has been paid (\pm \$1,900.00).

Old Business:

Planning goals: The majority of this meeting was devoted to discussion of strategic goals and actions for the coming year. The consensus is that the amended Strat Plan circulated with the February 2014 minutes is good (though we took no formal vote on it). We agreed to concentrate on three areas: Community Outreach, Stewardship, and Land Acquisition, all with an eye to raising the profile of the BLT and all inter-related. Details at the end of this document.

Cabbage Lane Property: Steve investigated the status of Old Town Highway North at both Watertown and Bethlehem Town Halls and also spoke to the owner of the property at the end of the open section of the road. The section that is paved and open now is all or at least partially in Watertown but Bethlehem maintains it. There does not appear to be any way to reopen or reclaim ownership of the abandoned roadway. Bev will update the owner of the lots for sale.

Planters Choice Tree Donation: The 10 trees donated to the BLT are in the town parking lot and ready for us to plant.

New Business:

Leever Easement: Very exciting news: In her will, Ruth Ann Leever left the BLT an easement on 70 acres; this property is south of Route 132, extending to Crane Hollow Road, and adjacent to the west border of the Pratt Preserve.

Miscellaneous news:

The Bethlehem Printer as we know it is closing and converting to a Minute Man printer, with the actual printing to be done off site. Roger will be working part time to facilitate orders.

John reports that the Town has been plowing the parking lot at Two Rivers.
Thanks!

2014 Strategic Goals: discussion details

Bear in mind that the new Leever easement provides incentives for the Board and the public and may influence details and direction of our thinking and actions. Human and capital resources to be focused on the following:

Prelude:

Educate the Board about conservation and easements—make sure we all understand the basics. (Reminder, a brief overview of this is on our website, where there is also a link to the Land Trust Alliance site with more complete information.)

1) Community Outreach/Raise Profile of BLT

Communicate with neighbors/attract donors, especially through invitational social events. Sponsor lectures for the town, e.g. Ian Branson, someone from the Agrarian Trust

(Emily's contact); website is agrariantrust.org

Pursue potential visible, donated or inexpensive office space

Sponsor/develop presentations for the schools (all levels)

Develop or participate in public events such as a town-wide cleanup day. (The Wildlife Conservation Club gives out seedlings and bluebird houses.)

Board Members: ??????

2) Engage in Active Stewardship

Monitor the properties

Focus on Preserves that are open to the Public

Continue to maintain/improve Bellamy Preserve (including cleanup stumps along cornfield)

Establish trails in Canfield Preserve

Establish communication with the neighboring property owners, perhaps engage them to be alert to activity in the preserves (especially infringements)

Engage Scouts and other volunteers

Board Members: Mary, Doug

3) Land Acquisition Committee

Target lands of value due to size and proximity to other holdings

Concentrate on donations and easements

Review current listings

Participate strategically in Community Outreach efforts as appropriate

Board Members: Carol, Bev, Mark

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

Respectfully Submitted: Carol Spier