

## Minutes of the Liberty Township Land Use Board

Regular Meeting

20 December 2023

The meeting was opened at 7:30 by Chairman Eric Tibak who read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

### **Flag salute**

**Attendance:** Eric Tibak, Dan Grover, Pete Wicki, Dave Snyder, Kevin Wulf, and Dave Wright were present. Also present were Eric Snyder, Planner and Richard Schneider, Attorney

**Minutes:** On a motion by Eric Tibak, seconded by Pete Wicki, the minutes of 16 August, as amended, were accepted. On motion by Dave Snyder, seconded by Dan Grover, the minutes of 18 October were accepted with abstentions by Eric Tibak and Pete Wicki.

### **New Business:**

The first item of business was the memorialization of the adoption of the Re-examination Report resolution prepared by Eric Snyder as discussed and amended. Richard Schneider, Board Attorney, had prepared a resolution for this memorialization which was provided to all Board members.

On motion by Eric Tibak, seconded by Doug Wright, the resolution was adopted. At this point, the requisite notices will go out. Richard Schneider offered to provide Eric Snyder with the requirements set forth in the Municipal Land Use Law.

Next, Dan Grover initiated a discussion of proposed Highlands rules which would place substantial burdens on property owners of relatively large lots. Elements such as eliminating invasive species, including deer, from properties and essentially eliminating woodlot management are proposed. However, prior to the Highlands Council meeting, this item was dropped from their agenda as not actually proposed. Notwithstanding this, there was a great deal of discussion in opposition to the ideas in the proposal at the Highlands Council meeting. George Bosze, Zoning Officer and Professional Forester, commented, saying that these included substantial changes to the Best Management Practices used by landowners who, for decades, managed their properties responsibly in the Farmland Preservation Program and elsewhere in general forestry. These rules also would appear to create a conflict between subagencies of the NJDEP.

Dan Grover also noted that most of the concern regarding poor management of open lands relates to State-owned properties. This is primarily a function of a lack of consistent stewardship funding and State programs that emphasized land purchase over the necessary long-term responsibilities of land ownership (e.g. Sparta Mountain).

The Highlands Chair indicated they would be back as their sole concern is protecting water quality. This is concerning as there appears to be no concern over underfunded mandates or abrogation of property rights.

Following the above discussion, the Board reviewed current warehouse news- the land proposed for warehousing in White Township is to be sold to the State as open space- see above concern and there are projects proposed in Belvidere and Blirstown immediately adjacent to Knowlton on NJ 94.

The Board then considered the need for recommendations for change in the required annual report to the Governing Body. No issues were raised as the Board had just adopted the Re-examination Report for the Governing Body. Eric Snyder was directed to prepare a letter to the Township Committee to that effect. Other issues may surface in 2024.

**Public Comment:**

The meeting was then opened to the public. No public wished to comment further and the meeting was closed to the public.

**Bills:**

The bills from Eric Snyder and Richard Schneider were presented. On motion by Eric Tibak, seconded by Dan Grover, the bills were approved unanimously.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric K. Snyder, AICP, PP  
Board Administrator