

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

February 11, 2020

A meeting of the Open Space Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020. Those present were Dennis Elliott, Chuck Note, Sherry Paup, Greg Churach and Scott Wagner. Also present were County Planner John Miklos, Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Coordinator Michael Lane and Township Manager Michelle Reddick.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Those assembled pledged allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion by C. Note, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of January 14, 2020 as written.

NEW BUSINESS – None.

OLD BUSINESS

ADA ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND – C. Note asked Board members to provide feedback on three (3) major issues with the proposal that he could present at the next meeting for the inclusive playground. After a brief discussion, it was agreed the major issues are: (1) short and long-term maintenance and upkeep; (2) parking; and (3) safety and insurance.

REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Green Ailes – Patrick Rieker was present to report on happenings at the Althouse Arboretum. He thanked the Township’s public works crew for their assistance with chipping the Christmas trees dropped off by our community. He noted the wood chips will be used to improve the trails at the Arboretum. He also thanked Greg Churach for providing additional wood chips for the main trail. He reported the electronic recycling event will take place again this year on Saturday, March 7th, and the location will be in the area behind the Target Store in West Pottsgrove Township. He further reported even on days of rain or snow, there are still cars coming to the arboretum. There were three cars parked in the parking lot where we did not plow after our only storm of the year. He also reported work has begun to remediate areas where runoff has damaged the trails. There are several areas where damage is created after every heavy rain. These issues will be addressed by a simple trench/pipe to move water off the trail. Grit will also be added to the trail where tree stumps and rocks are showing through. **Comcast Cares Day** – K. Hamilton reported that Comcast Cares Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 2020. He noted that everyone will meet at Heather Place Park for breakfast and then head out to their respective working areas. He further noted Green Allies will be providing a camp for children of the volunteers. **Prout Farm Proposal** – Jennifer Anderson from Trellis for Tomorrow is an organization which has been in place for over 16 years. She explained that Green Allies and Trellis for Tomorrow would like to partner with area organizations and individuals to create a multifaceted agricultural learning space and sustainable farm where students and community members will have unique opportunities to observe, learn and experiment with the tools and techniques of regenerative agriculture for the benefit of Upper Pottsgrove and the surrounding region. Green Allies believes that Prout Farm, being the ideal location, has the potential to

become an agricultural destination to inspire the next generation of farmers and leaders while providing the surrounding community with a greater understanding of where their food comes from and why it matters, as well as improved access to nutrient-dense foods. The acreage provides ample space to establish an interactive demonstration of new techniques in agricultural and food production. The goal is that Upper Pottsgrove, an area with rich agricultural history, would become the model for the world for future of farming and community resilience as we inspire young people to reimagine our local food system and to find their path towards meaningful work. The creation of this vision is reliant on community input and feedback to build a more localized food and health system. In addition to a unique and interactive learning environment, it is envisioned the site doubling as a fully functional agri-business with value-added outputs (workshops, student curriculum for local schools, prepared foods, etc.). The products could generate revenue streams to drive the project toward financial sustainability and to encourage entrepreneurship and employment in Upper Pottsgrove and surrounding communities. The benefits of such a project for Upper Pottsgrove were outlined some of which include (1) providing low-impact economic opportunity on open space land, (2) provide nutrient-dense, local and sustainably farmed produce to community members at an affordable price point, and (3) provide a community-based whole child learning facility that improves both health and academic achievement through coordinated efforts between area organizations and institutions. demonstrating as present to explain the student-run sustainable farm program they are proposing for the Prout Farm property. In response to a question from S. Wagner, Jennifer explained the soil would need to be tested. In response to a question from C. Note, K. Hamilton explained the project would utilize all of the property. In response to a question from M. Lane, Jennifer explained that this is a new endeavor for Trellis that would include learning centers. She also noted that a formal proposal would eventually be submitted but needed initial feedback before proceeding. C. Note advised that part of the proposal is the restrict the use of pesticides or sprays for any farmers who may use the land this year. G. Churach expressed concerning regarding parking, how the use might affect the house there and whether there would be enough water for such a project. K. Hamilton explained there would not be any use of chemicals or sprays so it should not affect the owner, and it would not be a high-use water farm. M. Lane reminded everyone that the developer put up monies to install a small loop trail, and the open space plan calls for recreation. In response to another question from S. Wager, K. Hamilton advised they already have an established relationship with the community with the organic farm that is currently there on the property. In response to another question from G. Churach, K. Hamilton explained that all organizations would work together on the day-to-day operations of the farm. In response to another question from G. Churach, K. Hamilton advised that there is a possibility that monies could come back to the township as part of this project. C. Note advised that he likes the idea and concept. Green Allies and Trellis request that the township postpone any leasing of the land at Prout Farm Park by a third party to allow their team until February 2021 to develop a vial plan and a formal proposal in line with what was discussed for the Board's review. Jennifer explained that a site proposal will be generated by Rob Fleming, AIA, LEED, AP, who is a Sustainability Strategist and Architect from Jefferson University. She further explained local stakeholders will participate in a Design Charrette process facilitated by Rob to produce drawings and a report for review. She noted it is of vital important to protect the

land from conventional farming and/or land maintenance techniques during this time period that would compromise the space and delay or derail opportunities for us to design and implement their vision. D. Elliott noted he believes the township should see what response we obtain from the RFP's for farming of our open space but does like the idea and concept.

PARRC Committee Updates – There was a meeting held on February 26, 2020 and the Committee would like a list of priorities for 2020. The Board noted that repairing the trails at Sunset Park and Fox Hill as well as pond maintenance at Sunset Park are the priorities for 2020. C. Note advised that a maintenance management plans for all our trails needs to be developed. S. Paup noted the bridge at Goose Run Greenway trail needs repairs. M. Lane advised this could be a potential Eagle Scout project.

Grants – No updates.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL – D. Elliot advised that donations are now being accepted for the memorial.

PRIORITIZE PROJECTS – It was agreed the repairs to Sunset Park and Fox Hill trails is a major priority for 2020. C. Note advised he believes a parking lot on the Schwenk property for Sussell Park should be a priority. M. Lane advised there would not be any grant funding available just for a parking lot. C. Note advised another priority should be ground cover in our basins. M. Lane suggested the township engineer review the basins for that project. Other priorities discussed include a master plan for Hollenbach Park and Mocharniuk Meadows and a master plan for Hoffman Field. D. Elliott explained he would like to move the pavilion from Sunset Park to Hollenbach Park. G. Churach suggested we wait until the park reopens and see how frequently the pavilion gets used.

BOARD COMMENT – M. Reddick advised the December 31, 2019 financial report and a copy of the 2020 budget was provided and the January 31, 2020 financial would be provided via email as it was not yet completed. M. Reddick publicly apologized to County Planner John Miklos for not providing him advance notice of the Board of Commissioners working session meeting regarding the Open Space Plan review. M. Reddick also advised use agreements for Kulp Fields would need to be discussed at the next meeting. C. Note requested that the 2018 and 2019 costs for open space be provided to members.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion by C. Note, second by S. Paup and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Reddick, Township Manager