

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

October 13, 2020

A meeting of the Open Space Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, October 13, 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 – None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Motion by S. Wagner, second by C. Note and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of September 8, 2020 as amended.

NEW BUSINESS

P RESENTATION & DISCUSSION ON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR POTTS GROVE INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND – Patti Grimm was present to represent the Pottsgrove Recreation Board and the Pottsgrove Inclusive Playground Committee. She presented the MOU for initial discussion and explained how important this project is for our area. C. Note noted there is a great group on the Pottsgrove Joint Recreation Board who are working well together, and the MOU is not set in stone and could change. G. Churach acknowledged he is glad to see that any changes to the MOU need to be approved by both parties. M. Lane suggested a specific name be included on page 5 of the MOU. C. Note suggested a name or a representative from the Open Space and Recreation Board. In response to a concern expressed by G. Churach, expressed concern that there are no penalties in the MOU for non-compliance related to maintenance. M. Lane suggested a maintenance fund should be established and included in the MOU. In response to another concern expressed by G. Churach regarding whether Upper Pottsgrove has the right to close the playground, M. Lane suggested including such language under “inspections”. In response to another concern expressed by G. Churach, it was agreed that a member of the Open Space and Recreation Board be part of the maintenance committee. In response to a question from C. Parette, Patti Grimm advised that Lower Pottsgrove Township is not really involved, but West Pottsgrove Township is actively involved. C. Parette advised she would like to see more of a commitment from all the Pottsgroves. In response to a concern expressed by C. Parette concerning the responsibility falling on Upper Pottsgrove for the inclusive playground, M. Lane explained a separate agreement will be drafted to cover this matter. In response to a question from S. Wagner, P. Grimm explained that Lower Pottsgrove and West Pottsgrove are on board with the project financially, but Lower Pottsgrove does not attend the meetings. Motion by C. Note, second by S. Wagner and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of the MOU with the changes discussed.

DISCUSSION ON ASH TREES AT SUSSELL PARK – G. Churach presented a quote from the logger to remove the 42 trees at Sussell Park. M. Reddick advised that Road Foreman J. Bean also obtained a quote, but it was only for 24 trees. G. Churach explained the trees were previously marked 1-42 so he is not sure why the quote was only for removal of 24 trees. M. Reddick advised she will have J. Bean obtain a revised quote for 42 trees along with an additional quote as 3 quotes

will be necessary to move forward. Motion by C. Note, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners they rework the budget to allow for removal of the trees at Sussell Park.

In response to a question from D. Elliott regarding moving the pavilion from Sunset Park to Hollenbach Park, M. Reddick advised she is waiting on J. Bean to contact someone regarding this matter. After a brief discussion, motion by C. Note, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they leave the pavilion at Sunset Park.

In response to a concern expressed by D. Elliott regarding pond leakage at Sussell Park, M. Lane advised he is trying to work with K. Hamilton on this project and include this concern as part of the future overall plans for Sussell Park so that we could look at obtaining a grant.

DRAFT 2021 OPEN SPACE FUND BUDGET – M. Reddick presented the draft 2021 budget for open space line items as part of the General Fund and the draft 2021 budget for open space fund. G. Churach provided a list of 2021 open space project recommendations which included changing the meeting dates for 2021 to the first Tuesday of each month. M. Reddick advised the Sewer Committee has agreed to move their meeting date to the second Tuesday of the month for 2021 so that the Open Space and Recreation Board could meet the first Tuesday of each month. Motion by G. Churach, second by C. Note, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners they advertise the meeting dates for the Open Space and Recreation Board to the first Tuesday of each month for 2021. G. Churach recommendations also included the repairs to the pump house at Sussell Park which M. Reddick confirmed have already been completed. G. Churach suggested the pump house be painted in 2021 since the repairs have already been completed. Motion by C. Note, second by S. Wagner and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they include the following open space projects in the 2021 General Fund budget: (1) painting of the pump house at Sussell Park; (2) replacing the two picnic tables at Sussell Park; and (3) outsourcing the mowing of our open space (to reduce costs for mowing). They also reviewed the proposed 2021 budget for open space fund. Motion by C. Note, second by S. Wager and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of the 2021 open space budget as presented. Another recommendation provided by G. Churach is to include way finding signage throughout the trail system. M. Lane suggested adding this to the project wish list. He also suggested this could be combined with entrance signs, directional signs, mile markers and kiosks containing maps as one entire project for which the township could seek a grant. Another project includes implementing a low mow/no mow for some of our open space areas, and both G. Churach and S. Wagner agreed to investigate the open space areas and make a recommendation on this matter.

OLD BUSINESS

UPDATE ON SHONTZ PROPERTY – M. Reddick advised the Township is moving forward with the survey on the property.

REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Green Allies – K. Hamilton was present and provided his report to the Board. He reported that 27 families participated in their new scarecrow making workshop, and the scarecrows were on

display at the October 9th farmers market for public voting. He noted the winner will receive a gift certificate to the Green Allies Eco Store. He also reported they held a Virtual Gala to raise money for Green Allies and the Althouse Arboretum, and with a matching gift, were able to raise almost \$10,000 which places us back up to last year's levels and erases the COVID-19 deficit. He reported they left the farm open for community members to come in and harvest anything they wanted, and it will remain open until the first frost. He reported they will be hosting their traditional "Family Night Hike (with COVID-19 adaptations) on October 16th and 17th and residents will need to register for a time slot. He noted they already have 80 families registered. He reported they will be hosting a safe "Trick or Treat" Night at the Althouse Arboretum on October 30th and admission is any amount of non-perishable food to be donated to a local food bank. The electronics recycling is scheduled for November 14th at the Hillside Aquatic Club parking lot. He reported they are hopeful to being work on repairing the township trail that parallels their parking lot and noted Hopewell contractors has agreed to do the work.

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

- Intergovernmental Agreement – The Board of Commissioners approved the ICIA for PARRC so at the next PARRC meeting, they will reorganize. She noted that we will need to put a link on our website for the zoom meeting until we are able to meet in person.

- Strategic Plan for PARRC – Barbara Heller was not able to come so the meeting was conducted via Zoom.

- PECO Grant – A PECO Grant has been developed for the Shontz Trail Easement, the Shontzs are ready to move forward, and the survey will be underway soon.

- PARRC Website – The website is up and running. C. Paretti suggested checking it often to see if we are updated with projects. She also suggested checking with the Althouse Arboretum to see if we can add them to the Upper Pottsgrove Township information. M. Lane advised there is already a link to Green Allies.

- 10 Minute Walk Initiative – The Initiative was approved to start a conversation about this program, and both C. Paretti and G. Churach volunteered to attend 4 meetings in a year to represent Upper Pottsgrove. Along with Lower, West and Pottstown, both school districts will be involved in the program.

- Metro-Philadelphia – With a focus on municipal and school district collaboration, the Tri-County Community Network will focus on increasing park access through partnerships across multiple cities in the Pottstown area, with a goal to establish a "joint use" agreement of school yards to ensure after-hour public use of them as parks.

The next PARRC meeting is October 28th via Zoom.

Grants – PECO GREEN REGION GRANT FOR SHONTZ PROPERTY - Motion by S. Wagner, second by G. Churach and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners approval of the submission of a PECO Green Region Grant for the Shontz trail easement. 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.

DCNR GRANT OPPORTUNITY – M. Reddick apologized and noted the information presented was for a workshop on DCNR grants, and not an actual grant opportunity.

VETERAN’S MEMORIAL – D. Elliot reported he is trying to schedule a meeting for November to obtain approval for the flagpole. He is also hopeful to get a photo on Veteran’s Day and submit with an article to The Mercury. C. Paretti advised you must complete the article yourself and submit along with photos to The Mercury as they are no longer doing the article.

COMMISSIONER REPORT/RECOMMENDATIONS – C. Note advised he has already agreed to complete the report and present it to the Board of Commissioners at their monthly meeting. He also noted that G. Churach has agreed to be the backup in the event he is unable to attend the Board of Commissioners meeting. M. Reddick advised she will remove this as an agenda item for next month.

BOARD COMMENT – In response to a question from C. Note regarding the trail connection from Upper Pottsgrove to Lower Pottsgrove at Route 663, M. Lane advised this project is on the back burner for now as it is no longer a priority since it goes through the School property and doesn’t connect anywhere.

G. Churach presented a copy of an article from The Mercury on Pottstown School District expanding meadows.

In response to a question from D. Elliott, M. Reddick advised she is hopeful to have the RFP for farming completed in time to advertise in 2021.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

ADJOURNMENT – Motion by C. Note, second by S. Wagner and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Reddick
Township Manager