

**Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, July 24, 2019  
Pagoda**

**Members:** K. Barnhardt (County), K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), L. Olsen (County), L. Kelleher (Reading), T. Styer (Lower Alsace Twp.), J. Oswald (Lower Alsace Twp), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Reading)

**Members absent:** B. Petrov (Mt. Penn), D. Barth (Alsace Twp), C. Hurwitz (Mt. Penn)

**Others attending:** Committee representatives and interested parties

**CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and stated that a quorum is present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for public comment. As no one came forward, the public comment period was closed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

Mr. Rock from the Environmental Committee requested a change: removing the word “illegal” from the report he gave listed on page 6 as shown below.

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

**Ms. Styer moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to approve the agenda and the April minutes as corrected. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

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

- Expenses - \$363.60 Little Old German Sign Maker
- Deposits - \$0
- Balance all accounts - \$21,235.33

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

**MP3 COG ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Review Draft Logo**

Ms. Burkovich called the group's attention to the draft logos attached to the agenda. She noted that some detail was added to the Pagoda and the Tower. She stated that the Marketing Committee recommends using the logo shown on Page 12 in the middle of the page on the left side labeled – Revised Tower Middle Features. She distributed a mockup of how this logo would look on letterhead. She noted that the MP3 COG will own the logo approved. She stated that color scheme changes are possible at any time. She stated that the final invoice for this design work has not yet been received

Ms. Styer reminded the group that the payment of the invoice can be authorized through emailing the invoice to the Executive Board for approval and the payment can then be ratified at the October meeting.

**A motion was made by Ms. Mallatratt, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to approve this logo for the MP3 COG. The motion was approved unanimously.**

### **B. BCCF Pass-through Fund**

Mr. Barnhardt stated that at the April meeting the MP3 COG decided to look into opening a pass-through fund with the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF). After meeting with the BCCF the MP3 COG decided to open a pass-through account for fundraising only, keeping the municipal contributions separate. He noted that a restriction was placed on the use of the BCCF funds. The restriction allows the funding of activities that directly impacts the preserve. Funds cannot be used to reimburse expenses for refreshments or operational costs. He stated that although the BCCF charges a 10% fee, that fee covers back office support such as promotions, accounting, auditing, etc. removing that responsibility from COG personnel.

**Mr. Oswald moved, seconded by Ms. Styer, to authorize Ms. Mallatratt, Treasurer, to execute the agreement with BCCF. The motion was approved unanimously.**

In response to a question, Ms. Kelleher and Mr. Olsen stated that the Finance Committee is working to prepare a budget that will include projections to move the capital projects approved by the MP3 COG at the April Meeting forward. The budget will include:

- Reuse of Mineral Spring Hotel – long term project
- Short-Term Priorities
  - a. Trail Management with Unified Signage & Rotary Park Trailhead
  - b. Complete link between the Pagoda and Tower camera systems
  - c. Change the flow of traffic at the Pagoda to allow the parking area to be closed to traffic during non-operational hours

Mr. Olsen stated that he is using the facility assessment report prepared for the City to develop the scope for the Mineral Spring Hotel.

Mr. Barnhardt noted that most capital expenses will be the responsibility of the City and/or County.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and Mr. Olsen reported that the City's capital plan for 2020 will include the repair of the retaining wall and the roof at the Pagoda.

There was a lengthy discussion on the need for improved road and trail signage that may include the MP3 COG logo or other identifier. The need for an RFP was discussed to develop an implementable plan and the need to consider using the joint purchasing cooperative to purchase the signs was noted.

Ms. Rossman described the standardization of signage used for trail systems.

Mr. Olsen, Ms. Burkovich, Ms. Rossman and Ms. Showers will work to move the sign initiative forward. Ms. Kelleher suggested including the City's Arborist in the meetings about signage and the trails.

Mr. Barnhardt will discuss this initiative with Ms. Murphy at Berks Nature at their meeting on Monday, the 29<sup>th</sup>.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Note: reports from the first three committees are included with the July 24<sup>th</sup> agenda.*

### **1. Marketing & Promotions**

Ms. Burkovich stated that activity on the Storymap app showing various points of interest, including restaurants on the Preserve, is growing. Mr. Barnhardt noted that the Preserve will be highlighted at the Commissioners conference and the APA conference which will be held in August and October, respectfully, at the Doubletree this year.

Ms. Burkovich described the work on the calendar which will include sponsorships to cover the preparation costs. Work on the calendar will begin between meetings, again creating the need to authorize the payment of invoices between meetings. The invoices will be circulated to the MP3 members who can authorize the payment and ratify at the October meeting.

Ms. Styer inquired if a QR Code could be added to the calendar, the signage, etc. that can be scanned by phones or other devices to show information about the Preserve. Ms. Burkovich stated that this feature can be added.

Mr. Oswald requested a map of the trail system. Ms. Kelleher provided a map created by County Planning and Ms. Rossman stated that she will email him the electronic version of the map. Ms. Kelleher noted that the map depicts only the trail system and the municipal boundaries, private property boundaries are not included.

### **2. Public Safety Committee –**

Ms. Kelleher stated that she received some information today that modifies 2 aspects of the report submitted.

Ms. Kelleher reminded the group that the MP3 remanded the linking of the security cameras at the Pagoda and Fire Tower back to the Public Safety Committee. The Committee requested additional information on how the Police Departments are utilizing the live stream video. She stated that she received verification today, that the Reading Desk Sergeant does use this live stream to check on the area when complaints are called in and police are dispatched when required. She noted that the use of the video has increased the police presence at the Pagoda. Therefore the Committee can follow through with the RFP process to find the best and cheapest alternative to link these systems.

Ms. Kelleher reported that she and Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz met with the Police Chief and acting managing director a few weeks ago and the Chief agreed that moving the south bound traffic lane to the eastern side of the rock island is a better solution. The Public Works Director looked at the site and he agrees that this shift can take place. She noted that additional steps must occur before the shift occurs and she expressed hope that the shift could be accomplished in the next construction season.

Mr. Oswald expressed the belief that the turning angle is too severe for this to occur. Ms. Kelleher noted that the Public Works Director verified that the traffic lanes will be only 11 feet wide but lane shrinkage is now used by PennDOT as a traffic calming measure.

Ms. Kelleher touched on the work the City's Arborist is performing on the trails and the lanternfly infestation.

Ms. Styer noted that when receiving an application for a race on one of the trails on the Lower Alsace side of the property, Lower Alsace sometimes requires the applicant to use an alternative trail. She suggested that Reading do the same. Ms. Kelleher stated that she will refer the matter to Public Works and the Arborist.

### **3. Finance & Capital**

Mr. Barnhardt reported that the Committee is beginning to prepare a budget for capital and operational expenses. He stated that he will be meeting with Ms. Murphy of Berks Nature about their participation in MP3 activities.

### **4. Environmental Committee –**

Mr. Frankhouser reminded the group that he is not email or technology friendly. He stated that he has called the Arborist to coordinate the work of the Committee. He stated that he appreciated the discussion on the trails and he suggested modifying the City Park hours to match that used by the County.

Ms. Styer stated that the change in Park hours was accomplished over six (6) months ago. She noted that a mutual aid agreement is also in place authorizing the Central Berks Police to provide enforcement at the Pagoda area on request of the Reading Police. She reminded everyone that Lower Alsace does not own any land on Mt. Penn and does not own any park properties.

Mr. Frankhouser expressed the belief that the spotted lanternfly issue is not as prevalent as it was last year. However, he stated that an extensive number of ash trees were killed by the Emerald Ash Borer. He stated that the recent torrential downpours has increased the erosion problems on Mt. Penn.

Mr. Brophy apologized for the messages that occurred regarding the City's use of weed killer spray on the eastern side of Oak Lane by City personnel. He stated that neighbors really just wanted to request the use of an environmentally friendly approach and advance notice when and if spraying was going to occur.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the lack of maintenance at this property was raised by the neighbors several years ago. As the City did not have enough Public Works personnel to undertake this maintenance there was outreach to volunteers. However, as years passed, regulations changed and volunteer groups were no longer permitted to use power equipment like weed whackers. The last time Albright volunteers were used the majority developed severe cases of poison ivy and now it is not possible to attract Albright volunteers. To address the problem, the City purchased a generic version of Roundup to kill off the poison, so part-time staff can address the weeds.

Ms. Kelleher noted that citizens need to realize that managing your backyard is much different from managing thousands of acres of publically owned property.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

Mr. Olsen stated that in 2020 the City plans to repair the retaining wall and the roof at the Pagoda and capital repairs will be scheduled annually using the facility assessment report the City obtained through a DCED Act 47 Grant.

The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be on October 23, 2019 at the Lower Alsace Township Building at 7 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary*