

Mt. Penn Preserve Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2018
Mt. Penn Borough Hall
7 pm

Attending: K. Mallatratt (Alsace & Governance Committee), M. Dudash (Mt. Penn, Governance & Marketing Committees), L. Kelleher (City, CHCC, Governance & Public Safety Committees), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (City and Pagoda Foundation, Governance Committee), B. Burkovich (County Planning & Marketing Committee), R. Rock (Environmental Committee), T. Orth (Lower Alsace & Public Safety Committee), L. Olsen (Co-Chair & Pagoda Foundation), M. Frankhouser (Environmental Committee), C. Crupi (Lower Alsace and Public Safety & Environmental Committees), S. Rose (Marketing Committee), J. Blatt (Hessian Camp, Public Safety & Environmental Committees), S. Kauffman (Pagoda Foundation & Public Safety Committee)

Mr. Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. As a reminder, the Master Plan and event calendar is available at www.MtPennPreserve.org. He stated that after Committee reports there will be a discussion on the finalization of the COG.

Public Comment

None

I. Committee reports

Environmental – M. Frankhouser, Chair

Mr. Frankhouser stated that he collected the various maps of the mountainside prepared by organizations such as BAMBA, the County, etc. He noted the improper creation of a system of new trails by unknown parties on the mountainside that is causing environmental devastation. In addition mountain bikes and other off-road vehicles are also contributing to the devastation. He stressed the need to address and control this problem. He noted that this is not an issue at County-owned parks as the parks are patrolled by the County Park Rangers and he suggested having additional patrol to control this issue on the mountain-side City-owned property.

Mr. Frankhouser stated that the winter weather has not cooperated with a meeting of the committee but he has started researching a solution to the spotted lanternfly. The committee plans to meet the last weekend in January.

Public Safety – Phil Kline, Chair

Ms. Kelleher reported that the committee has spent a significant amount of time discussing the need for improved police enforcement in the Preserve area, especially at the Pagoda and the need for coordinated park hours between the City and County. She stated that the group drafted an inter-municipal agreement that would allow Reading police to enforce local ordinances and summary offenses in Lower Alsace and Mt. Penn and would allow Central Berks to do the same in Reading. The document should be finalized and forward to the governing bodies soon.

Ms. Kelleher stated that an old security camera at the Pagoda was recently replaced with a newer camera that has a live feed that can be viewed on a cellphone or computer. Mr. Kline is working to provide access to Central Berks and Reading police which will enable them to periodically check the Pagoda area independently and allow them to view complaints when they are called in.

The Public Safety group also recommends changing the flow of traffic at the Pagoda to provide 2-way traffic in the current 1-way northbound lane, which will allow the parking area at the Pagoda to be gated during non-operational hours. It was noted that there are three (3) other viewpoints that are available to the public on Skyline. The ability of police officers to use discretion when enforcing ordinances/laws was discussed. A traffic engineer should determine if widening the road is required.

The group is also beginning to address wireless connectivity between the Pagoda and Tower which will allow the installation of additional security cameras through the use of an unlicensed microwave channel. The group is also looking at alternatives for blue light call boxes that would eliminate the need for phone lines and connect people with the 911 Center.

Ms. Kelleher reported that the committee agrees with the relocation of the Gravity Racing events to Spuhler Lane (connecting the rear of the Fire Tower with Angora Road) and that the Lower Alsace Manager and Reading Public Works Director are meeting next week to discuss issues with the road that has been gated since the 1980s.

A Preserve event permit has been created by Ms. Crupi in consultation with the Reading Traffic Division and the Alsace Township. After the event permit is completed it will be circulated and signed off by each of the three (3) municipalities then shared with the County Planning Office so the event can be posted on the Event Calendar. It was suggested that the Pagoda Foundation be included in the circulation of the permit so they are made aware of events.

Marketing – Beth Burkovich, Chair

Ms. Burkovich reported that the Committee has simplified the calendar and it is now available on mobile devices as a list view that auto-refreshes. Work on the cosmetics of the app continues. She stated that the group is working to finalize several mission statements that will be circulated through the group to determine the favorite.

Ms. Burkovich stated that the group continues to build a social media presence for the Preserve. A Facebook page will be developed next to help drive traffic to the Preserve website, currently hosted by the Berks County Planning Commission.

Finance & Development – Jeff Waltman, Chair

Ms. Kelleher reminded the group about the Finance Committee’s request to assist the committee in the development of a 3-5 year capital plan by making recommendations on the initiatives located in the Master Plan. She stated that a word document with the initiatives was sent out on January 3rd. (*Doc attached to these minutes*)

Ms. Kelleher reminded the committee to review the initiatives and send recommendation as quickly as possible so the Finance Committee can begin to develop the plan and its costs.

Governance – Kim Mallatratt & Linda Kelleher, Co Chairs

Mr. Olsen stated that the Governance Group did an outstanding job preparing the draft COG that will be considered by the five (5) member municipalities. Ms. Kelleher highlighted the agreement. The need to add Exhibit B - the Preserve area map - into the ordinance was noted.

Mr. Olsen noted that if the COG is approved by the member municipalities, the way the COG operates will shift and the Executive Committee, made up of reps from the member municipalities, will become the decision makers and the Steering Committee members will be continue to participate on the various Committees and make recommendations to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee membership is:

- 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, 1 municipal secretary or administrator 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.

- E. **Committees:** The MP3 COG Executive Committee may establish such standing, special or ad hoc committees as deemed appropriate to conduct its business. Standing committees may

include, but not be limited to: Finance & Capital, Promotions & Marketing, Public Safety & Public Services and Environmental & Land Use Committees.

The final draft will be circulated to the managers and governing bodies of the five (5) member municipalities so they have time to review the document before meetings are scheduled by Commissioner Barnhardt's office.

II. Other Business

Ms. Rossman noted that as the group is beginning to enter the decision making process, the meetings should be advertised. Mr. Olsen predicted that the member municipalities should address entering into the COG by May so he suggested advertising the meetings through May.

The group discussed the request to change the day or time of the meeting. After discussion the group decided to change the start time to 6:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:10 pm.

Meeting Schedule

- **Thursday, February 8th at 6:30 pm at Mt. Penn Borough Hall – note the time change!!**
- Thursday, March 8th at 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk

High Priority Initiatives from the Master Plan

- **Entire Mountain**

6.1 Extend Municipal Policing throughout Mount Penn Preserve Determine methods and sources to help fund additional policing throughout the Mount Penn Preserve 1. High

6.2 Additional Clean-up Efforts Work with local organizations to clean-up the mountain and the negative perception of the area 1. High

6.3 Friends of Mount Penn Preserve Establish a volunteer organization dedicated to the well-being and preservation of the Preserve - Organize volunteer work efforts 1. High

6.5 Interactive App Develop an interactive app for events, activities and places on Mount Penn 1. High

6.7 Decrease Conflicts between Pedestrians and Vehicles Implement safety improvements and education programs that decrease vehicular and trail user conflicts 1. High

6.9 Create the 'Mount Penn Preserve Partnership' Implement an organizational structure to set priorities for physical improvements and programs, and to organize and disperse information about all events and activities in the Mount Penn Preserve 1. High

6.10 Wayfinding Develop uniform signage standards and locate wayfinding signage at key locations, intersections and trailheads 1, High

6.12 Mount Penn Branding Establish a brand for the Mount Penn Preserve with the creation of a logo and through the use of social media (#mtpennpreserve). Establish identities for individual areas within the Preserve 1 High

6.16 Events Additional Events and Festivals Explore additional event / festival opportunities throughout the entire mountain (i.e. Gravity Railroad Food Festival) 1. High

6.21 Physical Improvement Security Cameras on Mount Penn Begin with security cameras at Pagoda and Fire Tower, tie into police monitoring system 1. High

- Skyline Area

1.1 Pagoda Circulation Improvements Improve Skyline Drive vehicular circulation at the Pagoda; create two-way travel lane to reroute vehicular traffic out of parking area 1. High

1.2 Pagoda Event Areas / Site Improvements Create an events gathering area below the Pagoda, improved ADA site access and parking via Bridle Path. 1. High

1.7 Trail Connection from Pagoda to Fire Tower Explore improved routes and signage to connect the Pagoda and Fire Tower for trail users 1. High

1.8 Reprogram the Pagoda Explore additional / different program opportunities and events for the Pagoda (i.e. seasonal fireworks, yoga, art shows, sunset events, festivals, etc.) 1. High

1.9 Extend Pagoda's Hours of Operation Extend the Pagoda's hours of operations 1. High

1.10 Pop-up Programs at Fire Tower Work with partners to schedule regular events at the Fire Tower (i.e. Pop-up food events, seasonal restaurants food vendors and festivals) 1. High

1.11 Boutique Hotel at the Fire Tower Develop a Boutique Hotel and Restaurant at the Fire Tower site 1. High

1.12 Trailhead Improvement at Drenkel Field Develop Ferndale and A-Line Trail trailhead at existing parking lot at Drenkel Field; trail kiosk and composting restrooms. 1. High

1.15 Gravity Sports at Spuhler Lane Repave Spuhler Lane for Gravity Racing (Soap Box Derby) and other Gravity Sports 1. High

- Gravity Railroad Area

2.1 Dog Park at Egelman's Park Establish a dog park at Egelman's Park that increases use at all times of the day 1. High

2.3 Egelman's Park Programming Establish programming opportunities at Egelman's Park that increase overall usage 1. High

2.7 Trailhead Improvements at Mineral Spring Park Provide improvements to trailhead parking lots that include trash receptacles, information kiosks, etc. 1. High **2.7 2.8 Physical Improvement Improve Trail Connections to Neversink Mountain** Improve connections between Neversink Mountain and the Mount Penn Preserve with improved wayfinding signage, trail routes, and safe road crossings 1. High

2.11 Pendora Park Improvements Seek programming opportunities at Pendora Park 1. High

2.12 Boy's and Girl Club Programs Work with the Boy's and Girl's club to develop programs that involve Mount Penn Preserve 1. High **2.12**

2.13 Private Sector Investment at East End Athletic Club Encourage new private sector investment at the recently vacated East End Athletic Club facility adjacent to Mineral Spring Park. 1. High

- **Antietam Area**

3.2 Food Venue at Angora Fruit Farm Work with Berks County to create a permanent, seasonal, or pop-up food venue at Angora Fruit Farm that utilizes locally grown food. 1. High

3.7 Phy Trail Connection from Antietam Lake Park to Lower Alsace Explore a trail connection from Lower Alsace to Lake Antietam along Antietam Road 1. High

- **Central Mountain Area**

4.2 Open Rotary Park Restrooms to the Public Open Rotary Park to the public including public restroom access, rental opportunities for the pavilion, and additional field programming opportunities 1. High

4.3 Trailhead Improvements at Rotary Park Establish a trailhead at Rotary Park and seek improvements to the existing parking lot including formalizing parking, trash receptacles, information kiosks, and trail connections 1. High

- **Mountain Village Area**

5.1 Events Additional Events and Festivals Explore additional event / festival opportunities in the Mountain Village Area. Work with private businesses to coordinate events and festivals and provide additional opportunities 2. Medium

5.2 Physical Improvement Group Campground Provide for an unformalized group camping area on Berks County land north of Hill Road 2. Medium

5.3 Physical Improvement Additional Restrooms Implement ADA compliant restrooms at trailheads and significant destinations 2. Medium

5.4 Physical Improvement Trail Connection to Lower Alsace Explore the possibility of implementing a trail connection along an existing paper street between Lower Alsace and Berks County owned land along Hill Road (easement required) 2. Medium

5.5 Physical Improvement Community Gardens Implement community gardens and establish an organization structure to oversee management and maintenance of the community garden 3. Low

5.6 Physical Improvement Equestrian Parking Trailhead Explore additional equestrian parking opportunities with ADA compliant restrooms, and connections to equestrian trails 2. Medium

5.7 Physical Improvement Trailhead and Parking Improvements Explore additional parking and trailhead locations with trash receptacles, information kiosks, ADA compliant restrooms, and connections to existing trails. Revisit overflow parking arrangements on County land. 3. Low

5.8 Physical Improvement Frisbee Golf Explore opportunities to implement a frisbee golf course. 2. Medium