

From The Morning Call
April 20, 2007

Tinicum pledges \$3 million for land

Township supervisors also OK the purchase of 98-acre farm.

By Kelly Madsen Special to The Morning Call

Just as Tinicum protected more land from development, its supervisors pledged another \$3.1 million to keep the township green.

Tuesday, Tinicum supervisors approved the purchase of the development rights to 98 acres of Come Along Farm at 55 Municipal Road.

Margaret and Matthew Balitsaris will sell the rights to their horse and organic vegetable farm for \$514,500, half of its appraised value.

The tenants will be able to continue working the land, but the township and Tinicum Conservancy will hold the development rights, keeping it out of the hands of builders.

Earlier this month, the supervisors issued a \$6.1 million bond to refinance debt and support the open space program.

Township Manager Linda McNeill said \$3.1 million of this will be dedicated to green purchases.

"The board of supervisors is committed to the concept of land preservation," said Tinicum Open Space Commission Chairman Norm MacArthur.

Tinicum has spent about \$3.2 million of the \$5 million bond it issued in 2002, he said.

All of the township's purchases are "bargain sales;" it does not pay more than 50 percent of the value of the land.

The township and Tinicum Conservancy hold the easements, and the open space commission does the legwork of securing the sales, MacArthur said.

With the \$3.2 million, the commission has bought the rights to 27 properties. Another 38 property owners have donated their land, he said.

Tinicum was eager to preserve Come Along Farm because it sits in the Tohickon Creek watershed and is adjacent to High Rocks County Park and a previously preserved 25-acre property, MacArthur said.

The land also has "one of the best long distance views of the Delaware Valley" because it sits on a ridge, he said.

The commission is looking at 12 other properties that total about 1,000 acres, MacArthur said.

He hopes to close on a few in 2007, but other deals can take years to complete.

Kelly Madsen is a freelance writer.

Copyright © 2007, The Morning Call