

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION BOARD

May 13, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Members present for the meeting were Chairman Greg Churach, Vice Chair Sue Thompson, Matt Dallas, Nancy Toothaker, Dennis Elliott and Commissioner Renee Spaide filling in for Commissioner liaison Herbert Miller, Jr. who was absent. Also present were Montgomery County Planner Mike Narcowich and Planning & Zoning Administrator Michelle L. Reddick. Commissioner Schreiber was in the audience.

Call to Order - Chairman Churach called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance - The members, after a moment of silence, pledged allegiance to the flag.

Approval of Minutes - A motion by Toothaker, seconded by Dallas, to approve the March 11, 2014 minutes as written. All aye votes.

Old Business

Update on 2014 DCNR Grants – Chairman Churach advised that there is still \$62,000 worth of grants available through Pottstown Area Health & Wellness, and noted the Township will be applying for \$25,000 grant for engineering of the pond at Sunset Park. He further noted Commissioner Taylor, acting Township Manager, has agreed to pursue this grant.

Update on Credentials for Open Space & Recreation Board Members – In response to a question from Chairman Churach, members indicated that they have not made arrangements with Chief Moffett to obtain identification badges. Michelle indicated that she had notified the Chief that members would be contacting him regarding obtaining identification badges and would give him another reminder. Members agreed to contact Chief Moffett and set up an appointment to obtain their identification badges prior to the next meeting.

Update on litter can at Prout Farm Park – Chairman Churach advised that the litter can has been installed at the park.

Update on signage at Althouse Arboretum & Prout Farm Park – Chairman Churach advised that the sign has been installed at Prout Farm Park and the sign at Althouse Arboretum will be installed in the near future. Ken Hamilton of S.A.V.E. indicated the sign would be installed sometime in June.

Update of Hollenbach field work – Chairman Churach advised that the Township has been spreading topsoil in preparation of developing an additional athletic field. In response to a question from Chairman Churach, Commissioner Spaide advised that the Township has been obtaining the topsoil from the Coddington View project.

Update on Sunset Park Pavilion – Chairman Churach advised that the installation of the pavilion at the park has been completed.

Update of status of Regional Recreation Coordinator through PMRPC – Chairman Churach advised the deadline for applications for this position is May 25, 2014, and at the PMRPC meeting on May 28, 2014, they will review applications and hopefully select a person for this position.

New Business

S.A.V.E. Eagle Scout Project – Ken Reigner from Troop 523 was present to discuss his proposed Eagle Scout project which is an outdoor education project for the Althouse Arboretum property. He explained that the project involves clearing brush from the site, building benches off-site, moving the benches to the site and installing them, and a final clean-up of the site. He noted that if his project is approved at the Council meeting tomorrow night, he would start the project next week and it would be completed by the end of summer. A motion by Thompson, seconded by Dallas, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of the proposed Eagle Scout project. All aye votes.

Ken Hamilton of S.A.V.E. was in attendance to present a copy of a plan for the Penn's Wood Trail proposal for the Althouse Arboretum property. He advised he wanted to have the engineered drawing to present, but it would not be ready until tomorrow. He explained that the project involves trails and two (2) meadows, one meadow which already exists and one meadow they will be developing. He noted the one trail will follow Snyder Road, and with funds secured through a settlement with Met-Ed, they will be able to complete the reforestation project. This project will include planting trees that are native to Pennsylvania as the idea is to walk the trail and be able to feel like you are in the time of William Penn. He further noted they applied for a Schuylkill Highlands grant for the trails which will connect within the property and also with adjacent open space properties. In addition, the proposal includes a parking lot with approximately 20 spaces. Ms. Thompson requested that Mr. Hamilton make the engineered plans available to Chairman Churach so that the board can review them. In response to a question from Chairman Churach, Mr. Hamilton explained that they will need PennDOT approval for the parking area. In response to another question from Chairman Churach, Mr. Hamilton advised that the trail access would be located where the Township filled in a pool that was on the property. In response to a final question from Chairman Churach, Mr. Hamilton advised that the Penn's Wood Trail proposal is separate from the proposed Eagle Scout project. A motion by Thompson, seconded by Toothaker, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of the Penn's Wood Trail Proposal subject to obtaining all the necessary Township and State permit approvals. All aye votes. Chairman Churach advised Mr. Hamilton that Commissioner Miller would like to accompany him to select trees which will be planted on the trail along Snyder Road.

Mr. Hamilton advised that Commissioner Miller already did accompany him to select trees and explained the reforestation project will include 24 different species of trees and approximately 75-100 trees.

Proposed trail between Upper & West Pottsgrove – County Planner Mike Narcowich was in attendance to present information regarding an informal meeting that took place between representatives from Upper Pottsgrove Township, West Pottsgrove Township and the Montgomery County Planning Commission to review trails and initiate discussions concerning trail connections. He explained that representatives discussed the Sprogel’s Run, Goose Run, Fox Hill and other branch trails and possibly connecting them to West Pottsgrove, Pottstown and Douglas Montgomery. In addition, they discussed the Montgomery County trail plan which includes the Manatawny Trail, not currently feasible, and the West County Trail, very conceptual. Mr. Elliott suggested that mile markers be placed along the trail system for emergency purposes. Mr. Narowich advised that Toni Hermerka, Township Manager for Douglas Berks, indicated they may consider a trail connection at Goose Run Park even though they do not have a township trail plan. Mr. Narcowich advised the Goose Run trail may be able to go through the area where this park is located. Chairman Churach indicated the access to this Park is not marked. Mr. Narcowich noted that Waste Management may have an obligation to construct the Goose Run trail as part of the closure agreement for the landfill. Mr. Narowich advised that other items discussed at the meeting included issues or obstacles with trail connections, funding sources and the next steps. Chairman Churach explained that representatives from both townships just wanted to get together and talk and it turned out to be a meeting. However, West Pottsgrove did indicate that they are very interested in trail connections, but there is still a lot of work to be done there in order to make those connections. Commissioner Spaide suggested contacting New Hanover Township as we could make some great connections with them as well as Lower Pottsgrove Township. Mr. Elliott noted that he and Commissioner Miller worked with Bob Thomas from New Hanover Township in the past. In response to a question from Chairman Churach, Mr. Narcowich advised that the County Trail Plan is available on line.

Request from Board of Commissioners to create policy for use of Township owned athletic fields – Chairman Churach explained that currently there is only a joint agreement with the School District for use of our athletic fields, and the Commissioners have asked this Board to come up with some recommendations. He agreed to put together what we have now and submit a proposal for review at a future meeting.

Select Township Park to enter PAH&W Favorite Park contest for \$10,000 prize – Chairman Churach advised that the contest starts July 1, 2014 and an application would need to be submitted on or before May 27, 2014. He advised his suggestion is Sunset Park and Commissioner Taylor’s suggestion is Kulp fields. He further advised members that they would have to promote the contest and make sure they vote. He explained that voting can be done either by using your smart phone and scanning a QR code which will be located at the park, by texting or by submitting your vote on-line; however, scanning the QR code would gain the most points. After a brief discussion, a motion by Thompson, seconded by Elliott, to promote Sunset Park for the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness contest “What’s Your Favorite Park”. All aye votes. Chairman Churach agreed to submit the application and install whatever signs may be

necessary at the park so that people can vote. He also agreed to provide members with further information on how to promote the contest.

Sunset Park Pavilion – Should utilities (electric & water) be extended to the pavilion?

Chairman Churach advised that there are excess grants funds that may be able to be utilized to run electric and water to the pavilion and requested input from the members on this idea.

Members initially expressed concern regarding water to the pavilion but were interested in electric to the pavilion. However, after further discussion, members agreed if we were digging a trench for electric, maybe a water line could be included for possible future connection. There were questions regarding the costs involved and whether the excess funds would cover those costs or whether the excess funds could be utilized for electric and water. Chairman Churach agreed to gather an estimate of the costs and obtain confirmation as to whether the excess funds would cover and could be utilized for this project. If so, members were in agreement to provide electric to the pavilion and install a water line for possible future connection. **Create**

requirements for use/reservation system – Chairman Churach explained that there is already a policy in place for reservation of the Heather Place Park pavilion but one also needs to be established for Sunset Park pavilion. He provided members with a copy of the reservation form that is currently used which contains rules and regulations as well as a liability release and asked members to briefly review the form and provide feedback. In response to a question from Mr. Dallas, Michelle advised that she is not sure whether the Township Solicitor ever reviewed the liability release contained on the form. Members agreed this language should be reviewed by the Township Solicitor. Ms. Thompson suggested changing the form to say “Upper Pottsgrove Township Pavilion Reservation Request Form”. A motion by Thompson, seconded by Dallas, to recommend revising the form as noted above and having the Township Solicitor review the language for the liability release on the form. All aye votes.

Reports – Chairman Churach reported on the following:

- A. The tables for Prout Farm Park which were part of an Eagle Scout project have been completed. Farmer Prout will be planting soy beans at the park.
- B. There was an article in the recent newsletter on the Open Space and Recreation Board. Hopefully all members had a chance to read the article and enjoyed its content. Members thanked Chairman Churach for composing the article.
- C. Commissioner Miller has asked Chairman Churach to coordinate the Girl Scout projects as he is busy with the Eagle Scout projects so he will be taking on that task moving forward.

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

Adjournment – A motion by Elliott, seconded by Dallas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. All aye votes.

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 13, 2014 at 7:00 pm.