



Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)

Board of Director's Meeting

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

Alsace Township Building

Members: K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), L. Kelleher (Reading), L. Olsen (County), K. Barnhardt (County), J. Moore (Alsace Twp), T. Goodman (Mt. Penn), D. Pottiger (Lower Alsace Twp.)

Members absent: B. Petrov (Mt. Penn), J. Oswald (Lower Alsace Twp.)

Others attending: J. Cunliffe J. Frank, R. Rock, M. Reinert, D. Hunter and approximately 6 other members of the public & L. Kissinger attended via telephone

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. He stated that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one attending offered public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Barnhardt asked the members to consider the minutes from the May meeting and the agenda for this meeting. No modifications were made and the minutes and agenda were approved by acclamation.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Mallatratt, MP3 COG Treasurer, stated that the MP3 has a balance of \$40,005.67 after the payment of the following bills:

- \$89.05 – Liederkrantz food for April Strategic Planning Meeting
- \$275 – IRC 501c3 application

Ms. Mallatratt stated that the payment of \$9.99 for the annual domain fee occurred electronically. She noted that the MP3 501c3 status was approved by the IRC in March.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion was approved unanimously.

MP3 COG REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Deer Management at Antietam

Ms. Kelleher reported that the City is piggybacking on the County's contract with the USDA to add two large parcels adjoining Antietam (approximately 200 additional acres) for the upcoming archery hunting season. This will allow all hunters who went through the required training to participate.

B. Coordinated Approach to Dumping RFP

No report.

C. Natural Resources Stewardship Plan re Trails Feasibility Study

Mr. Lloyd explained that the DCNR and County ARPA grant applications were not approved. He believes that the denials occurred because the application was for planning, rather than a shovel ready project. He stated that the City, as landowner, is now considering the request to fund this study. If approved, this will create shovel ready project applications to the County and DCNR as the study is implemented. He stated that the application for City ARPA funding was requested by the City's Public Works Department, if approved, the committee (Berks Nature, City and County) that drafted the proposal will assist in the completion of the study.

Mr. Barnhardt asked Mr. Olsen to follow-up with the County Grants Coordinator about the denial. He explained that the Commissioners divided their \$37M in ARPA funding into two (2) packages; the second will be applied to Imagine Berks with \$15M in funding. He stated that an application for a shovel ready project to improve the conditions on Mt. Penn through the City-Berks Nature-County partnership would be eligible. He added that this is the first County funding applied to economic development in 20 years.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt, to authorize the Natural Resources Stewardship work group's continued work to identify funding for the study and the implementation of the study. The motion was approved unanimously.

D. Pagoda Trail Update

Mr. Kissinger, City Arborist, participated by telephone. He stated that the signage has been corrected, as requested. He stated that the City prepared an estimate to redo the arrow signs to make them more compatible in size with the Pagoda Trail sign. He offered to resend the estimate for the board's consideration. He noted that the City's sign maker was able to remove the white stickers from the signs without damaging the signs.

Mr. Olsen stated that when the Board reviews the estimate a motion can occur via email and then ratified at the September meeting.

E. MP3 Staff Update – Circuit Rider Application

Mr. Hunter stated that the DCNR Circuit Rider Grant application has not been submitted. He referred to the information requested by the board showing hours Planning staff dedicates to MP3 issues – approximately 114 hours per quarter at the cost of \$7852.80. He noted the availability of college interns to assist with the work.

After discussion Mr. Barnhardt suggested capping Planning staff hours at 100 per quarter. He stated that due to the passing of Mr. Waltman, he will assume the Finance Committee Chair role and he will arrange a meeting to discuss this issue and its financial impact prior to the September MP3 meeting.

F. MOUs with Preserve based organizations - September Meeting with Preserve Partners

Mr. Reinert questioned a phrase in the Strategic Planning meeting report regarding the relationship between Pagoda Skyline and the Pagoda Foundation. Mr. Barnhardt stated that the phrase summarized discussions regarding Pagoda Skyline and the Pagoda Foundation having similar efforts and holding fundraising activities that in some way compete with each other and those who financially support the preserve and its assets.

Mr. Pottiger stated that the discussion at the Strategic Planning session left him with the belief that there are communication issues between the two organizations created by some issue that caused ruffled feathers. Mr. Rock agreed noting that the problems seemed to have stemmed from when the Pagoda Foundation asked Pagoda Skyline to stop the gift shop that existed for decades in the 1st floor of the Pagoda.

Mr. Olsen explained that he was on the task force that former mayor McMahon empaneled to create a new Pagoda based organization. He stated that the model for the Reading Public Museum organization was used. He agreed with the areas of responsibility for both organizations are very similar and that the fundraising for both organizations would probably improve if the organizations folded together. He described his prior involvement on the Foundation noting that there are some differences of opinion and tensions between some prior Foundation members.

Mr. Pottiger suggested a meeting of Pagoda Skyline and Pagoda Foundation to work through the communication issues, hosted by the MP3.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that Mr. Olsen is working on a follow-up meeting to determine how all partner organizations can come together and begin working jointly. He stated that originally the focus was on BMR SCCA, BAMBA, Pagoda Skyline and Pagoda Foundation. He questioned including other mountain-based organizations such as Rotary Park, the Jeep group, etc. including County and City Parks staff. Some dates for late September/early October were discussed. A date will be finalized prior to the start of September.

G. Letter to Mt. Penn Borough officials re withdrawal

Mr. Goodman and Mr. Cunliffe, members of the Mt. Penn Borough Council, were present in the audience.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that he had a phone call from the Borough Solicitor this past Monday regarding a proposed resolution to this issue. Mr. Klonis proposed having Mt. Penn remain in the MP3 as an inactive member, without the ability to vote until the financial problems Mt. Penn is currently experiencing are resolved and Mt. Penn can begin making their annual financial contribution to the MP3.

Mr. Goodman stated that he supports this solution and that he will ask the Borough Council to approve the proposed solution. He stated that this issue is caused only by the financial problems the Borough is experiencing, which hopefully will be resolved through the adoption of a five (5) year financial plan. He added that there is no ill will about the work, goals and mission of the MP3 as it exists.

Ms. Kelleher inquired if representatives from Alsace and Lower Alsace Townships support this proposal. Ms. Mallatratt stated that Alsace Township agrees with the proposal, noting that all municipalities at times experience hardships. Mr. Pottiger also agreed with allowing Mt. Penn time to regroup financially.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that prior to the meeting he described this proposal to Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and that she supported it.

Ms. Mallatratt moved, seconded by Mr. Pottiger, to allow Mt. Penn to continue to be an inactive MP3 member, with no voting privileges, providing the Borough time to recover financially. The motion was approved unanimously.

H. Create Events Committee

Mr. Olsen described the background regarding the need to split events away from the Marketing Committee. He stated that a punch list of potential members was developed and so far five (5) individuals have agreed to participate – Heather Adams, Todd Papich, Kathy Wegener, Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz and himself. The Committee's first task will be assisting with the November event to kickoff the Blues Fest by raising \$6K to cover costs. He stated that moving forward the Berks Arts Council would like the MP3 to continue hosting kickoff events annually for the Jazz Fest and the Blues Fest.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS – submission in written form only

- Finance & Capital –no report
- Promotions & Marketing – report attached to the agenda

Ms. Mallatratt stated that board approval to pay for the marketing postcards for the kickoff to the Blues Fest is required. The information will be distributed via email, approved via email and ratified at the September meeting.

- Public Safety - report attached to the agenda

Mr. Kissinger stated that the Public Safety Committee is discussing potential solutions to the partying at the Overlooks – blocking the entrances to the overlooks or gating off Skyline at

List Road. He noted that the current tree canopy currently blocks visitors from the view of the County; therefore, people are not gathering at these overlooks for sightseeing.

Ms. Kelleher noted that while the roadway in the List Road overlook area is in Lower Alsace, the overlook property itself belongs to the City. Mr. Pottiger stated that the gating of the roadway will be a financial issue that the Township must consider.

- Environmental - report attached to the agenda

Written Reports from Preserve Stakeholders

Mr. Rock invited the MP3 to the Hill Climb scheduled for August 20 and 21. He stated that there is a cleanup scheduled for August 14th starting at 9 am at the 2nd turn on Duryea Drive. He expressed concern about the condition of the paving on Duryea and he asked the MP3 to advocate for the repaving of this roadway so the Hill Climbs can continue

Mr. Barnhardt adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:35 pm. The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be held on September 28, 2022 at 6 pm. at the Alsace Twp Building.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary

Action Items:

1. Linda - update the RFP re Dumping and send out through City Purchasing office locally
2. Linda – draft security camera RFP for Skyline – List Rd Overlook to Pagoda
3. Ashley - MP3 staffing – application for DCNR Peer Study/Circuit Rider program
4. Board members – consider the cost of the Pagoda Trail arrow signs
5. Lee schedule Events Committee Meeting prior to September 1st
6. Lee prepare framework for Sept/Oct. meeting with Preserve Partners w/ facilitator
7. Environmental Committee – develop monthly clean-up schedule in coordination with City Solid Waste manager
8. Linda – assist Lower Alsace in obtaining ballpark cost to gate Skyline at List Road
9. Lester – obtain estimates to clock entrance to the Overlooks
10. Kevin – schedule Finance Committee Meeting prior to September 1st