

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION (CACC)
May 11, 2009 Meeting Record

Members Present:

Libby Liebschutz, Chair; Jeff Freedman, John Mead, David VanLuven, Mike Waldenmaier, Caleb Wistar

Staff Members Present:

Rob Leslie, Jeff Lipnicky, Debbie Kitchen

Chair Report:

- A. **Approval of March 12, 2009 Meeting Record:** Mr. Leslie asked the members if they had any comments or corrections on the draft March 12, 2009 meeting record that was circulated. No comments were provided and Mr. Leslie indicated he would post to the Town's web site.
- B. **Other**
No discussion items.

Farm and Open Space Protection Program (Open Space Plan):

A. Review/Discuss Recommendations on Open Space Needs and Opportunities document

Mr. Leslie indicated that all Committee members should have received a printed copy of the draft "Recommendations on Open Space Needs and Opportunities" Report. He announced that the most recognizable change in the revised document is the removal of the green infrastructure approach. The discussion has returned to focus on open space and more specifically to address the task as requested by the Town Board. To help clarify certain terms, additional "text boxes" and a glossary were added. Mr. Leslie stated the purpose of the night's meeting is to review the Report and provide comments. He asked that grammatical and "word-smithing" comments to be provided through email, and tonight's comments focused on concepts and themes of the Report.

Mr. Waldenmaier questioned the intent of scenic value in the definition of open space. Several members responded that scenic value reflects the aesthetic value of open space, which has always been considered as an environmental value and validated by the courts. It was also mentioned that community discussions at the public meetings included scenic value as associated with open space. The meeting summaries located in the Report appendices list the term scenic value as a term associated with open space.

There was discussion regarding the terms "preservation" and "conservation". Committee members indicated that they are typically used interchangeably.

Ms. Liebschutz stated she felt the Town streets offer recreational opportunities and provide connections (i.e. places for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel) where traffic volumes and speeds are low. She suggested this be added to the pathways section.

There was discussion on the addition of a scrub/shrub layer to the Natural Systems Map. Mr. Lipnicky explained that scrub/shrub is described as unmaintained fields reverting back to forested lands. Additionally, it was suggested that the significant natural community definition be added to the Natural Systems Map. Mr. Leslie stated that the "white" areas on the map are either developed lands or agricultural/farming areas.

Mr. Waldenmaier suggested adding a statement of protecting the financial investment in the land to the needs and opportunities section on page 24.

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It was suggested that the statement “missing the big picture” should be removed from the third paragraph on page 26.

There was discussion on the definition of a greenway, which is stated as, “a corridor of private and/or public undeveloped land, as along a waterway (i.e. named stream), that could be reserved for recreational use and/or environmental preservation”. It was suggested that the term ‘undeveloped’ be removed from the definition since a greenway could included developed land. Mr. Leslie stated he viewed greenways as undeveloped areas.

The Committee reviewed Recommendation #12 – Open Space Vision, and suggested that the current report provides a vision, to some extent; and therefore, there is no need to include this as a recommendation.

Mr. Leslie stated the Planning Department would review the comments from tonight's meeting and revise the Report. Committee members agreed that the draft Report should be posted on the Town website and made available for public review. Mr. Waldenmaier asked if the Agricultural and Farmland Committee would receive a copy of the draft Report. Mr. Leslie stated the Agricultural and Farmland Committee would receive a copy in the mail.

B. Discuss Next Steps

Mr. Leslie stated the next steps include:

- Set a public meeting date (possibly late June/early July). It is anticipated that the meeting would include a presentation by Town Staff on the draft Report and an opportunity for public comment. The draft Report would be posted on the CACC webpage.
- Comments received at the public meeting would be discussed with the CACC at its July 13 committee meeting.
- Presentation to the Town Board late summer/early fall.

Public Comment:

Public comments included the following:

- Expand the glossary to include additional terms that are used in the Report (i.e. amenity zoning, purchase or development rights, etc.)
- Good land stewardship is following best management practices.
- The statement from the Comprehensive Plan that addresses protecting the financial investment in the land is to “retain the economic value of rural lands”.

Next Meeting:

July 13, 2009 at 7:00 PM