



140 College Drive, Pottstown, PA 19464 | PARRCoordinator@gmail.com | 484-945-0200

PARRC Meeting Minutes

February 27th, 2021

a Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Cathy Paretti, Upper Pottsgrove Township
Michael Lenhart, Borough of Pottstown
Bill Keohane, Lower Pottsgrove Township
Karen Nocella, East Coventry Township
Charlie Valentine, West Pottsgrove Township
Pete Hiryak, Douglass Township
Jay Erb, North Coventry Township

Liz Willow, East Coventry Township
Erica Batdorf, North Coventry Township
Scott Wagner, Upper Pottsgrove Township
Flora Kapp, East Coventry Township
Craig Colistra, PAHWF
Danielle Baer, Community Planner, MCPC
Rachael Griffith, Trails/Open Space Planner, CCPC

Meeting notes:

1. Call to Order – 4:05.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introductions were made.
4. Meeting minutes from January 27th, 2021 were motioned for approval by K. Nocella, C. Paretti seconded, B. Keohane abstained and were approved.
5. Presentations – Representative Pennycuick was scheduled to meet with PARRC tonight but cancelled.

Hayfields – Andrew Frankenfield, Penn State Ag Extension Educator presented a summary of converting open space areas in grass to hayfields. Most farmers like long-term leases on a property so they can take care of the soil to produce a productive crop over a long period of time. He can send PARRC a lease example. Some municipalities charge a rent or fee per acre. Depending on the type of crop or hayfield, this fee may be nominal or none. The farmer will add the property to his Conservation Plan that needs to be submitted to the County for approval. The plan outlines methods to reduce erosion and sedimentation. The farmer or a municipality can pay for a Conservation Plan. If the municipality pays for it, they can make recommendations for the farmer to consider based on specific needs and residents' concerns. Common farming methods, such as early morning or late evening noise, spraying, cultivating, spreading of manure and production of dust may be disruptive to neighbors. Nearby residents need to be notified of change in land use and apprised of the possible impacts. Most farmers will fertilize in the spring, control weeds and arrange for 3 cuttings during the productive season. A hayfield is not good productive forever and may need to be tilled under and ag crops, such as soybean or corn produced for a year before returning it back to a hayfield. This also helps to interrupt perennial and annual weed cycles. The Extension Service partners with some farmers to do research. Farmers are to be licensed to spray herbicides. The leases a Township holds with a farmer should have an indemnification clause to release the Township of liabilities. Local farmers should be given the chance to farm the tract. If none nearby, the County Farm Bureau can help locate some. Some farmers do hayfields, some do ag crops and some do both.

Meadows – Abigail Reiter, Ag Conservation Specialist, MCCD, presented a summary of converting open space areas to meadows. The Conservation District provides technical assistance and has a no till drill they loan that plants seeds for a meadow. The drill needs a 35 HP tractor to operate it effectively. A meadow can be in a wet, dry, sunny or shady location. Seed costs can be up to \$700/acre. They use a lot of seed from Ernst Seed Company. The lifespan of a native meadow is about 12 – 15 years before it needs to be renovated. They have a grant program and can assist with funds to start a meadow. The no till drill can be used for large hayfields/meadows and for a small area, a landscaper can use their own seeder. To start a new meadow in an existing grass area, all grass/weeds need to be killed by an herbicide. The grass can be cut short and left in place to die as it acts to control erosion and the seeds planted in the soil will come up through the dead grass. The



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best time to plant is in the fall, September/October, as the cold snap is required for the seeds. It may take 2 – 3 years for a hayfield/meadow to fully mature. The district partners with schools to do meadows. In a floodplain, it is better to use a no till drill in existing grass areas or erosive areas as it helps to keep erosion down and seeds can come through the dead grass. Weeds are carried in during floods so there may have to be spot spraying in the first few years. Can control the growth of trees and shrubs by mowing once a year in late fall. It is difficult to have a meadow in the woods as tree and shrub seeds are produced every year and control is more intensive. The no till drill that is in Montgomery County could be used in Chester County if in the right area. A Conservation Plan can cost several hundred to several thousand dollars depending on the use. The Conservation Plan stays in place until management of the land changes or crop changes significantly.

6. Executive and Sub-Committee reports.

Treasurers report – M. Lenhart & B. Keohane have been added to the bank account as signers with C. Paretti. There is \$300.00 in the account. She will use the PARRC letterhead for the yearly invoices and add her name, address and email to it.

7. Old Business –

- a. Status of Recreation Programs – C. Colistra will finalize the report for the next PARRC meeting for members to review.
- b. Intern for 2021 – C. Colistra would like to continue the Internship program to support PARRC and the Coordinator. He would like to have a Communications Intern and a Research Intern for 2, 20 hour/week part-time assistance. Intern position descriptions are on the PARRC website.
- c. Coordinator/Planner position – There are 8 candidates that have responded to the job posting. Most have seen the posting on the NRPS website. C. Colistra responds to the emails. He will merge all the resumes into one document and send them out to the committee for review and ranking. Sue Landes is ranking them as well. The meeting to discuss the candidates is March 9th. M. Lane will resend the link to the Gmail account in case members have not reviewed the resumes yet.

8. New Business –

- a. Report on tasks completed to date by Planner - No questions concerning tasks completed. The Strategic Plan is completed. Barbara Heller will present it at the PMRPC meeting tonight and if there are any comments, they will be incorporated into the plan. She will then develop an Executive Summary for the PARRC website. It was discussed if the Executive Summary and the full report should be added to the PARRC website. There was no decision made. M. Lenhart reviewed the short-term tactics and asked the members to think about what sub-committee they would like to serve on and discuss it at the March PARRC meeting. M. Lane discussed revising the New Business category in the Agenda and to pull out “The Report on tasks completed to date” and “Active implementation of projects utilizing PARRC assistance” to a separate report. Members approved of the change. M. Lane added a Members tab to the PARRC website so PARRC members could access PARRC documents. M. Lane discussed aligning open space acquisitions on a regional basis to form larger cross-municipal Greenways. Montgomery County is doing that now and R. Griffith requested GIS info from D. Baer to add to their Chester County database of information.
- b. Active implementation of projects utilizing Planner assistance - No questions concerning projects assisted.



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9. Grant Announcements and Partner Updates –

- a. Grant Announcements – M. Lane discussed the grants submitted and grants to be submitted. The DCED grant round is open this spring. PAHWF reviewed the LOI's and will be announcing the awards in a few days.
- b. Partner Updates –
 - i. Douglass – No updates.
 - ii. East Coventry – The Park & Rec Board has been discussing turning some fields and riparian areas into meadows and if farm fields can be converted to meadows. They are considering applying to the American Rivers grant for a riparian buffer planting in Ellis Woods Park. They are waiting to hear from PECO about their Wayfinding grant. The signs they purchased from iZone is in Texas and due to the storm, will be delayed in shipping. The Fall Festival is scheduled for September and may have a pickleball tournament. The 5K is rescheduled for April 22nd. They are looking for invasive plant removal guidance. R. Griffith suggested that they use their Open Space funds to hire someone to remove the invasives and then the Township could manage them. Their spring newsletter will be out soon.
 - iii. Lower Pottsgrove – Gerald Richards Park project construction plans are being reviewed by the Conservation District for the next phase of construction. They are considering project funding for amenities in the lower section of Sanatoga Park. They have had discussions with Pottsgrove Future Falcons football league for fields in Pleasantview Park. They need to amend the Master Plan for the park. The league is comprised of K – 8th graders and cheerleaders.
 - iv. North Coventry – The construction of the SRT will be started March 1st and be gravel. The next year, they will pave it after PECO shuts down electric lines over the trails so the construction trucks can go through safely. The Coventry Trail trailhead is 1/3 through engineering design. They are looking to extend the Coventry Trail at Cedarville Road into East Coventry Township. There is no SRT activity in Lower Pottsgrove Township.
 - v. Borough – Projects for 2022 include: The Memorial Park Bridge and Streambank Restoration project. The RFP for engineering design is out to replace the bridge and abutments and stabilize the banks. Riverfront Park Bridge Embankment project needs streambank stabilization at the bridge over the Manatawny Creek. Pollock Park needs more testing of contaminated soil on adjacent property owners but owners are reluctant to comply. Across the street from Pollock Park, 860 Cross Street will be capped and the Borough will acquire it after it is sealed. The acreage will help them with a 6F violation in Memorial Park. Ricketts Center is doing well and being rehabbed by Boyertown Multi-Services. New LED lights were added to the gym and water is being removed from the rear block walls. Boyertown Multi-Services is looking to extend the lease.
 - vi. Upper Pottsgrove – The Open Space & Rec Board has reorganized and there is a new Chair. They are looking at maintenance of each open space and are looking into more meadows and/or farm fields to lease. A new consultant for Hollenbach Park Master Plan was chosen, CMC Engineering. They are doing weekly meeting for each Township Board to keep Commissioners informed of open space needs. Sunset Park trail work is still proceeding.
 - vii. West Pottsgrove – For the Trex bench program, North Coventry and West Pottsgrove Township have signed up. They have 500 pounds of plastic and awarded 38 pounds to North Coventry and 37 pounds to West Pottsgrove. It was suggested adding an announcement of the program in the



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- viii. Township Newsletter or website to get resident interested or have an outside organization run the program for them.
 - ix. MCPC – The Progress Reports are due for the mini-grants. They have a survey out for residents to comment on for improvements to different pikes in the area. Swamp Pike is the road in our area.
 - x. CCPC – They are having an Open Space Summit to celebrate open space success on April 29th at 6:30 PM. They are unveiling a website that has tools and information to help municipalities preserve open space, such as cluster zoning, ag zoning, TDR zones, open space ordinances and Ag Security areas. A map will be publicly available.
 - xi. PAHWF – Their board reviewed the LOI’s last night and award decisions will be made by Friday or Monday. Shared Schoolyard meeting is tomorrow morning at 9:00 AM. They are creating maps of gaps where no parks or schools are to serve the public. It will be done in May and sent to PARRC.
10. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.
11. Action items – PARRC voted on and approved the Letter of Support for the Memorial Park Bridge and Streambank Restoration project. B. Keohane made the motion and K. Nocella seconded. M. Lenhart abstained.
12. Next Meeting Date – March 24, 2021 at 4:00 PM. It will be held virtually. John Richards from PAHWF will be at the next PARRC meeting.
13. Executive Session – M. Lenhart discussed the Executive Session before the March meeting to discuss the candidates for the Planner position.

Adjournment – 6:23 PM

Recorder: M. Lane

2021 Meeting Schedule

(All meetings to be held at 5:00 PM in the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation Conference Room, 152 East High Street, 5th floor, Pottstown, PA 19464 unless otherwise noted):

*January 27 February 24 March 24 April 28 May 26 June 23 July 28 August 25 September 22
October 27 December 1*

Next meeting: March 24, 2021 Location: Virtual Meeting 4:00 PM