



Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)

Board of Director's Meeting
Wednesday, November 30, 2022
Alsace Township Building

Members: K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), L. Kelleher (Reading), L. Olsen (County), K. Barnhardt (County), J. Moore (Alsace Twp), D. Pottiger (Lower Alsace Twp.)

Members absent: B. Petrov (Mt. Penn), J. Oswald (Lower Alsace Twp.), T. Goodman (Mt. Penn), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Reading)

Others attending: R. Rock, L. Kissinger, L. Lloyd, K. Boyd (Natural Lands), J. Motze, H. Adams and 3 others

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm, noting that the meeting was scheduled for 6:30 rather than 6 pm due to a schedule conflict. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one attending offered public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Barnhardt asked the members to consider the minutes from the September meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

Mr. Rock stated that on page 7 he made a request for a pavilion at the Fire Tower, not a shed. He asked if that could be changed.

Mr. Moore moved, seconded by Mr. Pottiger, to approve the September meeting minutes as amended and the agenda for this meeting. The motion received unanimous approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Mallatratt, MP3 COG Treasurer, stated that there are no bills to be paid. She stated that there were \$5110.86 in expenses (\$349.80 Pagoda Trail signs and the remainder were Blues Fest related expenses) and \$4250 in revenues (all Blues Fest related) creating a bank balance of \$39,818.73.

Ms. Mallatratt stated that she will make a full report on the Blues Fest concert after all expenses and checks are received.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Mr. Pottiger, to approve the Treasurer's Report and file it for audit. The motion received unanimous approval.

PRESENTATION – Natural Lands

Kelsey Boyd described the Natural Lands organization, which owns approximately 2500 acres in passive recreation and natural resources. She stated that the organization also assists municipalities and agencies to develop management plans for natural resources. Locally, Natural Lands has drafted management plans for Neversink Mt. for Berks Nature and Antietam Park for Berks County. One of the largest trail analysis Natural Lands created was 4500 acres at Indian Orchard Park, Media PA.

Ms. Boyd explained the process used to develop the plan for the 400 acre Antietam Park in 2018, noting that a similar process will be used for Mt. Penn – public meetings, interviews with stakeholders, walk the land to allow a needs evaluation overall, and the completion of an implementation and management plan (which will include a forest management plan) prepared by 6 members of Natural Lands staff. She stated that currently Mt. Penn has 37 miles of legal trails. However, there are many more illegally cut trails.

Ms. Boyd stated that the estimated budget is \$60K for the trail assessment, \$30K for the forest management, \$17K for public engagement with an \$8K for contingency expenses. The study is expected to take 18 months and will be provided in digital and hardcopy with a prioritization of recommendations.

Mr. Olsen questioned if we are able to move forward after receiving only 1 presentation.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the requirements for a COG differ from that of a municipality. She stated that if the City did the study, the RFP process would be required, COGs do not have that requirement which is why the MP3 was asked to manage this project with the City. She also explained that Natural Lands prepared similar studies for Antietam and Neversink and for consistency the City and MP3 desire a similar plan for Mt. Penn which was why Natural Lands selected.

Mr. Olsen suggested allowing one other presentation prior to the end of January by Simone Collins, the company that prepared the Mt. Penn Preserve Master Plan.

During the discussion about this issue, Mr. Lloyd noted the importance of beginning the study in spring 2023 which will allow the contractor to observe 2 growing seasons, prior to preparing the study. He recommended moving forward with Natural Lands.

In response to a question about obtaining a proposal from Natural Lands, Ms. Boyd stated that she can have a proposal out within the next 2 weeks.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Ms. Kelleher, to move forward with Natural Lands for the Stewardship and Forest Management Study at a cost not to exceed \$115,000.

Mr. Barnhardt suggested holding a special meeting on January 10th at 6 pm to review the proposal and potentially award it and take care of any other required business.

- **Appointment of a Committee to work with Natural Lands on the development and completion of the Study – to include 2 MP3 Board Members, 2 reps from Berks Nature, a rep from County Parks, a rep from BAMBA, and at least 1 City Public Works rep who will act as the point person for the project**

Mr. Olsen and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz previously volunteered to be the 2 MP3 representatives on the committee to work on the development and completion of the Study. Mr. Moore volunteered to be an alternate.

Ms. Kelleher stated that Mr. Kissinger, City Arborist, will be the point person representing the City.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Mr. Pottiger, to appoint the MP3 representatives as listed above. The motion was unanimously approved.

- **Update on RFPs for:
Coordinated Approach to Dumping – no responses submitted
Security Cameras draft started**

Ms. Kelleher reported that once again there were no bids submitted. The Solid Waste Manager is reaching out to the companies that were sent proposals to find out why they decided not to submit a bid.

Ms. Kelleher reported that the VSU Sergeant is working on the Security Camera issue.

Mr. Kissinger and Ms. Kelleher expressed the belief that an internet connection on Skyline is required.

Mr. Kissinger updated the group on the vandalism that regularly occurs on Mt. Penn.

- **Reschedule Retreat**

Mr. Barnhardt noted the need to reschedule the retreat that was originally planned for November. The group consulted schedules and decided to meet on Wednesday, December 7th from 5-7 pm at the Alsace Township Municipal Building.

- **Update – Events & Blues Fest Concert**

Ms. Adams reported that the event was a success noting that the concert sold out – the crowd was a mix of locals and those from out of the area. Concert expenses were covered through sponsorships, which provides the ticket sales as MP3 profit. She noted that this was a great opportunity to educate people about the MP3.

Mr. Olsen explained the outreach to publicize the concert. He reminded the group that Berks Art would like the MP3 to hold kick-off concerts moving forward for the Jazz Fest and the Blues Fest.

- 2023 Meeting Schedule

The following meeting schedule was agreed to at the locations listed. All meetings will be in-person only and begin at 6 pm.

Jan 10 – Alsace Twp Municipal Bldg

Mar 29 - Lower Alsace Twp Municipal Bldg

May 24 – City of Reading Council Chambers

July 26 – Alsace Twp Municipal Bldg

Sept 27 – Lower Alsace Municipal Bldg

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS – submission in written form only

- Marketing – Ms. Burkovich stated that the committee believes that a 2nd logo that is more manipulative is required, noting that the shape of the 1st logo has limited uses. The alternative logo is attached to the Marketing report with the agenda.

Ms. Mallatratt moved, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adopt the 2nd logo. The motion was approved unanimously.

- **Public Safety** - Mr. Kissinger stated that Phase 2 of the A Line trail repair is beginning. He explained that the trail was improperly modified in a way that made the trail unsafe requiring closure.

Mr. Kissinger explained that the closure of Skyline at the List Overlook was explored; however due to the wide expanse of the roadway and other technicalities Lower Alsace will need to obtain an estimate from an engineer. He noted that the complete closure will also require changes at the Pagoda. He added that the complete closure has also raised various liability issues.

The lack of internet service and security cameras at the List Overlook prevents Central Berks from visually checking the status of a complaint prior to dispatching officers.

Ms. Motze stated that she lives below the List Overlook on Lorraine Rd. and the noise is horrific and similar to that experienced at residential properties prior to the closure of the Pagoda parking lot at dusk.

Mr. Pottiger reported that Lower Alsace budgets \$20K annually for wall repairs on Skyline Drive and they also utilize insurance funding to make wall repairs from vehicular accidents when that is available. Alsace Township does the same and both use Wilson Eshbach.

- **Environmental**

Attached to the agenda.

Public Comment

Mr. Lederer, from County Parks, confirmed the existence of new illegally cut trails off a newer main trail in the vicinity of Antietam.

Mr. Barnhardt adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:19 pm.

→ The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2023 at 6 pm. at the Alsace Twp Building.

→ The retreat for MP3 COG board members is on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 from 5-7 pm at Alsace Twp

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary

Action Items:

1. Linda – work with PW Solid Waste Manager to revise the RFP re Dumping advertised through City Purchasing office
2. Linda – draft security camera RFP for Skyline – List Rd Overlook to Pagoda
3. Don - obtain estimate from engineer re closure of Skyline at List Overlook