

Operations Meeting Minutes July 21, 2020

Pursuant to due notice to Board members and the public the Operations meeting was held via Microsoft Teams Live.

1. Schuylkill River Greenways -

Elaine Schaefer, Executive Director of Schuylkill River Greenways, Julia Hurle and Bob Folwell, Trails Team, made a request to the Board of Commissioners for a letter of support for a Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development Greenways and Trails Grant for funding to conduct a feasibility study of the Reading to Hamburg gap in the Schuylkill River Trail (“SRT”), and also requested financial support from the County in the amount of \$7,500 towards their match for the grant. from the 2021 Budget

Ms. Schaefer stated this is for a 21-mile section of the SRT, and it is important to Berks County because of the economic impact, tourism, health benefits and increase in land values. When asked what major impediments there are,

Mr. Folwell admitted working with property owners will present some challenges. After discussion ended, Commissioner Barnhardt made a motion to support the request for letter of support, and the request for \$7,500 in matching funds required by DCED for the grant. Said motion was seconded by Commissioner Rivera. The motion carried.

2. Parks Department – Antietam Lake Park –

Ron Horn, Pretzel City Sports, made a request to the Board of Commissioners to re-establish the use of certain trails on Mt. Penn for trail races. Mr. Horn told the Commissioners he has been running trail races on Mt. Penn for over 25 years, and he and his staff spend a significant amount of time maintaining the trails and picking up trash. Mr. Horn mentioned a portion of funds he receives from the races is donated to the Schuylkill Greenway Association, the American Cancer Society and other organizations.

Cathy Wegener, Berks County Parks Director, and Brendan Lederer, Deputy Director, said the County does not and has not allowed special events at Antietam Park, as well as night-time events, and does not allow events for profit entities. The Master Plan identified the Park as a pristine site, and they have declined requests for mountain bike events and large orienteering groups. Mr. Lederer said at this point Parks Department does not endorse Antietam Lake for trail runs. The Commissioners asked Cathy Wegener and Brendan Lederer to coordinate with Ron Horn at Antietam Lake Park and look at the actual section of trails he is interested in using and report back to the Commissioners next week so they can take a look at. The Commissioners also intend to look at the trails before deciding whether to allow Mr. Horn to use the trails.

3. Election Equipment Storage Update – Ron Seaman

Mr. Seaman reported he solicited proposals from the Reading-Berks Association of Realtors to serve as a broker of record for the County for leasing purposes and only received one response yesterday. Mr. Seaman also had discussions with Steve Willems who will be submitting a proposal to provide broker services.

4. Commissioner Barnhardt reported the County’s PCCD grant application for \$213,255 to cover PPE has been approved and should be received next week.

5. Commissioner Barnhardt reported the County would like to restructure our Transfer Agreement with Muhlenberg Township to remove a commitment of \$250,000 that was to be used for a separate project by the Township, and apply those funds to the Ebling Bridge project to be applied to the cost of relocating sanitary sewer and water lines owned by the Muhlenberg Township Authority. The Agreement will allow the bridge to be reconstructed, including these utility relocations, at no cost to either Muhlenberg Township or the Muhlenberg Township Authority. At the completion of the project, the bridge ownership will be transferred to Muhlenberg Township.

Adjourned at 10:32 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maryjo Gibson, Chief Clerk