



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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NEWS RELEASE

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65-Acre Sedgley Farm Property Officially Preserved by Schuylkill Township

Schuylkill Township, PA – December 17, 2024 – Schuylkill Township is proud to announce the successful acquisition of the Sedgley Farm property, located at 930 Valley Forge Road, Phoenixville, PA 19460. This historic \$17 million purchase, finalized on Tuesday, marks the culmination of nearly two decades of proposed land development plans and calls for conservation from engaged citizens.

Tuesday's closing was facilitated by Schuylkill Township Manager Laurie Getz, Township Solicitor William Brennan of Butera, Beausang, Cohen & Brennan, Conflict Counsel Michael Crotty of Siana Law, and Open Space Counsel Robert Willson of Wisler Pearlstine, in collaboration with the Reeves Family and Pohlig Builders.

Schuylkill Township Board of Supervisors Chair, Mark Donovan, said, “The acquisition of Sedgley Farm is a significant achievement for Schuylkill Township. It brings to a close almost two decades of controversy. This purchase demonstrates this Township’s commitment to protecting open space and honoring the voices of its residents. The Schuylkill Township Board of Supervisors, dedicated staff, and trusted advisors have worked hard to realize the long-held goal of preserving this valuable property. Residents and neighboring Townships will now have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of this property for years to come.”

A Long and Storied History

The acquisition of approximately 64.7 acres of Sedgley Farm represents the fulfillment of efforts that began with the establishment of the Township’s Open Space Commission, which first identified the property as a high-priority parcel for preservation nearly two decades ago.

In 2006 when township residents approved the referendum to enact an open space tax, Sedgley Farm was already under contract with a developer. Over the course of the next 16-years the Township would review many variations of development plans for the property – ranging from 51 single family homes to 94

cluster development lots. Ultimately earlier this year, after years of delays and land development lawsuits, the developer was granted conditional preliminary approval of a 51-lot development and was also successful in its appeal of the Township's prior denial of a 94-lot cluster development.

This week's purchase of such a vital piece of open space, long recognized as essential to the community, demonstrates the unwavering commitment of the Board of Supervisors and brings to a close a development plan that had been in motion since 2006.

A Path to Preservation

During the 16-years that the land development process was underway, the Township's Open Space fund continued to grow. When the opportunity for possible acquisition presented earlier this year, the Township – with the help of Jamie Schlesinger of PFM Financial Advisors – was able to act on the purchase.

Township Manager Laurie Getz said, "This acquisition, from concept to closing, happened at lightning speed. The Township had no debt and therefore no credit rating when we began this project. We had to start at the very beginning, and what we were collectively able to accomplish in the course of about 4-months is a true testament to the talent that this Township has in its staff and consultants, and the commitment and support by the elected officials to conserving open space. The residents of this Township are going to benefit from that commitment in perpetuity."

The Township's funding strategy involved a combination of open space cash and the issuance of \$10 million dollars in municipal bonds. This strategy allowed the Township to purchase Sedgley Farm while retaining funds for other future open space prospects with no new tax increase. Getz said, "the debt service is being paid for annually out of the existing revenue from the Open Space Fund, so the transaction was able to be accomplished without the need for a tax increase." The Township is also actively pursuing federal, state, and county grants to support the purchase retroactively with the help of Natural Lands.

Planning for the Future

Sedgley Farm is situated on Valley Forge Road between Valley Forge National Park and Phoenixville Borough, and adjacent to the Pickering Creek Reservoir. It is one of the largest remaining open space properties in Schuylkill Township. The site is also home to the Class II Historic William Reeves House, a Colonial Revival architectural gem constructed between 1808 and 1833. The Township recognizes the historical and cultural value of this landmark and plans to initiate a master planning process in 2025 for the property, ensuring that the community's voices and visions guide its future use.

The property's preservation highlights the Township's longstanding advocacy for protecting its historic significance, conserving the environment, and creating open space for future generations to enjoy.

The Township intends to embark on the planning process for the property in early 2025. At this time, public access to the property is not permitted while the Township undertakes initial planning and completes its preservation efforts.

About Schuylkill Township

Schuylkill Township is located along the Schuylkill River on the eastern border of Chester County. The Township covers 9.44 square miles and 41 miles of roadways. The Township provides police, road, and other services to its 8,780 residents. Schuylkill Township has a rich history and boasts numerous historic sites including a portion of the Valley Forge National Park. For more information about Schuylkill Township, please visit www.schuylkilltwp.org.