

Minutes of the Open Space Park and Recreation Board Upper Pottsgrove Township

July 9, 2019

A meeting of the Open Space Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, July 9, 2019 at the Upper Administrative Office, 1409 Farmington Avenue, Pottstown with Dennis Elliott, Greg Churach, Chuck Note, Sherry Paup and John Shantz present. Also present were Commissioner Renee Spaide, Township Manager Michelle Reddick, Pottstown Regional Recreation Coordinator Michael Lane, County Planner John Miklos and Green Allies Executive Director Ken Hamilton. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Elliott at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Those present pledged their allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – M. Reddick thanked Sherry Paup for taking notes at the last meeting. Motion by G. Churach, second by C. Note and unanimously carried to approve the April 9, 2019 minutes as written. Motion by C. Note, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to approve the May 14, 2019 minutes as written.

OLD BUSINESS

GREEN ALLIES PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS – K. Hamilton reported there were 15 public programs at the arboretum which brought a total of 756 visitors. He further reported they received a grant to provide a special programming for the Crossroads Development Income Restricted Housing. He explained the program includes creating a “virtual bus” to walk children to a special programming at the Althouse Arboretum. He noted the participants would receive free farm bucks to use at the farmers market. He reported trail trimming is completed on most portions of Sprugel’s Run Trail, Sussell Park and the trail leading to Prout Farm Park. He advised the most unique community program coming up prior to the next Open Space meeting include the Dog Days of Summer on August 11, 2019 which will include a program and activities for dogs. G. Churach suggested contacting Suzy Q’s mobile dog grooming to see if they would be interested in assisting with event. He further advised other programs include FREE story time and a hike program, the farmers market on July 26th, a special Chamber of Commerce leadership training on our low ropes course, two church visits and three special camp programs. He noted the 5th year anniversary celebration of the Althouse Arboretum, entitled Green Allies Galla, will be held on Saturday, October 5, 2019 starting at 5:00 pm. He encouraged Board members to attend and also invite family and friends. He advised the event will include guided history tours, a reception with appetizers and wine and cheese tasting, a dinner and awards ceremony, a silent auction and activities for adults and children. He further advised tickets are available online at www.bit.ly/greenalliesgala. K. Hamilton explained he is proposing a tree farm for park facilities behind the organic garden at Prout Farm Park. He further explained it would be a project for students to grow trees until they mature and then install them in parks within the Township. M. Lane suggested a tree vitalize grant could help fund this program. C. Note expressed concern regarding ongoing maintenance costs.

G. Churach suggested starting on a smaller scale. D. Elliott suggested K. Hamilton prepare additional information and submit for further review by the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND AT KULP FIELD – M. Lane advised the Pottsgrove Joint Recreation Board is proposing an inclusive playground for physically challenged children and adults at Kulp Field. He noted this is a good area since it is flat and large. He further advised they do have some money to get started but also discussed ways to obtain additional funding. He noted they would need funding, sponsors and grants. He noted they need to look at similar playgrounds in the area and talk to a playground equipment company who may be able to assist with design. He further noted the playground would include trees to provide shade and also some benches. In response to a question from G. Churach, M. Lane advised there cannot be a public playground located on school property, and this was a convenient location. He further advised they looked at Gerald Richards Park in Lower Pottsgrove which is already built out and Sanatoga Park which is not suitable. G. Churach expressed concern with ongoing maintenance costs. C. Note noted he likes the idea but expressed concern that an Agreement similar to what the Township has with Green Allies would be needed.

HANDICAP ISSUES FOR TRAILS/PLAYGROUNDS – There was discussion regarding accessibility to some of our parks and trails for the physically handicapped. It was noted that Cherrytree Park and Heather Place Park are accessible for the physically handicapped. C. Note noted that Hollenbach Park is not accessible for the physically handicapped. M. Lane advised grants could be available through the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation or the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission for making our parks and playgrounds handicap accessible. D. Elliott suggested a grant to include a pavilion at Hollenbach Park. J. Miklos noted the Montco 2040 grant could also be an option.

OLD BUSINESS (cont'd.)

MALFARO EASEMENT – D. Elliott provided a drawing of the property and the proposed location for a trail easement. G. Churach advised the trail would lead to nowhere right now unless we obtain the Ott property. In response to a question from C. Note, D. Elliott advised there was a proposal of \$400,000 to purchase the property many years ago. M. Lane suggested looking at grants to cover the cost of the appraisal if the Board is interested in a trail easement. C. Note suggesting having a conversation with the owner to determine the amount they are looking for to grant an easement on the property.

PARRC COMMITTEE UPDATES – M. Lane advised a summer intern will be working to inventory parks and conduct observations to see how the parks are being used. He further advised the intern will be assisting Green Allies at Prout Farm Park. M. Lane provided a report on the trail sensors and noted the most heavily used is Heather Place Park and the second is the Sprogels Run Trail from Prout Farm to Althouse Arboretum.

In response to a question from D. Elliott, K. Hamilton advised he inspected the pond at Sussell Park and determined there isn't any sewage leaking in the pond but rather a spring is feeding the

pond. He noted the level in the pond has dropped dramatically. C. Note advised we could drop bentonite in the pond to fill any leaks. In response to a question from D. Elliott, C. Note advised you could dye test the pond to determine if it is leaking.

HOLLENBACH PARK TREE SCREEN – C. Note provided a cost estimate for the project if it were to go out for bid. He noted if we pay someone to do the project, the trees are warranted for two years. M. Lane suggested prioritizing sections. C. Note advised the upper trail section is a hot spot.

GRANTS – There was a brief discussion on grants for 2020. It was agreed to finalize the open space plan update first, prioritize projects in the update and then seek out grants.

REQUIRED TRAIL MAINTENANCE – **Sunset Park Trail** - M. Reddick expressed concern that folks are ignoring the trail closed sign at Sunset Park Trail and suggested the Board considering closing Sunset Park until the trail is repaired. Motion by C. Note, second by J. Shantz and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners they close the entrance to Sunset Park until the trail is repaired due to safety concerns. **Fox Hill Trail** – The Board agreed to move forward with obtaining quotes for the necessary repairs to the trail.

VETERAN’S MEMORIAL – M. Lane advised a draft donation request letter was sent to Cathy Paretto for review and will then be forwarded to Dennis for review. D. Elliott advised a fundraising committee will need to be established, and the values for purchase of plaques will need to be determined.

OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE – The Board reviewed Chapter 12 which projects how the goals and objectives described throughout the plan may be realized by the Township. J. Miklos explained the goals in the open space plan will need to be prioritized and timeframes will need to be established for implementation.

BOARD COMMENTS – **D. Elliott** advised he will not be available for the August meeting. It was agreed to have a meeting in August only if the quotes for trail maintenance are available.

D. Elliott suggested each member review Chapters 6 through 10 in open space plan update and provide any feedback to J. Miklos.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion by C. Note, second by J. Shantz and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Reddick, Township Manager/Treasurer