



Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)

Board of Director's Meeting
Wednesday, September 28, 2022
Alsace Township Building

Members: K. Mallatratt (Alsace Twp.), L. Kelleher (Reading), L. Olsen (County), K. Barnhardt (County), J. Moore (Alsace Twp), D. Pottiger (Lower Alsace Twp.), M. Goodman-Hinnershitz (Reading)

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

Others attending: J. Frank, R. Rock, L. Kissinger, L. Lloyd

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 July meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned why members of the public present at the July 27th meeting were permitted to question some language in the Strategic Plan meeting report outside of the public comment period. She inquired if the meeting minutes are posted prior to their approval.

Mr. Barnhardt recognized the statement from Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz about remarks made outside the public comment period but noted that the remarks were related to the agenda topic - MOUs with Preserve Based Organizations agenda heading.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the draft meeting minutes are posted on the website and are marked "draft" until the minutes are approved at a meeting.

Mr. Moore moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to approve the July meeting minutes and the agenda for this meeting. The motion received unanimous approval.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ms. Mallatratt, MP3 COG Treasurer, noted the need for the board to ratify the payment of \$349.80 for the restyled Pagoda Trail arrow markers.

Mr. Kissinger stated that the restyled arrow markers were installed. He noted that during the installation the crew discovered that two (2) of the channels were missing. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that vandalism of the signage on Mt. Penn is common.

Ms. Mallatratt stated that the MP3 has a balance of \$9,082.47 at the Community Foundation and \$40,679.47 at Thompkins after the following transactions:

- Expense of \$76.08 for printing the Jazz Fest postcards
- Income of \$750 for sponsorships to the upcoming concert

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

Mr. Barnhardt noted the need for an external audit.

Mr. Pottiger noted the need for the completion of the audit prior to the filing of the required tax return in May. He suggested an audit starting when the organization formed.

Ms. Kelleher offered to ask the City's Elected Auditor if she would perform the audit and she noted the need to gain an understanding of how grant funding would affect the MP3's tax return.

MP3 COG REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Deer Management at Antietam

No update required. Archery hunting managed the USDA Wildlife Services has been scheduled for Antietam Park and adjoining City owned parcels.

B. Update on RFPs

- Coordinated Dumping

Ms. Kelleher stated that she worked with the Solid Waste Manager to revise the RFP which will be re-advertised. The Solid Waste Manager will also send the RFP directly to a variety of businesses that could possibly respond.

Mr. Frank explained the expanded work of the Environmental Committee to engage more volunteers for Mt. Penn clean-ups and he inquired about how to handle debris located in Alsace and Lower Alsace Townships. Mr. Pottiger and Mr. Moore asked Mr. Frank to contact them so they can have the road crews respond to collect the bagged trash.

Mr. Frank noted the continual work of BAMBA to clear debris from the trail areas.

- Security Cameras

Ms. Kelleher stated that Chief Tornielli provided clearance for Sgt Anderson from the VSU Unit to assist with providing specs for the RFP to provide security cameras for the overlooks, the Fire Tower and the Pagoda that will allow Central Berks and Reading Police to monitor activity prior to dispatching an officer. She stated that Ms. Quandel, from BAMBA, who has expertise in this field, is also assisting.

B. Natural Resources Stewardship Plan re Trails Feasibility Study

Mr. Kissinger stated that he and Mr. Zeiber met with the managing director about this project and the need to move it forward without delay. They briefed him on the work of the committee to move this project forward, noting that the prepared plan will mirror that created for Antietam Park and Neversink Mountain. The committee was empaneled under the MP3 and is a combination of people from the County, Berks Nature and the City. They suggested having this committee continue with this project, rather than transferring it to Public Works. The managing director agreed and suggested that the \$115,000 ARPA allocation can be handled in the same way the other non-profit allocations are handled.

Ms. Kelleher explained that some non-profits will be receiving a lump sum and others will submit project expenditures to the City's consultant. She expressed the belief that for this project the second model should be followed with project costs for the plan which will allow the committee to review and approve the project costs and have them submitted for payment by Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Zeiber.

Mr. Lloyd agreed with this approach, as under the MP3, the committee can work with Natural Lands, the company retained to create the plans for Antietam Park and Neversink Mountain, noting that this will allow this project to move forward without delay. Mr. Kissinger stated that he and Mr. Zeiber agree with the use of Natural Lands to develop the plan as the City wants a plan that mirrors with the properties to the north and south of Mt. Penn.

Mr. Pottiger inquired if the \$115,000 allocated by the City will cover the cost of the plan. Mr. Lloyd reminded the group that Berks Nature will donate \$20,000 towards this plan and he stated that when the committee was working to draft the DCNR grant application, Natural Lands was asked for an estimate and that the funding allocated now should cover the cost.

Mr. Barnhardt moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt, to authorize the MP3 and its committee to contract with Natural Lands to develop the Natural Resource Stewardship Plan for Mt. Penn, dependent on the plan presentation and cost submitted by Natural Lands and pending the City approval of having the MP3 administer the allocation for the Stewardship Plan. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Kelleher was asked to follow-up with the City's managing director.

Mr. Barnhardt noted the upcoming Imagine Berks grant process.

C. Pagoda Trail Update

This project has been completed.

D. MP3 Staff Update – Circuit Rider Application

The group reviewed the submission from the County Planning Department regarding staff time allocated to MP3 projects. It was noted that Ms. Kelleher and Ms. Mallatratt also spend time on MP3 issues during the workday and that some worktime on MP3 matters was justifiable to further the improvement of the Preserve which is owned by the City and County and that the MP3 is a partnership between the County, City, Alsace and Lower Alsace Townships and Mt. Penn Borough. Some questioned whether work with committees is volunteer time or time that should be charged as staff time and noted that the role of public employees, at the County or municipal level, is to assist with various community related projects.

Mr. Barnhardt suggested that it may be too soon to apply for the Circuit Rider grant. The group agreed to delay the submission of the application.

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

Mr. Olsen explained that he received a phone call after the MP3 Finance Committee meeting, requesting that the October meeting with the Preserve based organizations be delayed and instead schedule a retreat meeting for the MP3 board members for the development of a strategic work plan and budget, without others in attendance.

After reviewing calendars, the group agreed to hold the retreat on Tuesday November 15th from 5-7 pm at the Alsace Township Municipal Building.

F. Events Committee

Mr. Olsen stated that the Reading Music Foundation grant in the amount of \$2,500 to assist with the costs associated with the upcoming Blues Fest concert was recently approved. There will be work with Berks Arts to organize the required music education requirement.

Mr. Olsen stated that so far \$4,250 has been raised in sponsorships with \$3,450 still required to cover concert overhead. He reminded the group that revenue from ticket sales never covers concert overhead and underwriting is required. He suggested reaching out to the Preserve partners – Pagoda Skyline, Pagoda Foundation, BAMBA, and BMR to either become a sponsor or attract a concert sponsor. The sponsor categories are \$1,000, \$500, and \$250. He stated that the first round of advertisement postcards are being distributed. The second round of postcards will have the sponsor names listed.

Mr. Barnhardt moved, seconded by Ms. Kelleher, to authorize the MP3 to make a \$1,500 contribution to the Blues Fest concert. The motion was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS – submission in written form only

- Finance & Capital – Mr. Barnhardt stated that the Finance Committee was reformed with a representative from each of the municipal partners. At the meeting the group discussed the County Planning staffing issue and the need to develop a work plan and budget.
- Promotions & Marketing – report attached to the agenda
- Public Safety - report attached to the agenda

Mr. Kissinger stated that he met with Mr. Pottiger and Chief Serafin at the List Road intersection and will assist them in developing an estimate so the Lower Alsace Supervisors can consider gating Skyline Drive at List Road during the hours when the park is closed. He noted that if the List Road intersection is gated, the City will also need to gate their roadway at the Duryea Drive/Shearer Road intersection. He noted that the City has invested \$250,000 to gate the Pagoda Parking lot.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the majority of the cost to gate the Pagoda parking lot was for paving and work to improve storm water drainage, not the actual gating. She expressed her belief in the need for the gates to protect the assets located on Mt. Penn.

Mr. Kissinger noted that if gates are installed at the List Road intersection, the City could consider relocating the Pagoda parking lot gate. He added that the Gorilla Glue vandalism of gate locks is ongoing. He stated that Public Works has advised the emergency management team that if they need access locked trails to cut the chains and they will be replaced or repaired.

Mr. Lloyd noted that the Preserve is a linear park and agreed with the gating. He suggested using electronic gating that can easily be assessed with a fob for first responders and others approved by the municipalities.

- Environmental - report attached to the agenda

Written Reports from Preserve Stakeholders

The written report from BAMBA is attached to the agenda.

Other

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that at the July 27th MP3 meeting, Mr. Reinert made remarks about the competition between the Pagoda Skyline and Pagoda Foundation organizations. She noted that both the Fire Tower and Pagoda have capital needs. She also noted that relationships between organizations change as needs and work plans change.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the gift shop was removed from the Pagoda when the Fire Marshal closed the Pagoda due to structural problems. She stated that the chairs of both organizations had a meeting and relationships are repaired.

Mr. Rock noted that he participated in the discussion at the July 27th meeting and he apologized if he misspoke, noting that the comments he made were based on his understanding of current events.

Mr. Rock stated that there is interest in installing a ~~storage shed~~ pavilion on the Tower property. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz asked Mr. Rock to speak with the City's managing director about this need.

Mr. Barnhardt adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:20 pm.

→ The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be held on Wednesday, November 30, 2022 at 6 pm. at the Alsace Twp Building.

→ The retreat for MP3 COG board members is on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 from 5-7 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary

Action Items:

1. Linda - RFP re Dumping advertised through City Purchasing office, bids due 10-23
2. Linda – draft security camera RFP for Skyline – List Rd Overlook to Pagoda
3. Lee - prepare framework for Nov 15th Retreat
4. Environmental Committee – develop monthly clean-up schedule in coordination with City Solid Waste manager
5. Linda & Lester – assist Lower Alsace in obtaining ballpark cost to gate Skyline at List Road
6. Linda – follow-up with managing director re ARPA funding for the trail study
7. Application for Imagine Berks