

BETHLEHEM LAND TRUST BOARD
Minutes—October 10, 2012

Call to Order: 7:30 p.m.

Present: Lynn Baker, Mary Hawvermale, Jean Melita, Bev Mosch, Stuart Rabinowitz, Vera Rosa, Anneke Rothman, Sandra Ruzicka, Steve Sabatini, John Swendsen, Carol Spier; Chris Armentano.

Secretary's report: The September minutes were amended to correct the meeting date and then approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bob was unable to attend, so no report.

Old Business:

Land Acquisition:

Open Space Commission: Mary met with the Open Space Commission, who indicated they could be interested in working with us to preserve the Still Hill, Cabbage Lane (both acquisitions) and Assard (easement) properties. Mary left them to discuss this potential. (Feed back came after our 10/10 meeting: They would like to participate and suggested grant opportunities, which they can help with or facilitate. Their order of priority is Assard, Still Hill, Cabbage Lane).

Cabbage Lane Property: Bev has asked the owner if she would consider selling us one lot at her full price and donating the other, thus receiving a tax advantage. She will confer with her attorney and accountant and get back to us.

BLT Acquisition decisions: The BLT Board agreed we are interested in pursuing all of the above, with participation from the commission, should it materialize, affecting the speed with which we move. At this time, we will commit to moving forward on the Still Hill property; if we receive help and as fundraising is successful, we will move on the others (pending the response of the Cabbage Lane owner):

Still Hill Property: Discussion: The general consensus is that at this time, of the two potential acquisition properties, this property most meets our Land Acquisition Criteria, comprises a considerable acreage (±34) with many streams as well as Wood Creek, and to our knowledge, there is no outstanding information or other factor that would inhibit moving quickly to contract should we reach a deal with the owner. The current asking price for this property (\$210,000) is greater than the appraised value (\$173,000). We discussed the implications of paying more than the appraised value and feel we can justify its conservation value being greater than its residential value, as it would be a challenging building site. It was moved that: Bev be empowered to negotiate on our behalf (we would name the preserve after the current owner if the price is no greater than \$200,000). The board voted to accept this motion.

Garlic Festival: We did take a table and offer the mechanical squirrel toy as a premium to anyone who wanted to join the BLT. Response was poor. Most people who were attracted to the toy were from elsewhere and not interested in the BLT. Weather was bad also, so the effort was terminated early. We will consider doing this jointly with the Bethlehem Conservation Commission next year, which would make a stronger presence overall (the Commission is not looking to raise money). Also, we will plan earlier with a goal of developing something to sell—our photo note cards, or a BLT shopping bag perhaps.

Dinner/Auction: Re donations, various board members volunteered to contact businesses Tom had contacted in prior years. Stuart will email donation forms and ad rates. Bev is in touch with Jillian about helping with the décor (n.b. Jillian will). Eagle Electric will help with lighting when we set up.

Stewardship:

Sky Meadows: John reports that the pond is next on the fire department's "to dredge" list; it may be spring before they do it.

Arboretum at Long Horizons: The trees need to be weeded and mulched. John will contact Woodhall School to see if students will take this on and Stuart will see if he can arrange for some mulch to be donated.

New Business:

Sherlock lease renewal: We agreed to renew the lease at the current rate for the current tenant. However, the lease will expire in May and be renewed again at that time for 1 year: a May vacancy, should one occur, is preferable as that is the best time to promote a property to potential tenants.

Also re Sherlock property: the shingles are being power-washed by the tenant's son. There is a large patch of Japanese knotweed that needs to be exterminated. There is a dead tree nearby on the adjacent property that should be removed to preclude damage to the house should it come down. Lynn will talk to the neighbor about this.

Motion to adjourn at 9:15 . . . all in favor.

Respectfully Submitted: Carol Spier