

## **Natural Heritage, Open Space, and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board**

Special Meeting (via Zoom/teleconference)

May 19, 2021

### Minutes

**Board members present:** Karen Burnaska, Linda Francois, Eric Hammerling (Co-Chair), Walker Holmes, Dan Morley, Amy Paterson (Co-Chair), Elanah Sherman, John Triana, Joe Welsh (All by Zoom, except for Elanah, who attended by phone.)

**DEEP representatives:** Allyson Clarke, Nicole Lugli

**Guest:** Catherine Rawson

**Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting began at 11:04 AM. The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss OSWA scoring criteria and to consider developing a similar system for UGCG applications.

### **General Discussion**

Amy asked Nicole if changes have been made to applications based on recent public comments and last week's Review Board meeting. Nicole answered that changes are "in process."

Nicole queried: How do we make the application and the evaluation protocols more equitable? In response, Walker noted that, in the current process, "five acres in Stratford can't compete with 50 acres in Litchfield County." She said that, in an effort to create greater equity, Pennsylvania has created two categories of application: protection of critical habitat and community recreation. She said that one challenge of instituting such a protocol would be avoidance of pitting these categories against one another. Eric said he liked this approach "conceptually," but suggested there may be better language than "community recreation." Amy and Nicole also responded positively, but said there was no time to incorporate this idea into the current round. Eric asked what could reasonably be "tweaked" this year to create greater equity. Walker answered that 50% of this year's grant funding could be directed to targeted/distressed communities.

### **Discussion of Administrative Evaluation**

# 3) Appraisal must be submitted on time (although exceptions may be granted on an individual basis). Note: Change has already been made that requires only one appraisal and an administrative review.

# 4) Clarify either/or, when appropriate.

# 6) Add five additional points for accessibility via public transportation. John observed that, because public access would not be applicable to water projects,

those applications should not be penalized. Offset might be protection of water supply.

# 7) Karen and Elanah suggested Increasing points to at least 10 for accessibility to people with disabilities.

# 8) In the interest of equity, Walker suggested considering how many people live within a certain distance of the site and doubling points accordingly.

# 9) Elanah suggested adding a category that includes letters of support from entities representing marginalized community members.

#12) Eric noted a need to clarify if the point categories represent one-or-another, or both. There was discussion on whether or not it is advisable to retain added points for working with a “licensed forester.”

### **Discussion of Resource Evaluation**

This discussion was brief. Eric noted that this section of the scoring has numerous redundant categories and overlaps (for example, in the wildlife categories). He also recommended that points be adjusted to align with DEEP priorities and that consideration of urban forestry be added.

### **Other**

Members did not address the UGCG program. Nicole said she will make an effort to “tighten” that application.

Amy advised that DEEP not delay the new grant round in order to implement application revision suggestions. Amy also requested that Walker email her the Pennsylvania application documents.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 12:06 PM

Minutes submitted by Elanah Sherman, Secretary

