



Mt. Penn Preserve Partnership (MP3)

Board of Director's Meeting

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Virtual Meeting

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

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

Others attending: A. Showers, J. Frank, L. Kissinger, R. Rock, L. Lloyd, D. Hunter

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 6:03 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 January 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 \$40,369.72 after the deposit of \$4,000 in annual member dues.

The Treasurer's Report was approved on motion by Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz, second by Mr. Olsen and approved unanimously.

MP3 COG REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Deer Management at Antietam

Mr. Barnhardt reported that the 2nd phase of deer management at Antietam was postponed after the State Game Commission asked the US Department of Agriculture to hold off. The

1st phase removed 26 deer, leaving the deer density at 83 deer per square mile. The desired deer density for healthy forest habitat is 20-25 deer per square mile.

B. Coordinated Approach to Dumping RFP

Mr. Pottiger stated that an RFP through the County Joint Purchasing Council was suggested by the County's Executive Director of the Solid Waste Authority. RFPs through the Council are handled by the City's Purchasing Coordinator. Mr. Pottiger began drafting the RFP and passed it over to Ms. Kelleher to finalize. Ms. Kelleher and the City's Solid Waste Manager completed the draft in December. The City Purchasing Coordinator recommended placing the RFP on PennBid.

(Note: The Purchasing Coordinator provided the schedule on March 24th - Advertised: 3/28, Questions due: 4/11, Addendum: 4/19, Due: 4/27 @ 3 on Penn Bid)

C. DCNR Grant Trail Feasibility Study and Forest Management Plan

Ms. Showers explained that an application for County ARPA funding for the MP3 Trail Feasibility Study was prepared by Mr. Lloyd from Berks Nature. The applications are due on March 31st.

Mr. Barnhardt recused himself from this discussion, as the County Commissioners will be considering the approval/rejection of the applications received. He asked Mr. Olsen to lead this discussion.

Ms. Showers explained that the MP3 Board needs to choose one of two options prior to submitting the application and summarized in an email message from Mr. Lloyd:

Option 1. Keep the total project cost at \$835,000 then the application request would be for \$209,000. That would require a \$285,000 cash match and that would require a DCNR implementation grant application or some other grant in year 2 to obtain the rest of the match.

Option 2. Narrow the project focus to create a total project cost of \$380,000 with a \$285,000 cash match and a request for \$95,000. We would still be able to do the Trail and Forest Plan and some implementation work and also Reading will spend \$75,000 per year on implementation work.

The group questioned if the match has to be in hand when the application is sent. Mr. Lloyd expressed the belief that the MP3 has a partial match due to the City, County and Berks nature contributions; however, no one knew if the match was required when the application is submitted.

The group suggested that the MP3 Vice-Chair be listed as the Contact on the grant application.

After a lengthy discussion Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Ms. Kelleher, to make application for County ARPA funding using Option 2 above. The motion was approved by K. Mallatratt, L. Kelleher, L. Olsen, D. Pottiger, J. Moore, T. Goodman, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz with K. Barnhardt abstaining.

Mr. Barnhardt returned to chair the remainder of the meeting.

D. Pagoda Trail Update

Mr. Kissinger stated that the risk and safety issues have been resolved and that the administration has authorized the installation of the trail markers. Mr. Kissinger stated that he will be contacting those who worked on the Pagoda Trail to walk the area and determine the location of the signs.

Ms. Showers suggested unveiling the Pagoda Trail at the Earth Day event. Everyone agreed.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested doing a clean-up at the Pagoda end of the trail prior to the unveiling to remove the trash that has accumulated. Ms. Showers stated that she will contact Mr. Brophy who has organized various preserve clean-ups.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need to make sure that the end of the trail is not impacted by the study of the Pagoda wall which is scheduled to begin soon. Mr. Kissinger stated that if there is a conflict the end of the trail can be temporarily relocated.

E. MP3 Staff Update

Ms. Showers stated that to date she has not had the time to do further work on the DCNR Circuit Rider grant program and application. She stated that she can begin on that project when the Pagoda Trail project and ARPA application are completed.

F. Strategic Plan

Mr. Barnhardt stated that a meeting is planned for April 30th at the Liederkrantz to define the MP3's 3-5 year work plan. He stated that at first blush the group considered defining the work plan and meeting with the preserve non-profit partners. However, it may work better to separate the two meetings – moving the meeting with the preserve partners to July/August. He noted that Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested having Sharon Mast act as facilitator at the July/August meeting with the preserve partners and having her sit in at the April 30th session for background.

Ms. Mallatratt stated that if Ms. Mast is sitting in on April 30th, the preserve partners should also participate so she can learn a bit about that factor. She suggested having the preserve partners' discussion from 8-9:30 am.

Mr. Olsen noted the need for a MP3 board discussion on the 30th and limiting the preserve partners to the major 4 – Pagoda-Skyline, Pagoda Foundation, BAMBA and BMR SCCA. As an introduction they will be asked to cover their general mission, 5 year plan and succession plan. More detail can be covered in the July/August session.

Ms. Kelleher suggested the following schedule for the 30th:

8-9:30 am – major 4 preserve partners

9:30-10:30 – MP3 Board discussion

10:30-1 pm - Committee input & lunch

1-1:30 pm - MP3 Board discussion

Everyone agreed with the proposed schedule and with Mr. Barnhardt's suggestion to have 2 representatives from each of the 4 committees attend. Ms. Kelleher was asked to send the invitations.

Mr. Rock stated that BMR and Pagoda-Skyline have conflicts on the 30th as that is the day of the Pagoda-Skyline chicken dinner event at the Fire Tower. He stated that BMR is responsible for set up that starts at approximately 8 am. He suggested adding input from stakeholders to each MP3 agenda. He stated that the 2022 hill climbs are scheduled for June 25-26 and August 20-21.

Mr. Barnhardt agreed noting that stakeholders will be expected to provide a written report that can be attached to the agenda allowing the board to review the report in advance and preventing the need for a lengthy discussion at the meeting.

F. MOUs with Preserve based organizations

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this can be covered after the July/August meeting with the preserve partners.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS – submission in written form only

- Finance & Capital –report attached to the agenda
- Promotions & Marketing – report attached to the agenda
- Public Safety - report attached to the agenda
- Environmental - report attached to the agenda

Ms. Kelleher asked Mr. Kissinger to update the board on the work to BAMBA's work on the A Line trail. Mr. Kissinger stated that BAMBA funded the repair of illegal revisions made to the A Line trail by an unknown group that created public safety hazards. That work has been completed and the next phase is being considered.

Other Business

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Mr. Olsen, to add reports from preserve stakeholders as a standard agenda item and requiring that reports are submitted in writing a week prior to the meeting so they can be attached to the published agenda. The motion was unanimously approved.

The group discussed returning to in-person meetings without the use of a hybrid application.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Ms. Mallatratt, to return to in-person meetings without use of a hybrid application on May 25th at 6 pm at Alsace Township Municipal Building. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Barnhardt adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:05 pm. The next regular meeting of the MP3 COG will be held on May 25, 2022 at 6 pm. at the Alsace Twp Building.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary

Action Items:

1. Linda - update on the RFP re Dumping and send out through City Purchasing office to Penn Bid
2. Kim – prepare 501c3 application – note the MP3 is recognized by the State as a non-profit; however an IRS 501c3 application must be submitted
3. Linda – April 30th Invitations sent via email on April 7th – due date April 20th
4. MP3 staffing – Ashley to apply for DCNR Peer Study/Circuit Rider program
5. Lester - arrange walking meeting re placement of Pagoda Trail markers
6. Ashley - County ARPA Grant Application re Berks Nature re Trail Feasibility Study and Forest Management Plan
7. Kevin - follow-up with Mt. Penn re withdrawal from the MP3 after the vacant Council seat appointments are made.
8. Linda - add written reports from stakeholders to agenda