

Mt. Penn Preserve Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 21, 2017

Liederkrantz

7 pm

Mr. Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The Mt. Penn Master Plan and other documents about this initiative are available at:

<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/Planning/Pages/MountPennPreserve.aspx>.

Mr. Olsen stated that there have been meetings with three (3) of the five (5) municipalities about forming a COG partnership to move the Mt. Penn Preserve initiative forward. Meetings with Mt. Penn Borough and Alsace Township will occur over the next two (2) weeks.

Mr. Barnhardt and Mr. Olsen expressed the belief that the COG is the perfect vehicle to successfully explore and implement components the Plan.

Ms. Kelleher explained that she was drawn to the COG concept as it is controlled by the partner municipalities and the municipalities decide what activities and authorities can be undertaken by the COG, unlike boards, authorities and commissions such as:

- Manner and extent of financing the agreement
- Organizational structure necessary to implement the agreement
- Manner in which property, real or personal, shall be acquired, licensed or disposed of
- explore and implement the initiatives in the Mt. Penn Preserve Master Plan and report back regularly to the participating municipalities
- develop one set of regulations that will apply to the Preserve area
- develop an event calendar for the area for improved coordination
- promote events scheduled in the Preserve area
- improve coordination of all activities, including police activities in the Preserve area

Mr. Stress, Executive Director of the County Parks Department, stated that he has seen successful COGs used in other areas but not here in Berks County. He stated that he believes that the Master Plan is well done and implementable and he believes that a COG is the best way to implement the initiatives in the Plan.

The group suggested initiatives that should be considered first, such as:

- Coordinated law enforcement and police services by the three law enforcement agencies and the Park Rangers for the Preserve area
- Unified laws, regulations and permitting for the Preserve area
- Feasibility study for the boutique hotel proposed for the Tower property
- Feasibility study for a restaurant for the Pagoda or some type of other viable commercial use
- Coordinated marketing for the Preserve including promotion of events on one calendar
- Coordinated use of social media
- Establishing committees – Public Safety, Governance, Marketing, Finance & Capital

In response to a question from Mr. Olsen, Ms. Kelleher stated that she has started working on a first draft of the ordinance to authorize the COG agreement for the five (5) partner municipalities. She stressed the need for input on the language by the partner municipalities, as the ideas in the first draft are her ideas alone. She noted that the five (5) partner municipalities must each have input and at the end agree to the language in the document, as individual agreements are not negotiated for each municipality. She explained that she obtained some COG agreements that are being used by other municipalities. She stated that she selected the best model and revised it to fit the Mt. Penn Preserve initiative.

In response to a question, Mr. Barnhardt stated that 14 County Park Rangers oversee 1200 acres of County owned recreational property – Antietam is 600 of those acres. He noted that the Rangers do not encounter much errant behavior during their patrols but they do contact the local law enforcement agency if an issue is identified.

The group discussed purchasing a camera system for the Skyline area. A new system has been installed at the Tower and the need to upgrade the system at the Pagoda was noted.

In response to a question about tying new cameras into the City monitored system, Ms. Kelleher noted that the City and School District are currently reevaluating the systems

they are using and the cost of the current systems. She described the way the City's system is set up, which requires clear line of sight between nodes running from the location of the camera to City Hall. She stated that the system is very expensive, uses outdated technology and the City is evaluating the use of a non-monitored system that would capture data that can be evaluated when an incident occurs.

Mr. Coleman suggested considering the use of a blue-light system similar to that used on campuses.

Mr. Barnhardt's assistant will send an email out to the Steering Committee to seek volunteers to serve on the committees described during this meeting.

Meeting Schedule

Mr. Olsen stated that the executive committee meetings through the end of the year are listed below at the Liederkrantz.

- October 12th at 7 pm – Executive Committee
- November 9th at 7 pm – Executive Committee
- December 14th at 7 pm – Executive Committee

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk