



Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)

Board of Director's Meeting

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Lower Alsace Township Building

Members: K. Barnhardt (County), K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), L. Kelleher (Reading), D. Pottiger (Lower Alsace Twp.), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Reading)

Members absent: B. Petrov (Mt. Penn), C. Hurwitz (Mt. Penn), L. Olsen (County); J. Oswald (Lower Alsace Twp); D. Barth (Alsace Twp)

Others attending: Committee representatives and interested parties

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and stated that a quorum is present. He noted that Mr. Olsen's arrival was delayed due to train traffic.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for public comment. As there was no response from those in the audience, 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.

Ms. Mallatratt moved, seconded by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, to approve the agenda and the November minutes as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

- Operations Account Expenses - \$1,669.50
- Operations Account Revenue - \$1,410
- Balance Operation account - \$11,690.33
- BCCF (Berks County Community Foundation) Balance - \$9,049.74 (including interest pymt of \$25.85)

Ms. Mallatratt reported on the Calendar project:

- Expenses - \$1,155.40
- Revenue \$1,865
- Profit to date \$709.60

Ms. Mallatratt noted that several calendar payments were made prior to the start of this meeting. Ms. Burkovich stated that there are still calendars available for sale.

Ms. Kelleher stated that our membership with the BCCF includes marketing assistance and other back office support. She suggested reaching out to the BCCF for marketing aide to sell the remaining calendars.

Ms. Mallatratt stated that she will follow up with BCCF. Ms. Burkovich asked all to double down on the sale of the remaining calendars.

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

MP3 COG ACTION ITEMS

1. Election of Officers

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for nominations for Chair. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Ms. Kelleher to nominate Mr. Barnhardt as chair. As no other nominations were made the nominations were closed and Mr. Barnhardt was elected chair by unanimous vote.

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz to nominate Mr. Olsen as vice-chair. As no other nominations were made the nominations were closed and Mr. Olsen was elected vice-chair by unanimous vote.

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer. Mr. Barnhardt moved, seconded by Ms. Kelleher to nominate Ms. Mallatratt as treasurer. As no other nominations were made the nominations were closed and Ms. Mallatratt was elected treasurer by unanimous vote.

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for nominations for Secretary. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt to nominate Ms. Kelleher as secretary. As no other nominations were made the nominations were closed and Ms. Kelleher was elected secretary by unanimous vote.

2. Update on BAMBA Trail Upgrade to Silver

Ms. Kelleher was asked to contact Mr. Moreadith from BAMBA for an update.

NOTE: *The next day Mr. Moreadith provided the following update:*

We are still waiting for the Evaluation of the trails and the area. We will most likely get their first draft by the end of this month and then have to go back and negotiate points. As in the past, they will not just hand us a new designation. We had to go back and forth the last time for 3-4 months. Stay tuned. Kim Murphy will email the GRTP (Greater Reading Trail Partnership) group once we know more.

3. Payment of Bills

Ms. Mallatratt stated that there are no outstanding bills. She distributed the membership dues invoices to the member municipalities present.

Mr. Barnhardt noted the absence of Mt. Penn officials again at this meeting. He stated that shortly before the end of 2019 he received a letter from the Mt. Penn Solicitor announcing Mt. Penn's withdrawal from the MP3. He noted that the terms agreed to by all member municipalities in the executed agreement allow member municipalities to withdraw from their original 10 year commitment; however the withdrawal does not eliminate their requirement to make an annual contribution during the 10 year period. See the terms copied in from the agreement below:

6. The MP3 COG shall have a term of ten (10) years. However, the member governments have the authority to withdraw from the MP3 COG annually, after providing 12 months' notice of their desire to withdraw per Article IV.C. of the attached agreement.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

C. Withdrawal: A member shall have the right to withdraw from the MP3 COG at the end of any calendar year by giving twelve (12) months prior written notice to the MP3 COG Chair. In the case of Government Members, this notice shall be in the form of an ordinance approved by the governing body of the Government Member. **A Government Member's withdrawal will in no way eliminate or lessen the financial obligation the municipality agreed to as a member of the MP3 COG.**

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that Mt. Penn is going through a transition with new Council members coming on and there may be some confusion about the terms of the agreement and why Mt. Penn should be a member municipality.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that while Mt. Penn only owns a sliver of land within Carsonia Park, the businesses located within Mt. Penn receive a benefit from Mt. Penn visitors who choose to dine at one of the many eateries in the Mt. Penn area. Mr. Barnhardt stated that he and Mr. Olsen plan to attend a Council meeting in March after the new Council completes its reorganization activities.

Also noted was Mt. Penn's confusion about the membership requirements in the agreement. Mr. Barnhardt recalled that the addition of a 2nd elected official if the municipal secretary did not want to participate was added at Mt. Penn's request, causing the need to revise the agreement and have the other four municipalities re-enact the revised agreement. The membership requirements are copied in below:

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

A. **Eligibility & Membership:** Voting membership on the MP3 COG Executive Committee shall be provided to one (1) elected official appointed by the governing body of each Government member, one (1) municipal secretary, administrator *or a second elected official* appointed by each Government member, one (1) elected County Commissioner, and one (1) representative of the Berks County Planning Commission, (each, a “member” and collectively, the “members” or the “membership”).

Non-voting membership shall be open to any organization designated by the voting membership.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: reports from the committees are included with the January 22nd agenda.

1. Finance & Capital

No report; currently working with Public Safety & Environmental on signage

2. Marketing & Promotions

Ms. Burkovich stated that a cleanup is planned for March 28th on Skyline Drive by a Geocaching group. She invited Deidra from the group to explain how their geocaching event works. She stated that she wants to regard those participating in the cleanup with a lunch at the Pagoda. The need to coordinate supplies and trash pickup after the event was noted. Deidra was asked to contact Steve Harrity at Reading Public Works to begin making these arrangements.

3. Public Safety Committee

No report; currently working with Finance & Environmental on signage

4. Environmental Committee

Mr. Brophy noted the need for an assessment of the Mt. Penn trail system to determine the number of trails, those that should be closed and those that are sustainable. He noted that a similar assessment was performed on the Antietam trail system.

Mr. Frankhouser agreed but suggested that volunteers perform the assessment, rather than have a professional organization come in to perform the assessment. He expressed the belief that using a volunteer group will free additional funding for the completion of the new signage and kiosk project.

Mr. Barnhardt reminded the group that the City and County each provide \$20K annually for capital improvements.

Mr. Brophy expressed the belief that a volunteer group would not have the ability to perform the assessment properly and determine the sustainability of the current trail

system. He noted that having too many trails leads to erosion which creates a physical and environmental threat to the mountain.

Ms. Brooks, from Berks County Parks, stated that there is currently a State grant open that could fund this assessment. She noted that the grant period closes on April 22nd.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that the Finance Committee decided to seek grant funding to perform the assessment of the Mt. Penn trail system. He and Ms. Kelleher agreed with Mr. Brophy to have professionals perform the assessment.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that he will have the County Planning Department staff write the grant.

Someone questioned if the MP3 is involved with the Greater Reading Trail Partnership (GRTP). Mr. Barnhardt stated that the MP3 is currently not involved, but he noted that the MP3 involvement would be beneficial. He stated that the group meets quarterly at Berks Nature.

Ms. Kelleher suggested that a representative from the Environmental Committee represent the MP3 at the GRTP meetings. Mr. Brophy and Mr. Barnhardt agreed to share this responsibility.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt, to have Mr. Brophy and Mr. Barnhardt represent the MP3 at the quarterly GRTP meetings. The motion was approved unanimously.

OTHER MATTERS

Ms. Burkovich described the Music on the Mountain music fest planned for various areas in the MP3 area in 2021. The weekend event will have ticketed and un-ticketed events and will include vendors of all types. A beer fest is also being considered. Ms. Burkovich and Mr. Olsen are currently contacting individuals who have coordinated these type of events to learn more.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Mr. Pottiger, to encourage the Marketing Committee to continue their work to plan for the music fest. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that the County has studied the growth of the deer population in the Antietam area, noting the increase in the number of deer-related traffic accidents in the Antietam Park area. He stated that they are planning a controlled hunt before the end of 2020 to reduce the deer population in this area.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the Pagoda Foundation is working on an music event at the Pagoda during the Jazz Fest.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the Reading Police Department's work to fine those who are partying at the Pagoda. She urged the MP3 to continue its work to make improvements to the island area so traffic can be better controlled.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:30 pm.

The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be on March 25, 2020 at the Alsace Township Building at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary