



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

## **PARRC MEETING MINUTES**

April 26, 2023-A hybrid meeting

### **In attendance:**

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

Rich Sichler, Washington Township  
Craig Colistra, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation  
Tricia McCloskey, PARRC Regional Recreation Planner  
Emma Heffner, PARRC Recreation Assistant  
Tim Konetchy, Montgomery County Planner  
Ed Washington, Pottstown Borough Resident  
Julie Fitzpatrick, Executive Director-PA Downtown Center

### **Meeting Notes:**

1. Call to Order- 4:30pm and Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Welcome, around of introductions were made for and attendees included Emma Heffner, the new PARRC Recreation Assistant, Ed Washington, a Pottstown resident and Julie Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of the PA Downtown Center.
3. Meeting minutes from March 22, 2023, were motioned for approval by B. Keohane and seconded by C. Paretti; all approved. There were no abstentions.
4. Public Comment included comments from E. Washington regarding the parks he visits in the Pottstown area and how he enjoys spending time in Pottstown parks and they are in good condition.
5. A presentation was made by J. Fitzpatrick about the Nature Based Placemaking program. J. Fitzgerald explained that she lives in the Borough of Marietta, a small river town along the Susquehanna River. She explained that the regional trail along the river has made a positive impact on the economy of the and region, doubling the town's population during summer weekends. J. Fitzgerald explained that Nature Based Placemaking (NBPM) takes a Main Street Approach and seeks to build economic development and revitalization based on an area's natural and recreation resources. The program is built on the four main principals of economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization. COVID illustrated the importance of not only parks and recreation but also downtowns, and that we are now in a period that has gone from disinvestment in downtowns to reinvestment. Group discussion took place regarding the perspectives of the townships and the Borough. J. Fitzpatrick indicated that when starting a NBPM program, it is assumed that the community's or region's recreational assets are already in place. J. Fitzpatrick stated that a request was made to the Governor for investment in the Outdoor Recreation Industry and Planning, which may support the NBPM program. B. Keohane comments that two of PARRC's main objectives are health and wellness and economic development. He indicated that right now he feels that happens organically and not necessarily intentionally or strategically. C. Paretti commented on how NBPM ties in with township goals and the overall mission of the township. P. McCloskey asked the group if the next step would be to explore funding and project partners and if she would be able to speak generally with J. Fitzpatrick. B. Keohane stated he thought that Rep. Ciresi may be interested in this as well. P. McCloskey to share J. Fitzpatrick's contact information

with the group. M. Lenhart stated that the NBPM program could be one of the first items to be handled by the PARRC Foundation.

6. Executive and Subcommittee Reports.
  - a. Treasurer's Report. C. Paretti previously provided the Financial Report and it was accepted by the Committee. [M. Lenhart shared the screen with the Financial Report]. C. Paretti stated that there is \$17,966.95 in checking and \$7565.03 in savings. C. Paretti stated that the reason for the low savings balance is because she sent the second installment for the planner contract. C. Valentine made a motion to accept the PARRC monthly financial statement. The motion was seconded by B. Keohane. All were in favor and there were no abstentions.
  - b. Events Subcommittee. C. Colistra stated that the subcommittee needs to meet. He discussed the October 2022 Empower Your Park event and asked the committee about their level of interest in holding a spring event. National trails Day is the first Saturday in June and could be a good day to hold a volunteering event. C. Paretti stated that a volunteer event will be held at Prout Farm Park. K. Nocella asked if E. Heffner could do a scavenger hunt in the Nature Preserve. C. Colistra also mentioned the popularity of geocaching in parks, which is like a scavenger hunt using GPS to locate small items placed by others in parks and along trails. The potential for E. Heffner to lead PARRC birding events was discussed.
  - c. Financial Sustainability Subcommittee. M. Lenhart reported that the Financial Sustainability Committee met to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding and Funding Resolution for the next five years of PARRC. M. Lenhart discussed the need for the policy language to be reviewed by an attorney. The numbers in the table within the MOU must be discussed in executive session due to salary information regarding the MOU and funding resolution for the next state of PARRC.
  - d. DEI Subcommittee. T. McCloskey stated that she is in contact with Deborah Vereen, owner of the Vereen Group, and she is working on a proposal to provide training for PARRC. B. Keohane stated that he discussed the training with Lower Pottsgrove and township staff and the Board of Commissioners are interested in the training. M. Lenhart also stated that Pottstown's elected officials are interested in the training too.
7. County Planner Updates. T. Konetchy stated that County is holding a Hazardous Waste drop off event, and people can sign up for a spot ahead of time. One location will be Boyertown Middle School East. Another event will be held in the fall. The County has also adopted its Hazard Mitigation Plan. He explained that this plan need to be adopted by the County in order to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funds. T. Konetchy also shared that nominations for the Montgomery Awards are due by May 8<sup>th</sup>. He also stated that the fifth round of Minigrants opens in the fall and that shared use/shared schoolyards is a new priority in the grant program. T. Konetchy stated that he needs the PMRPC progress report for Douglass Township, and T. McCloskey stated she will get it to him. S. Buck was not able to make the meeting but provided an update. T. McCloskey stated that S. Buck shared that a Trails and Transportation meeting will be held on May 9th at the Wet Whiteland Township building at that you can also attend the meeting virtually.
8. Planner Report and Quarterly Report. M. Lenhart shared that Planner's Report on the screen, and T. McCloskey went through the Planner's Report with the Committee. Items included the submission of several grant applications to PAHWF and DCNR for park and recreation projects, the hiring of the Recreation Assistant, and coordination with the IRS for the PARRC Foundation. T. McCloskey also presented the Quarterly Report. Highlights of the report included receipt of \$498,000 in grant funding in Q1, for East Coventry and Douglass. T. McCloskey also reviewed her utilization, indicating the administration and regional projects numbers were high due to the work involved in hiring the Recreation Assistant.

9. Old Business

- a. PARRC Nonprofit Designation Update. M. Lenhart discussed the completion of a form required for the IRS. T. McCloskey stated that she spoke with the IRS agent handling the document and he indicated that he received the completed form and would close the case. T. McCloskey stated she hoped we would have the PARRC Foundation nonprofit designation in 90 days. M. Lenhart stated we should reverify the Board members for the PARRC Foundation. B. Keohane stated that we can put an article in the Sanatoga Post once the PARRC Foundation is official. T. McCloskey will write this up.

10. New Business. None.

11. Grant Announcements. M. Lenhart read the upcoming grant deadlines for the Schuylkill Highlands Minigrants and the DCED Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program. M. Lenhart stated that he will discuss a potential DCED grant with T. McCloskey.

12. Partner Updates:

- North Coventry: J. Erb discussed the upcoming Coventry Woods Festival and its festivities, including the annual goat race and cow plop bingo. He also stated the Festival will have a new element this year, Art in the Woods, a juried art show.
- Douglass: M. Powanda stated he that township received its Local Shares Grant for its park equipment. He discussed the staff level grants meeting that was recently held, and the upcoming Douglass Park pickleball-tennis court resurfacing project and is waiting on receipt of playground equipment to install in Douglass Park.
- East Coventry: K. Nocella stated that the Bluebird Box event is coming up and that June 3<sup>rd</sup> is National Trails Day.
- Lower Pottsgrove: B. Keohane welcomed E. Heffner to the team. He stated that Easter Egg Hunt went off with about 150 kids and that the Pottsgrove Softball Team helped out. The township has signed an MOU with Adventure Grove Playground to establish an adaptive playground in Sanatoga Park and a concert will be held at the park to benefit the playground.
- Pottstown Borough: M. Lenhart reported that the Pow Wow on the Manatawny is on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at Riverfront Park. Grand Entry is at 12pm. He stated that the pedestrian bridge for Memorial Park is now in fabrication and should be installed by the end of next year. The permit for the pedestrian bridge in Riverfront Park has been received and construction should begin in August. M. Lenhart also reported the arts project is now underway in the Borough and the first signal box has been completed. M. Lenhart thanked T. McCloskey for her work on the project.
- Upper Pottsgrove: C. Paretti stated that work continues on implementation of the Hollenbach Park Master Plan and the Falcon Trail. She stated that the work on the mural on Veterans Island will begin in June. She later stated that a cleanup event will be held in Memorial Park on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.
- West Pottsgrove: C. Valentine stated that a new Wawa may be constructed on High Street at Grosstown Road and this may have a positive effect for users of the Schuylkill River Trail.
- Washington Township: R. Sichler stated that the Township had another monthly meeting for the preparation of the new Township Parks and Open Space Plan and that the public survey component is now closed, with 150 completed surveys.
- PAHWF: C. Colistra stated that he is impressed with the Public Arts project and the mural at High and Hanover Streets. He stated the art has made a positive change to that corner and the streetscape in general.

13. Action Items. None.

14. Next PARRC meeting-M. Lenhart stated that the next PARRC meeting will be held on 5/24, and to send all agenda items to T. McCloskey. B. Keohane stated that it should be noted in the minutes that the letter to Elverson Borough regarding PARRC membership was sent and the item is completed.
15. Adjournment- A Motion to Adjourn was made by C. Paretti and seconded by C. Valentine; meeting adjourned at 6:15pm.