

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

June 9, 2020

A meeting of the Open Space Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, June 9, 2020. Those present were Dennis Elliott, Chuck Note, Sherry Paup, Greg Churach and Scott Wagner. Also present was Township Secretary Jeannie DiSante.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion by G. Churach, second by C. Note and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of February 11, 2020 as written. The March 10, 2020 minutes were not yet available for review.

NEW BUSINESS

SHONTZ TRAIL EASEMENT – The Committee discussed the submitted quotes for a survey of the property to ensure the proposed trail easement stays within the Township property. Quotes were \$1,250 from Bercek & Smith Engineering Inc., \$6,500 from Hopkins & Scott, Inc. and \$3,000 from Aston Surveyors. M. Reddick recommended they contract with Aston Surveyors and use the \$6,175 grant money in the General Fund Open Space which the Township did not use for the easement. Next year the Township can apply for a grant for the actual easement costs. D. Elliott said Glocker was paid for two surveys when purchasing the open space and would like to see them before paying for another survey. He said the Committee has to be fiscally responsible with their budget as there is a decline in EIT and property transfer taxes coming into the Township due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Motion by G. Churach, second by C. Note and unanimously carried to table the discussion on the Shontz Trail Easement and Aston Survey Job #1608 until D. Elliott can talk with M. Reddick and review prior survey documents.

CONSIDER SURVEYS FOR BOERNER & SUNSET PARK OPEN SPACE - G. Churach asked if the Sunset Park and Boener Property survey proposals should also be tabled. Concerning the Sunset Park property, two small parcels that border the property were discovered during updating the Open Space Plan however, they are not included in the property description. M. Reddick informed the members the Township bought property from the Boerner family and due to drainage issues there is a dispute concerning the boundary lines. The Committee members feel there should be surveys in Township files from when the properties were purchased and/or when the properties were put out for bid for farming.

Motion by C. Note, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to table the discussion on the Sunset Park and Boener Property for further information on the history of acquiring these properties before spending any money on surveys.

DISCUSSION ON TRAIL RELATED DOG ISSUES AT ALTHOUSE ARBORETUM – The members discussed the complaints received about dog feces on the park trails and at the arboretum and the lack of bags dispensers and trash cans for the public. The arboretum Board members have called D. Elliott with complaints that the public does not pick up after their dog or if they do, they toss their bags into the woods. D. Elliott, noting this is a health issue at an outdoor education center for children, suggested temporarily closing the arboretum and park trails to pets, installing game cameras and hanging large notices so the public understands the seriousness of this issue. He feels the Township should not spend money to accommodate the irresponsibility of pet owners that violate the law of cleaning up after their pets. He read an Article in a Section of the PA law for Open Space stating violation of the rules is enforceable with penalties and fines. G. Churach said Ken Hamilton asked months ago to install dog bag dispensers and was told Open Space does not have the funds in the budget. He researched the costs and suggested not mowing the Kulp/Hoffman fields for one week and the Township would save \$420 in mowing costs. That would pay for the dispensers that cost a minimum of \$90 each for one with no trash can or post and he would install them. The cost of dispenser kits with bags, a sign stating the law, a trash can and post would be \$230.00 each. Four would be needed for the arboretum. The members agreed that some fields could be left un-mowed as meadows and use the saved funds for this purpose. Motion by G. Churach, second by S. Wagner to recommend the Board of Commissioners approve the purchase of four dispenser kits for \$230.00 each to be installed by G. Churach. Ayes: C. Note, S. Paup, S. Wagner, C. Churach. Nays: D. Elliott. Motion passed 4-1.

DISCUSSION ON OPEN SPACE WORK CREW FOR PONDS – D. Elliott explained that he sprayed orange paint around the pond showing the area that so much debris has fallen into there is not any room for recreation. The Committee discussed how to address the cleanup of fallen trees and sludge in the pond. The members volunteered to help with the removal of the debris and using the service entrance to get trucks into the area. The trees would be cut and stacked for the public works crews to chip. The members will coordinate with each other in setting up a date.

OLD BUSINESS

ADA ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND – C. Note told the members there is no report.

REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Green Ailes – Ken Hamilton informed D. Elliott that one of the two ponds in Sussell Park is leaking. D. Elliott confirmed it and needs to be addressed to keep it from stagnating. It is understood there is no money right now to work on this. The area is very wet and overgrown and once the leak is repaired it needs to be cleaned out.

PARRC Committee Updates – C. Paretti provided the Committee with a list of items discussed at their meeting. She reviewed the following items:

- Strategic Plan for PARRC - As PARRC prepares to sever from the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission we have hired Barbara Heller from Berry Dunn to help with our strategic plan.

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- Intergovernmental Agreement - Another item that needs to be settled soon is the Intergovernmental Agreement that will need to be in place to sever from PMRPC; OSR should be aware of the document.

- Park & Trails - Mr. Lane suggested that a plan should be in place in case there were another event where the public parks needed to be closed down.

- 10 Minute Walk Campaign - Craig Colistra from the Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation and member of PARRC committee has asked C. Paretti to present information about the 10 minute Walk Campaign which is a partnership between the Trust for Public Land, National Recreation and Park Association and the Urban Land Institute. The goal is to ensure that everyone has a quality park within a 10 minute walk of their home. Upper, Lower and West Pottsgrove along with Pottstown are being asked to be the participants in the first round which will be a discussion of how we could possibly make this work among these communities. Included in the discussion will be the Pottstown and Pottsgrove school districts. The “focus group” discussions are being funded by the Trust for Public Lands and there is no financial commitment from any of the participants. Right now a letter of commitment will be needed by each participating community partner to commit to participate in 4 meetings a year. C. Paretti has agreed to be one of the participants and would like for at least 1 member of OSR to attend with her. Any member interested is to email her. October 10th is slated to be Walk to a Park Day.

The next PARRC meeting is June 24th and any updates from Open Space is appreciated so that C. Paretti can report to the committee on any progress that Open Space is making

Grants – No updates.

VETERAN’S MEMORIAL – D. Elliot advised that electric is installed & complete at the memorial.

PRIORITIZE PROJECTS – The members reviewed the Project Wish List provided by M. Lane and categorized their priorities by locations into 1 year, 5 year and 10 year projects. A revised list showing their priorities will be created by Township Secretary J. DiSante and sent to the members prior to their next meeting to further drill down to what their order of importance is in each location by the project years.

BOARD COMMENT – C. Note asked if the electric was finished at Kulp Field and G. Churach advised he was never contacted. S. Paup noted trees should be taken down at the pavilion for safety reasons. G. Churach will send his report to R. Spaide about how and when to have the open space mowed. In response to a question from C. Note, G. Churach noted he would assist, if requested, with reviewing Google maps to point out areas for reducing mowing days.

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D. Elliott advised there are repeat offenders riding 4-wheelers on Fox Run Trail. He has the police report and asks that the Board of Commissioners address this issue. These offenders are in violation of State law and he gave R. Spaide a copy of the State statutes for review with the Board. G. Churach said resident Keith Kachel is a mountain biker and would like to see biking trails only. He also said there are cars parked at Sunset Park with teens hanging out in the park even though it is closed. He asked that Manager Reddick call him to discuss his moving the rope and putting up more 'park closed' signs.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion by G. Churach, second by C. Note and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannie DiSante,
Township Secretary