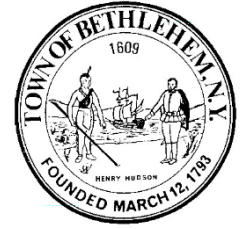


David VanLuven
Town Supervisor

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Albany County - New York
OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR
445 DELAWARE AVENUE
DELMAR, NEW YORK 12054
Email: dvanluven@bethlehemny.gov



August 14, 2025

Patrick Curran
Albany County Executive's Office
112 State Street, 12th Floor
Albany, NY 12207

Re: Project Proposal for Conservation of Open Space on 2.6 acre vacant parcel (Tax parcel ID #109.10-1-130)

Dear Mr. Curran,

The Town of Bethlehem is interested in acquiring in fee, the vacant parcel off of Wemple Road in Glenmont (Tax parcel ID #109.10-1-130). The subject parcel is associated with the Dowers Kill, in the Hudson River basin, and the entire parcel is constrained due to the presence of federal wetland areas and wetland mitigation areas that were created as a condition of the final approvals for the Milltown Plaza subdivision, which is adjacent to the south and west of the subject parcel. Further, as a result of the recent changes to the NYS Freshwater Wetlands Act these wetlands will also likely be regulated by the State.

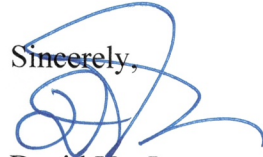
The following (**Attachment A**) provide documentation of these wetland and wetland mitigation areas:

- Stamped survey depicting wetland and wetland mitigation boundaries, dated September 17, 2001
- Letter from the New York District of the Army Corps of Engineers referencing the "Wetland Disturbance and Mitigation Plan, dated August 31, 2001 (2000-01002-YN)
- Wetland Disturbance and Mitigation Plan, dated August 31, 2001
- Certificate NO.208-CF, dated July 2, 2002 from the Town of Bethlehem Planning Board which refers to the required Wetland Disturbance and Mitigation Plan for the Milltowne Plaza Subdivision.

If granted ownership of the subject parcel, the Town intends to maintain the land as open space, in perpetuity. This open space will provide a buffer between the Milltowne Plaza Subdivision and two adjacent Town-owned parcels. One of these parcels is currently farmed, and was acquired as part of the Historic Heath Farm Initiative (www.historicheathfarm.com) in 2023, and the other parcel is a wetland mitigation area that was acquired from the Albany County Land Bank in 2018. In the future, these parcels may collectively provide space for a passive use park. The Town intends for the subject parcel to remain as open space in perpetuity, and thus proposes a minimal budget for this acquisition with a purchase offer of \$1. Additionally, the Town would cover deed, title, and recording fees for a total closing cost of approximately \$1,500. Attorney fees are covered through the Town's attorney and there are no outstanding water bill fees. If the

Town's purchase offer of \$1.00 is accepted, the total project budget will be approximately \$1,500.

Please see the attached information, prepared by our Open Space Coordinator, detailing the Town's interest in conservation of the subject parcel.

Sincerely,


David VanLuven
Town Supervisor

Background and Rational for Conservation of Subject Parcel:

The Town of Bethlehem has an active Farms & Forests Conservation Program which aims to conserve open space lands of high conservation value in town. In December, 2017, the Town Board adopted our Open Space Plan: Conservation Criteria Implementation document, the focus of which was the establishment of four town-wide Open Space Values Maps, a list of 25 data-driven Conservation Criteria with which to evaluate open space land for its conservation values, and a GIS-based Conservation Analysis Tool to assist with evaluating and prioritizing the conservation of open space land in town. According to the Town's 25-point Conservation Criteria Assessment, the 2.6 acre vacant parcel off of Wemple Road scores a "high" conservation value rating for open space protection (see **Attachment B**).



The Conservation Priorities Map provides guidance to planning staff, our Conservation Easement Review Board, the Planning Board, and the Town Board in responding to landowner-initiated inquiries about conservation opportunities. Further, these tools inform the use of limited local financial resources to the conservation of open space land that will have the most beneficial impact town-wide. Working with Albany County to secure this parcel in perpetual open space is consistent with Bethlehem's Comprehensive Plan (2022), Recommendations on Open Space Needs and Opportunities Report (2009), Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2009), and the Open Space Plan (2017). Additionally, conservation of the subject parcel which is adjacent to lands associated with the Town's Historic Heath Farm Initiative, is well aligned to the Heath Farm Vision Plan (2025).

In summary, the Town of Bethlehem would like to acquire this highly valued open space parcel and maintain it in its undeveloped state in perpetuity for the following reasons:

1. Acquiring open space with willing landowners (in this case, Albany County), is a primary objective of [Bethlehem's Open Space Plan](#), adopted in 2017 and the Town's active Open Space program;
2. Our 25-point Conservation Criteria Assessment indicates that this parcel has a "high conservation value" score (rating is moderate, high, and significant), as it contains prime farmland soils, wetlands, and forested habitat, as well as providing other key natural resource benefits to the community;
3. This open space, if owned by the Town, would remain undeveloped, in its natural state, in perpetuity protecting the parcel's open space value to the community;
4. The area (Route 9W Corridor) surrounding the subject parcel is experiencing high development pressure, and as such, the conservation of available open space land here is a priority of the town;
5. The subject parcel is a remnant area of the Milltown Plaza Subdivision, which is adjacent to the west and south. In approved subdivision plans for the Milltown Plaza development, the subject parcel is noted to contain wetland buffer, wetland, and onsite creation of wetlands (see **Attachment C**);

6. The parcel contains valuable open space in an area of town that has historically been open and agricultural. Keeping this 2.6 acres undeveloped and conserved in perpetuity will help to retain valued community character in an area that is expected to be developed and look substantially different in the near future;
7. The adjacent farm lands on Wemple Road are owned by the Town of Bethlehem (www.historicheathfarm.com see **Attachment D**), thus this 2.6 acres adjacent parcel could increase the open space value, contributing to providing scenic qualities and potential recreational opportunities in the future, for nearby residents and the larger community;
8. The majority of the parcel is characterized as containing important agricultural soils (see **Attachment E**). This area is historically agricultural due to the rich soils; maintaining this land as undeveloped and conserved will protect these soils for any future possible agricultural land use that may be desired (e.g., community gardens, etc.);
9. The land has the potential to be enhanced as parkland with public access, including trails, for the nearby neighborhoods and the larger community to enjoy;
10. The Town's Open Space and Farmland Conservation Survey (2017) indicated overwhelming public support for conserving open space and farmland in Bethlehem;