

**Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, April 24, 2019
Alsace Township Municipal Building**

Members: K. Barnhardt (County), K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), L. Olsen (County), B. Petrov (Mt. Penn) , L. Kelleher (Reading), T. Styer (Lower Alsace Twp.)

Members absent: D. Barth (Alsace Twp), J. Oswald (Lower Alsace Twp), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Reading), C. Hurwitz (Mt. Penn)

Others attending: B. Burkovich, S. Rossman, P. Kline, J. Blatt, R. Rock, S. Kauffman, A. Sellers, R. Johnson, C. Crupi

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. He stated that as a quorum is not yet present, we will begin the meeting with the Marketing Committee's update on the logo.

Ms. Burkovich displayed the new draft logos on the wall. The favored design is marked R4. There was a discussion about the colors and the suggestion to have the lettering follow the curve of the mountaintop.

Ms. Styer and Ms. Petrov arrived. A quorum is now present.

Ms. Burkovich noted that further changes to the design will continue to increase the cost of the logo. Ms. Rossman suggested having Ms. Burkovich have the favored design finalized as changes in color and font could occur without the assistance of The Little German Signmaker.

The MP3 COG Board agreed with the suggestion made by Ms. Rossman.

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 January meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt, to approve the agenda and the January minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Mallatratt, MP3COG Treasurer, distributed the report showing the following:

- Opening balance - \$12,598.93
- Expenses - \$1,100
- Deposits - \$10,000 (contributions from all government members)
- Balance all accounts - \$21,498.93

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

Ms. Mallatratt suggested developing a policy to pay vendor and other invoices that are issued between the quarterly meetings to avoid late fees and interest. Mr. Barnhardt suggested that Ms. Mallatratt email the MP3 COG Board about any invoices between meetings and obtain majority support for paying them in advance of the meetings. All present agreed.

MP3 COG ACTION ITEMS

A. PACOG Membership

Ms. Kelleher stated that our MP3 is now a member of the PACOG and that our MP3 was featured in the Spring newsletter.

B. Authorize the retroactive payment of an invoice for \$263.60 to The Little German Sign Maker to create an MP3 COG logo. Approve, Deny or Amend

Note: The MP3 COG authorized the payment of a \$250 down payment at the October meeting

Mr. Barnhardt explained that the need to pay this invoice before the April meeting was brought to his attention and he authorized the Treasurer to pay the invoice to avoid late fees.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Styer, to approve the retroactive payment of this invoice. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Finance Committee Recommendation for MP3 COG approval of the long and short term capital priorities selected by all Committees from the Master Plan. Approve, Deny or Amend

- Long-Term Priorities
 - a. Skyline Wall Repair
 - b. Reuse of Mineral Spring Hotel
- Short-Term Priorities
 - a. Create Friends of the Preserve
 - b. Trail Management with Unified Signage & Rotary Park Trailhead
 - c. Complete link between the Pagoda and Tower camera systems
 - d. Change the flow of traffic at the Pagoda to allow the parking area to be closed to traffic during non-operational hours

Mr. Barnhardt explained that the Finance Committee, with assistance from the other working committees, developed the listed priority items from the Mt. Penn Preserve Master

Plan. Having the COG approve the priority list will enable the Finance Committee to develop an implementation budget.

Ms. Styer agreed, noting the need for the budget to include a line item for miscellaneous expenses that may arise. She also noted the need to provide advance notice to the five government members if there will be a need for the shared funding of capital projects so they have time to budget for those issues.

Mr. Johnson agreed, noting that capital requests for the upcoming year must be submitted to the City by May-June annually for inclusion in the capital budget.

Mr. Barnhardt expressed the belief that the first shared expense will be the cost of signage across the Preserve. He expressed the belief that the other municipal partners would probably not be asked to contribute toward larger capital expenses for Antietam Park or a City owned facility such as the Pagoda.

Ms. Crupi questioned the donation by the COG to BAMBA. Ms. Kelleher explained that BAMBA requested financial assistance to cover a portion of the \$7,000 application fee to change the trail rating from Bronze to Silver. Other organizations also provided financial assistance to cover this application fee. Improving the rating of the trail system by the IMBA (International Mountain Bike Association) will bring more attention to the preserve and help to promote tourism. She noted that by helping BAMBA, the MP3 is also helping itself.

Mr. Barnhardt agreed, noting that the evaluation team is coming to the area over the next few months and improving the rating of the trail system will help market the Preserve to the outside community.

Ms. Styer inquired about the priority to explore the reuse of the Mineral Spring Hotel. Ms. Kelleher explained that this property was originally built in the late 1800s and the last tenant moved out approximately two years ago. The hotel has been vacant since then. She stated that City Public Works team has worked to increase the security at this location and begin to make repairs to the property. She added that the need to consider the reuse of this historic property was discussed by City Council at their April 22nd meeting.

Ms. Styer moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to approve the list of priorities submitted by the Finance Committee with no modifications.

D. Finance and Public Safety Committee's Recommendation - seeking contributions from the County, the City and the Pagoda Foundation to jointly cover the \$11,927 cost of the microwave link to connect the Fire Tower with the Pagoda (Quote on page 7). **Approve, Deny or Amend**

Ms. Styer inquired if the live stream will be open to the public. Mr. Kline stated that open access could lead to bandwidth problems. He questioned if the live feed is viewed by the Reading and Central Berks police.

Mr. Kauffman expressed the belief that the owner of the system would need to determine if the live feed link will be open for public consumption. He noted the need for additional cameras and lighting in the Pagoda area. He stated that there are currently 9 cameras in place – 1 in the interior on the top floor of the building and 8 covering various areas of the Pagoda grounds.

The need to link the cameras at the Tower with those at the Pagoda was questioned.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the original concept was that Central Berks and Reading police could check the live feed when a complaint call was received. Officers could then determine if the situation warranted a response. She stated that sometime ago the Reading Desk Sergeant area was provided with a device to view the live feed; however, due to some personnel changes, she is unsure how that is currently handled. Linking the two camera systems will allow police to also check on activities at the Tower.

Ms. Crupi suggested asking the DA for drug forfeiture money to fund the microwave link and the addition of cameras. Ms. Kelleher stated that funding from the DA is only made available if the area has enough criminal activity. The activity at the Pagoda was reviewed and it falls way below the threshold for funding. She stated that Representative Caltagirone suggested applying for PCCD funding.

Ms. Petrov moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to remand this issue back to the Public Safety Committee for further review.

E. Finance Committee Recommendation – enter into agreement with Berks County Community Foundation to establish a fund for the MP3 COG in place of 501c3 status.
Approve, Deny or Amend

Mr. Olsen reported that a few members of the Finance Committee met with Ms. Aiken from the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF). Ms. Aiken explained that the BCCF handles Scholarship and Grant funding along with “pass-through funding” for non-profit organizations like the MP3. He explained that pass-through funds have a one-time 10% fee with no restrictions. For example, if the MP3 deposits \$10,000 today, \$10,000 can be withdrawn tomorrow for any expense.

Mr. Olsen explained that the 10% fee allows the BCCF to provide back office assistance such as financial reporting, mailings, thank you notes, promotions, etc. He stated that this type of support will relieve COG officials from taking on more responsibilities.

Mr. Barnhardt inquired if the COG could use the BCCF approach for donations and hold the contributions from the government partners in separate accounts. Ms. Kelleher stated that that separation could occur.

Ms. Kelleher suggested considering running marketing events through the BCCF to remove the burden of back office responsibilities from COG officials.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Ms. Styer, to set up a pass-through fund with the BCCF, keeping government member contributions separate. The motion was approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: reports from the first three committees are included with the April 24th agenda.

1. Marketing & Promotions

Ms. Burkovich stated that the Committee would like to do a 2020 Mt. Penn Preserve calendar containing current and historical photos across the preserve with event dates, holidays, etc. populating the date blocks. Dates for 2020 events should be sent to Ms. Burkovich at BBurkovich@countyofberks.com for inclusion. She noted that the cost to create the calendar is minimal leaving a healthy profit margin.

All approved the project and a kickoff event for the fall was discussed.

The Committee recommended a Yoga at the Pagoda class held at sunset. The classes will need a location within the Pagoda for about 2 hours total. Currently the Pagoda Foundation has a single event fee of \$350 to rent the facility. The Foundation will consider an alternative fee for small events that do not require the reservation/use of the entire facility including extensive cleanup and set-up.

The Storymap app is ready to go live. The logo and other features can be added moving forward.

Ms. Kelleher suggested running the calendar fundraiser through the BCCF as back office support and promotions can be provided.

2. Public Safety Committee –

- Work on a mutual aid agreement between the Reading and Central Berks Police is underway – Sign off from Central Berks complete. Sign off by Reading is almost complete.
- The City's Arborist has started working on trail maintenance with BAMB volunteers.
- Signage was prepared for the Preserve area by Reading Public Works. Four (4) signs will be installed regarding the City's park regulations.
- The Committee learned about property damage caused by the discharge of firearms at the Fire Tower and other areas across Skyline Drive.
- Thanks to the help of Lower Alsace Twp, Muhlenberg Twp and the Reading Traffic Sergeant the issue related to the closure of certain Skyline Drive access roads due to Gravity racing events has been resolved. The tentative schedule for 2019 is:

March 24th – N 13th St (Muhlenberg)

April 7th – Oak Lane

April 28 – N 13th St (Muhlenberg)

May 19 – Oak Lane

June 16th – N 13th (Muhlenberg)

July 21st – Oak Lane

October 6th – Oak Lane

3. Finance & Capital

Finance recommendations previously discussed.

4. Environmental Committee –

Mr. Rock reported that focus remains on the Spotted Lanternfly. He stated that trees affected by the Emerald Ash Borer have also been identified. It is unknown how many of the Ash trees will die. The Committee suggested having a contractor come in to remove the ash trees for reuse.

Mr. Johnson stated that the former Operations Division Manager who was also a certified arborist brought a contractor in several years ago and they determined that there were not enough valuable trees on the mountain to justify the endeavor.

Ms. Kelleher agreed with the assessment, as it matches information provided by a previous administration in the early 2000s.

Mr. Johnson stated that the City's arborist is working on the Spotted Lanternfly issue. He noted that the City is addressing the Emerald Ash Borer issue with street trees and trees within the inner-city park system; however, the City does not have the resources to address the issues with the trees on the mountains.

Mr. Rock stated that the Committee remains concerned with the erosion and runoff created by the installation of trails on the mountain, especially in the Lower Alsace area around Angora Road.

Ms. Kelleher suggested that the Committee speak with Mr. Kissinger, the City Arborist. At a Public Safety Committee meeting, Mr. Kissinger described his work with BAMBA to address these same issues.

Mr. Rock invited everyone to join the Committee's cleanup efforts this Saturday during the Great American Cleanup.

OTHER MATTERS

Ms. Crupi displayed photos of activities on the Preserve and provided her observations.

The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be on July 24, 2019 at the Pagoda at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary