

**Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, January 23, 2018
Mt. Penn Borough Hall**

Members: K. Barnhardt (County Commissioner), K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Reading City Council), L. Kelleher (Reading City Council), C. Hurwitz (Mt. Penn Borough Council)

Members absent: Mt. Penn Borough Secretary, T. Styer (Lower Alsace Twp.), D. Barth (Alsace Twp), J. Oswald (Lower Alsace Twp)

Others attending: Beth Burkovich, Mitch Raczy, John Pacharis, Phil Kline, Justin Blatt, Rich Rock, Mike Frankhouser, Scott Kauffman, Ann Sellers, D. Reed

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for public comment on agenda matters. As there was none, the public comment period was closed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Barnhardt asked the members to consider the minutes from the October meeting and the agenda for this meeting. He noted the need to add the election of officers to the agenda, as the COG agreement requires a reorganization meeting each January.

No one present objected to the approval of the minutes or the addition to the agenda. Ms. Hurwitz abstained from the vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Mallatratt, MP3COG Treasurer, distributed the report showing one expense of \$265 for the Little Old German Signmaker (logo) and a balance in all funds of \$12,598.93.

A motion was made by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, seconded by Ms. Kelleher to approve the Treasurer's Report and file it for audit. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Mallatratt announced that the member governments will be invoiced for the annual amount of \$2,000 for 2019.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Barnhardt suggested deferring the election until later in the meeting. No one objected.

REPORTS AND ACTIONS

- **PA COG Membership**

Ms. Kelleher stated that she has not yet spoken with the PA COG organization.

- **BAMBA**

Mr. Raczy and Mr. Pacharis explained BAMBA's work to revitalize and manage the trail systems, which are currently Bronze rated by the IMBA (International Mountain Bike Association), due to the great terrain, support facilities and businesses located in close proximity to the trails. They noted that our trail system is one of the 37 IMBA rated world-wide Ride Systems. They stated that there are approximately 40 trails of various types located on Mt. Penn and they explained the different categories of the trail system, along with the IMBA rating criteria and evaluation process. They explained their belief that the trail system is eligible to apply for a Silver rating.

Mr. Raczy and Mr. Pacharis stated that they plan to make application in March/April and are beginning to seek funding assistance to offset the \$7,000 required application fee. They explained that this fee is partially used to cover the expenses of the IMBA evaluation where a team will come to Berks County to evaluate the trails and other local facilities such as restaurants, brew pubs, available entertainment, medical facilities, etc.

Mr. Olsen arrived at this time.

Mr. Barnhardt suggested that the \$7,000 permit application fee could be reduced through the donation of hotel accommodations or other lodging, meals, etc. Mr. Pacharis and Mr. Raczy stated that they have started seeking such donations. Mr. Barnhardt offered to assist if needed.

Mr. Barnhardt and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed their belief in the importance of the trail systems located on Mt. Penn and the benefit they provide overall.

Mr. Raczy noted the importance of sprucing up the areas that will be evaluated by the IMBA. He stated that BAMBA will begin by working in the South 9th Street Neversink connection area. He noted that Reading-Berks is perfectly situated in a location 2 ½ hours away from a few metropolis areas, making day trips to Greater Reading possible for 11 million people. He stated that Berks County has 175 miles of trails of varying types and terrains – 40 of which are located on Mt. Penn.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt, to pledge \$1,000 to the IMBA Silver application fee. The motion was approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: reports from the first three committees are included with the agenda.

1. **Marketing & Promotions**

Ms. Burkovich projected mock-ups of the new logos onto the wall. There was a discussion about the appearance of the classic design incorporating the components from the current signage and the new, more streamlined design. Overall the group liked the new, more modern design; however, they agreed with Ms. Mallatratt's suggestion on the modification of the font to a Sans Serif type to improve the readability of the sign. Also noted was the need to use the term Greater Reading and list the names of the member governments only on things such as letterhead, sponsorship materials, etc. It was decided to exclude the names of the member governments from the signage. The committee will take the recommendations back to the Little Old German Signmaker, which include adding more detail to the top of the Fire Tower.

Ms. Burkovich displayed a draft story map showing the features located on Mt. Penn which can be used on various digital devices. There was discussion on expanding the area to include support facilities not on Mt. Penn that can help visitors easily identify lodging, area eateries, pubs, medical facilities, etc.

2. Public Safety Committee – Ms. Kelleher reported that the committee received an estimate to digitally connect the Fire Tower and the Pagoda areas with a live video feed and license plate reader - \$11,873. She stated that the estimate was provided to the Finance Committee who will work to find funding sources. She added that the Central Berks solicitor provided a draft mutual aid agreement that would enable the desired cross-enforcement at the Pagoda and Tower areas.

Mr. Olsen stated that he is working to obtain an estimate on the complete removal of the rock island at the Pagoda, which would create a larger parking area and allow the construction of an ancillary, low-profile building that may be able to provide 1st floor Pagoda access to handicapped individuals. He noted that he has not requested a price for the partial removal of the island to only allow the expansion of the roadway on the west side of the island.

The group noted that eliminating the rock island would create make it difficult to secure the parking area when the Pagoda is not open. They suggested in exploring all opportunities.

Ms. Hurwitz noted the need to obtain more than one estimate at the expected price point of this project. Mr. Barnhardt agreed and noted that at this point the group is exploring only the feasibility of the project.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that he has contacted Senator Casey's office about finding federal funding for the repair of the Skyline stone wall, which was installed as a WPA project.

3. Finance & Capital - Ms. Kelleher stated that the committee has had funding requests from the Public Safety Committee for the connectivity between the Pagoda and Fire Tower and the modification of the rock island at the Pagoda. Funding sources are being explored.

4. Environmental Committee – Mr. Frankhouser described the need to eliminate illegally cut trails to reduce the amount of erosion that is currently taking place and the need to provide improved maintenance and signage on the legal trails. He noted the need to address the infestation of the lanternflies on Mt. Penn. He announced the April 27th clean-up of the Skyline area.

Ms. Kelleher noted that the City's Arborist reported his work with BAMBA on the trail system and his work on the lanternfly infestation, which includes assistance from the USDA and PA Ag.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz to retain the current slate of officers. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be on April 24, 2018 in the Alsace Township Municipal Office Building

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary