



Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)

Board of Director's Meeting
Wednesday, September 23, 2020
Virtual Meeting

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

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

Others attending: B. Burkovich, A. Showers, M. Brophy, C. Quandel, L. Kissinger, A. Sellers

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and stated that a quorum is present. Due to the COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency, the MP3 is meeting virtually with public comment invited in writing via email or through registration via Zoom.

Mr. Barnhardt thanked the Board and Committee members for continuing to work to move the MP3 forward during the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted his appreciation as many organizations and agencies have gone stagnant over the past six months.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Barnhardt inquired if Ms. Kelleher received any written public comment. Ms. Kelleher replied in the negative. He asked if members of the public present wished to comment. None of the attendees present offered comment at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

The July minutes and the agenda were approved by acclimation with no changes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Mallatratt, MP3COG Treasurer, called attention to the reports attached to the agenda showing no expenses and deposits of \$150 which creates a balance of \$19,403.83. She stated that the balance at the Community Foundation is \$9067.59 and includes interest income. To date profit from the 2020 calendar is \$909.60.

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

MP3 COG REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

1. BAMBAs Upgrade to Silver Rating

BAMBA is working to add the additional signage requested for the upgrade to Silver.

2. Payment of Bills

Ms. Mallatratt stated that there are no bills requiring Board approval at this time.

3. Update on the Withdrawal of Mt Penn

Mr. Barnhardt reported that he called Mt. Penn Solicitor Tom Klonis but has not had a return call to date. He noted that Mt. Penn was one of the last municipalities to sign the agreement committing to the 10 year partnership but their dues are unpaid for 2020. Ms. Mallatratt confirmed the delinquency. Mr. Barnhardt stated that he would continue trying to contact Mt. Penn officials.

4. Update on Pagoda Partying

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz reported that due to the joint work of Central Berks and Reading Police and the Reading Police Chief's coordination of the patrol officers with the security guards, the problems appear to be resolved. She noted that patrol officers report to the Pagoda area around dusk, interact with people and then clear the area at closing time. Mr. Pottiger agreed that the noise complaints have quelled.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the Interim Public Works Director and Deputy Director have determined that the traffic lane running through the Pagoda parking lot can be shifted to the eastern side of the rock island, which will allow the parking area to be gated when the park area is closed. This work will cost approximately \$200K and will be completed next spring. She thanked the MP3 Public Safety Committee for making this recommendation and their consideration about this issue. She added that the Pagoda remains closed as the configuration of the building makes proper social distancing challenging.

5. Executed MOU for the Pagoda Trail

Ms. Kelleher reported that the MOU is executed and distributed to the parties for this initiative.

Mr. Olsen reported that Mr. Poole, GM of the DoubleTree, is interested in sponsoring the signage, as he has organized a wellness partnership between the hotel and Penn State Health. He will continue to follow up.

Ms. Showers noted that apart from the potential sponsorship of the signage, there may be some upfront sign design costs for the MP3 to cover. She noted the need to make the signs match those used by Berks Nature and BAMBA and include the MP3 logo.

Mr. Kissinger requested that the signs be coated with the anti-graffiti product which allows graffiti damaged signs to be cleaned, rather than replaced.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the pandemic has increased the number of visitors to the Pagoda area. She suggested coordinating some type of online information about the trail system.

Ms. Quandel, from BAMBA, stated that she would assist with that coordination and guidance through the Trail Forks app.

Mr. Brophy offered to organize guided hikes.

6. Update of Coordinated Approach to Dumping

Mr. Pottiger stated that the work group met with the Joint Purchasing Council and that Mr. Lugo, Reading Solid Waste manager, was working on an RFP.

Ms. Showers clarified that due to the City's transition to a municipal collection system, Mr. Lugo cannot assist by drafting the RFP. She asked if Mr. Pottiger would assist by getting the RFP started. Ms. Mallatratt offered to assist Mr. Pottiger with the RFP.

Ms. Kelleher noted that Mr. Harrity from the City can assist with the preparation of the scope of services.

7. DCNR Grant Trail Feasibility Study and Forest Management Plan

Ms. Showers explained that there has been a lot of behind the scenes work on moving this initiative forward. She stated that the grant application will be submitted in April 2021 in partnership with Berks Nature and BAMBA. She noted that Ms. Murphy from Berks Nature suggested adding the Forest Management Plan as a companion to the feasibility study, as this same approach was used successfully on Neversink. All present agreed.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that the City and County each budgeted \$20K in the 2020 budget to assist with the matching funds required for the grant. Ms. Kelleher noted that the MP3 Finance Chair/Council President requested adding an additional \$20K in the 2021 budget. Mr. Barnhardt agreed to bring this need to the attention of the Commissioners if it can be applied toward the implementation of the plan.

Ms. Showers suggested preparing an MOU for the grant partnership. Ms. Kelleher suggested adding the City to the MOU as the City is the landowner. Ms. Kelleher and Ms. Showers will coordinate the drafting of the MOU.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, to prepare and submit the Trails Feasibility and Forest Management Plan DCNR Grant, to use the funds contributed by the City and County towards the required matching funds and plan implementation and prepare an MOU between the MP3, the City, BAMBA and Berks Nature. The motion was approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Finance & Capital

No report; currently working with Public Safety & Environmental on a trail assessment study. County Planning will submit a DCNR grant application to assist with the funding for the trail assessment.

2. Marketing & Promotions

Ms. Burkovich stated that her report is attached to the agenda. She noted that late in the day she circulated a copy of the draft brochure that the committee created. The brochure will be used mostly in digital format but there will be a limited number of copies prepared at Mr. Olsen's office. She stated that Mr. Olsen has requested some reimbursement for the purchase of the glossy paper that is usually used for hard copy brochures.

Ms. Burkovich stated that the 2020 calendar project generated \$1,000 in profit. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that she sold \$100 worth of calendars and will be forwarding a check. Ms. Burkovich stated that the committee is currently researching the creation of a free refrigerator magnet for 2021 that will contain the MP3 logo and web information.

Ms. Burkovich stated that her report provides detail on the migration costs to transfer the MP3 web presence away from the County's website. She described the many benefits of moving away from the County's site. She stated that she has experience working with a few of these providers and they provide similar services. She expressed the belief that the top two (2) providers are Site Ground and Go Daddy. She explained that the Mt Penn Preserve Partnership, previous to the formation of the MP3 organization, already exists on Go Daddy (when Mr. Stefanik was managing the online presence). She noted that it would be easiest and less time consuming to retain the Go Daddy site. She reported that and Go Daddy is an American company and Site Ground is a company located outside the United States.

Ms. Mallatratt suggested creating a PayPal account to make payment for the migration, as the companies do not take checks. Ms. Burkovich agreed, noting that creating a PayPal account would also allow the sale of online merchandise after the MP3 migrates off the County's website.

The group reviewed the pricing provided in the report and noted their preference to use Go Daddy as it is an American company.

Ms. Mallatratt moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to migrate the MP3 from the County website to Go Daddy and purchase the three (3) year option. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to authorize the Treasurer to set up an MP3 PayPal account and use the account to pay for the three (3) year option with Go Daddy and other expenses approved by the board. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Public Safety Committee

The Public Safety Committee report is attached to the agenda. Ms. Kelleher noted that the update provided by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz about the Pagoda and Ms. Showers about a coordinated approach to dumping are the highlights from the report.

Mr. Kissinger noted the City continued partnership with BAMBA to make repairs and improvements to the trail system. He noted that there has been a new illegal trail formed and he advised a group unassociated with BAMBA about the need to remove the trail and the dangerous alterations they made to the Aline Trail by the end of September.

4. Environmental Committee

Mr. Brophy stated that the Environmental Committee thanks the board for moving forward with the Pagoda Trail project.

OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Brophy questioned the recent gating of the Fire Tower. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the gating was done to thwart improper activities on the lot and she noted the need to obtain clarification on the gating based on the MOU Pagoda Skyline has with the City. She questioned who has keys to the gate.

Mr. Kissinger stated that he was provided with a gate key. Ms. Kelleher added that County DES probably has a key as they have communications equipment on the Tower site, along with RAWA.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the efforts of Berks Stands Up to beautify Mineral Spring Park and stated that she has offered to assist. She noted the historic importance of Mineral Spring Park and the need for the MP3 to address this area of the preserve.

Mr. Kissinger reported that the City has started working on Egelman's Park. Over the next month 30 trees will be removed and some replanting will occur.

Mr. Olsen inquired about the reuse of the wood when the City removes trees. Mr. Kissinger stated that some is chipped and used as mulch at City properties, some is milled into boards for reuse, and some is offered to employees and others as firewood.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:09 pm.

The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be on December 9, 2020 via Zoom at 6 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary

Action Items:

1. Kim, Don and Ashley to develop RFP re Dumping w/ assistance from Mr. Harrity
2. Linda and Ashley will coordinate on the MOU for the DCNR Grant re Trail Feasibility and Forest Management
3. Linda to schedule meeting with City Man Dr for Marcia & Lester re DCNR Grant
4. Lee to speak with Craig Poole re promoting the Pagoda Trail
5. Kevin to discuss Mt Penn withdrawal with Mt. Penn Solicitor