

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

**September 8, 2020**

A meeting of the Open Space Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Those present were Dennis Elliott, Chuck Note, Greg Churach, Sherry Paup and Scott Wagner. Also present was Township Manager Michelle Reddick and Regional Recreation Coordinator Michael Lane. Commissioners Renee Spaide and Cathy Parette were present in the audience.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Commissioner Spaide advised that the Board of Commissioners does try to do things recommended by the Open Space and Recreation Board, and she does care about open space. However, she would like the Township to take care of the existing open space and trails prior to starting new projects.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Motion by C. Note, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of July 14, 2020. Motion by G. Churach and second by S. Wagner to approve the minutes of August 11, 2020 as amended to remove C. Note as he was not in attendance, to correct the date of the meeting in the heading and to correct the time for adjournment. Aye votes: C. Churach, S. Wagner, D. Elliott, and S. Paup. Abstain: C. Note. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**DISCUSSION ON PUMP HOUSE AT SUSSELL PARK** – G. Churach reported that he is recommending preserving the pump house at Sussell Park. He reported the pump house contain a wellhead and pressure tank which has not been used for many years. He provided photos and noted the door to the pump house was replaced when we purchased the property. He noted if we ever want to provide water at the park, the roof on the building should be repaired and this could be a project for the public works department. He further noted the tank and pump motor would probably need to be replaced, but the well should be usable. He also reported electric could be provided with the owners consent from the house, via a separate meter or from Snyder Road. He advised the small investment to preserve the building for the future would be well worth the cost. R. Spaide noted she recalls there was camping and a playground at Sussell Park many years ago. Motion by C. Note, second by D. Elliott and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they fix the roof of the pump house to preserve the building and have public works complete the project. G. Churach provided a list of outstanding items still at Sussell Park, and M. Reddick agreed to address the remaining issues with public works. He also suggested holding off on purchasing replacement picnic tables for the park at this time. He also noted he will provide a recommendation on removal of the trees at Sussell Park.

**FINANCIAL REPORT/EXPLANATION OF RESTRICTED FUNDS** – M. Reddick reported the August 31, 2020 financial report for Open Space Fund was included in the packet. She also noted the items related to open space in the General Fund financial report were also provided. She explained the Township receives a quarter percent earned income taxes for open space and that only a quarter percent of that revenue can be used for open space maintenance which is approximately \$115,000. She further explained the items included in the General Fund for open

space do not include any salaries or benefits for the time our public works department spends on maintaining our open space; so, as you can see, the total money transferred back to General Fund from Open Space Fund does not cover all the costs to maintain the open space and trail systems in the township. She reiterated how important it is for this Board and the Board of Commissioners to understand that we have a responsibility and obligation to maintain our open space and trail systems regardless of the costs associated with the maintenance. She also noted it was suggested by this Board during last year's budget discussions that the Board of Commissioners consider outsourcing the mowing and/or hiring a part-time maintenance person for open space from May through October; however, none of that was included in the 2020 budget. Members agreed those same recommendations should be made known to the Board of Commissioners again this year in discussion of the 2021 budget.

**PRESENTATION ON PROPERTY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE** – S. Wagner provided the members with a sample preventative maintenance schedule for open space. He reported there are software programs available that could be utilized for compiling and tracking the preventative maintenance schedule. Members of the Board suggested providing the preventative maintenance schedule to the Board of Commissioners and asking them to consider purchasing software and implementing the program.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**DISCUSSION ON SHONTZ PROPERTY** – M. Lane advised the Shontz property is part of the Act 319 program and he is attempting to find out how this might affect the trail easement. He noted the trail may only be 20-foot wide, and we may not be able to install a parking lot. M. Reddick advised that after the last meeting, she was told to put the easement on hold until such time as clarification is received on the Act 319 matter. However, she received a call from Barb Shontz to go ahead and move forward with the survey. In response to a question from R. Spaide, M. Lane advised the Grim is a conservation easement which is different than what is being proposed for the Shontz property. He suggested holding off on the survey for the easement until we receive the information on how the Act 319 may or may not affect the easement. D. Elliott noted the easement is a win for the township in making a connection to Douglass/Montgomery Township and then New Hanover Township for a connection to the Perkiomen Trail

**REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES**

**Green Allies** – K. Hamilton was present and provided his report to the Board. He reported they removed two dead ash trees near the parking lot last week and cleared all trails including the Spregel's Run trail where there were fallen trees from last month's storm. He noted there are still two very large fallen trees blocking the Children's Forest Trail. He also noted the Kehl family has expressed concern that people are leaving the trail and walking onto their open field and requested whether more private property signs could be placed along their property. He reported the farmers market has been extended through October, a Family Night Hike (with COVID-19 adaptations) will be held on October 16 and 17, a scarecrow making workshop will be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> for those who don't have the materials or don't know how to make one and they will follow with a scarecrow making contest, a safe "trick or treat" night will be held on October 30<sup>th</sup> and a clothing drive will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm and will be

collection clothing, shoes and household items. He further noted they will be hosting their annual fundraising Gala on October 3<sup>rd</sup> which will be both in-person and virtual. He requested approval to use the parking lot at the Hillside Aquatic Club for an electronics recycling event on November 14<sup>th</sup>. He also noted they will be having one event in the fall and one in the spring to reduce the amount of traffic. M. Reddick advised the township is okay with using the parking lot at Hillside, but he would also need to contact Bill Draves at Hillside to obtain their approval. G. Churach noted that Ken Hamilton and his crew fixed the trail washout caused by the storm.

**PARRC Committee Updates** – C. Paretti provided members with a copy of her report and reviewed the following items:

- Strategic Plan for PARRC – C. Paretti advised Barbara Heller from Berry Dunn will be here on September 24<sup>th</sup> to visit all the townships to look at parks and trails. She reported she has been assigned to a sub-committee for the completion of the strategic plan.

- Shontz Trail Easement – On Aug. 27<sup>th</sup>, Gregg, Renee, Mike Lane, and Cathy met with Mr. and Mrs. Shontz about the easement, and Mike Lane has provided a sample easement to the Shontzs for review. There is a question about Act 319 and how it would affect the easement, so the survey has been put on hold until we have an answer and the Shontzs are ready to move forward.

- PARRC Website – The website is up and running and will give the township opportunities to keep the public informed about what our Open Space Board is working on and invite others from surrounding townships to come and visit us. We should coordinate with the Arboretum, so their events are listed on the PARRC website.

- Trail Sensors – C. Paretti suggesting tracking our events, especially at the Arboretum for the PARRC research project. Requests should be sent to Mike Lane for a sensor, and he provided the trail sensor reports for 4/11/19 to 8/13/20. The use of the trails increased after the pandemic hit, but it has not started to trend downward and level off but still at a higher rate than this time last year. Our research data from this summer also indicates that respondents to our surveys intend to use the trails more often in the future. This will have an impact on future trail planning efforts as well as maintenance concerns.

- ICIA – C. Paretti reported she has asked that the ICIA be on the September agenda so the Board of Commissioners can vote on it. Once we have voted, the PARRC can then do a reorganization in October, and we will be our own entity. Advantages of this is that we do get to control our own funding, and as an entity free of any government ties, we will be eligible to apply for other grants that we are not restricted from applying for. For the reorganization, she will have to submit the names of two (2) representatives for Upper Pottsgrove, but please note that we will still only have one (1) vote even though we have two (2) representatives. In addition to C. Paretti, R. Spaide will be alternate representative.

The next PARRC meeting is September 24<sup>th</sup> at the Schuylkill Riverfront Pavilion in Pottstown.

**Grants** – M. Lane reported the township could resubmit for a PECO Green Region Grant for the Shontz trail easement. Members agreed to follow through with submitting the grant.

**VETERAN’S MEMORIAL** – No update. In response to a question from G. Churach, D. Elliott advised that he would

**COMMISSIONER REPORT/RECOMMENDATIONS** - D. Elliott explained the Board of Commissioner would like to have a brief monthly report of items discussed by the Open Space Board and including a list of recommendations made to the Board of Commissioners. D. Elliott asked for a volunteer who is willing to prepare such a report and present it at the monthly Board of Commissioner meeting. C. Note volunteered to complete the report and present it at the Board of Commissioners but asked for an alternate volunteer in event his is unable to attend the meeting. G. Churach agreed to fill in if C. Note is not available for the meeting. G. Churach recommended changing the monthly meeting to the first Tuesday of each month starting in 2021. M. Reddick advised the Sewer Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month. Members requested M. Reddick email the members of the Sewer Committee to see if they would be willing to change their meeting to the second Tuesday of the month in 2021.

**BOARD COMMENT/NEW FORMAT** – D. Elliott suggested he would like each member of the Open Space Board to take turns each month with setting the agenda for the meeting. G. Churach advised that typically the Chairman sets the agenda, and although he appreciates the offer, he suggests that members just continue emailing their ideas for agenda items.

C. Note asked for clarification on a meeting concerning the MOU for the ADA accessible playground. He advised noted he thought it was suggested at the last meeting that a separate meeting be held and that is what he was trying to arrange. However, that seemed to be a problem. After a brief discussion, members agreed to have the MOU presented at their regular meeting next month. G. Churach suggested the MOU be provided to members ahead of time so they have sufficient time to review prior to the meeting.

G. Churach noted that a television was dropped off at the corner of Snyder and Yarnall Roads and asked if the township could pick it up. M. Reddick explained the township does not typically pick up televisions since we would incur costs to dispose of it. G. Churach expressed concern that if it is left there, it will potentially send a message to other people to do the same and agreed if the township road crew would pick it up and store it, he would pay for and deliver it to the electronic recycling event being held by Green Allies in November.

In response to a question from M. Lane, M. Reddick advised she had not heard back from Andrew Grabowy about his Eagle Scout project and agreed to send him a follow-up email. M. Lane reported that Township Zoning Officer Paul Labe was working on updating the township maps but did not have a copy of the latest Open Space Plan Update, so he provided him a copy. He also reported that the survey for Sunset Park was received today. He also reported that he has been

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

**September 8, 2020**

speaking with Ken Hamilton regarding plans for Sussell Park and presented him with two (2) separate plans which were also presented to members.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Motion by C. Note, second by S. Paup and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Reddick  
Township Manager