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## **PARRC MEETING MINUTES**

### March 27, 2024-A hybrid meeting

#### **In attendance:**

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

Mark McKinnie, Upper Pottsgrove Township  
Craig Colistra, Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation  
Tim Konetchy, Montgomery County Planning Commission  
Steve Buck, Chester County Planning Commission  
Tricia McCloskey, PARRC Regional Recreation Planner  
Shelley Kriczky, PARRC Recreation Assistant  
Cathy Paretti, PARRC Treasurer

#### **Meeting Notes:**

1. Call to Order- 4:33pm and Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Welcome and Introductions. No introductions were needed.
3. Approval of meeting minutes from February 28, 2024. Two edits were noted by B. Keohane and C. Valentine. The minutes with the noted revisions were motioned for approval by B. Keohane and seconded by J. Erb. The motion was approved with no objections or abstentions.
4. Public Comment-None.
5. Executive and Subcommittee Reports.
  - a. Treasurer's Report. C. Paretti previously provided the Financial Report and it was accepted by the Committee. C. Paretti stated that the savings account balance is \$63,484.00 and the checking account balance is \$8,452.88. C. Paretti stated that the invoice from Schuylkill River Greenways has not yet been received and she called Tim Fenchel. C. Paretti stated she will prepare municipal invoices for the 2025 municipal contributions. M. Lenhart stated that a new MOU will be needed and asked when is SRG's fiscal year. C. Colistra stated that the operating year runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. SRT will provide the financial report in September which will indicate any unspent funds. T. McCloskey discussed that PARRC can receive a discount on Quickbooks software through TechSoup, and indicated she would look into it. A motion was made by M. Bedle to accept the March Financial Report to PARRC. The motion was seconded by C. Valentine. The motion was approved with no objections or abstentions.
  - b. Events Subcommittee. M. Lenhart stated that the Borough will partner with Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy to hold a volunteer stream cleanup on the Monocacy Creek. J. Erb stated that North Coventry is pushing their event to the fall. T. McCloskey stated Upper Pottsgrove may be partnering with the Althouse Arboretum for a spring cleanup day. M. McKinnie stated that this was confirmed with the Arboretum and will be held on April 14<sup>th</sup>. M Douglass Township. He stated the program will be a cleanup and trail building on the newly acquired Kehl react adjacent to the Arboretum. M. Powanda stated that Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy is holding about 100 stream cleanups within the watershed and one will be held at Smith Road Park in Douglass Township.

- c. Financial Sustainability Subcommittee. M. Lenhart stated that no meeting had been scheduled and that there was no report. B. Keohane asked if C. Paretti's name had been removed from the Financial Sustainability Committee and should M. McKinnie be asked to join. M. McKinnie stated he will join the Committee. C. Paretti will also attend the meetings. M. Lenhart stated that he and B. Keohane need to run the numbers on what adding a ninth or tenth member to PARRC would look like financially.
  - d. DEI Subcommittee. C. Colistra stated that he and T. McCloskey continue to discuss the survey further and have review questions from similar surveys. M. Lenhart said he met a woman at the PRPS Conference who might speak with us regarding accessibility issues. B. Keohane indicated his company is getting much more diverse and that PARRC should take this into consideration with respect to programming, for example not everyone celebrates Easter. T. McCloskey stated she is seeking additional grant funds for the survey.
6. County Planner Updates. T. Konetchy stated that the twenty acre Renninger farm was preserved in Douglass Township. The County is also working on its Vision Zero Plan to reduce pedestrian and cyclist deaths. He also stated that Round 4 grant closeouts are due at the end of the next month, and that he has received most of the signed contracts back on the new round. T. Konetchy stated that the New York Times did an article on pedestrian deaths in the US versus Europe, and several factors affect the rates in the US, including larger size of vehicles, and the use of automatic transmissions versus manual in the US. K. Nocella asked if there are the trail easements on the Renninger farm. T. Konetchy stated that only the development rights were purchased, and that agricultural easements preclude trail development. K. Nocella indicated that she is currently working on two easements. The township manager is reviewing the trail entrance and exit points and having the trails closed where the engineer determines that it is unsafe. S. Buck shared that DVRPC's Regional Trails Program has opened. The program is funded by the William Penn Foundation to improve and expand the Circuit Trails network. The total amount to be awarded is \$2 million, each project is capped at \$200,000 and no match is required. Chester County has also released its new Heritage Tourism Plan, as well as two new Design Guidelines, one for Rural Landscapes and one for Village Preservation. The County is also hosting an HOA Sustainability seminar on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Chester County Intermediate Unit in Downingtown. K. Nocella asked about village design. S. Buck gave an example of St. Peters Village.
  7. Planner Report. T. McCloskey reviewed her work on the monthly Planner Report, including the submission of four PAHWF grant applications and an application to the PA Historic and Museum Commission for East Coventry Township. She also shared that \$60,000 in Yeck Foundation funding has been received. The Report was attached to the meeting agenda email.
  8. Old Business
    - a. PARRC Procedures. M. Lenhart stated that the revised PARRC Procedures were not adopted, and that the changes had been discussed at a previous meeting. A motion was made by B. Keohane to adopt the procedures dated 1/26/24 as amended. The motion was seconded by M. Bedle. The motion was approved with no objections or abstentions.
  9. New Business.
    - a. Trail Easements & Licenses. M. Bedle stated that Washington Township may have an opportunity to extend its trail from Barto Community Park onto a 100-acre property owned by a non-profit organization, and he is looking for input and tips on how to proceed. J. Erb asked if the trail will connect to trails together or will it be a loop. M. Bedle shared that the trail will be a loop. M. Bedle stated that a trail license will be easier to secure with the property owner because they can back out in the future if the situation changes, and it will not affect the trail in the park. M. Bedle also shared that he is meeting with his Board tomorrow to review draft easements. K. Nocella shared that she prefers easements

because they are in perpetuity. A discussion ensued regarding the need for a conservation easement on the Padre Pio property to prevent it from being developed. T. Konetchy shared that he will share language for the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance regarding trail development. T. McCloskey shared that she recently read Montgomery County's report regarding municipalities with open space funds. She stated that the Montgomery County PARRC communities without open space funds are Douglass and Lower Pottsgrove, and that they may experience more development pressure because they do not have access to these land preservation funds. B. Keohane asked about the costs of a trail easement. K. Nocella stated that it's based on the appraised value and is roughly \$10,000 per acre, and that the value of a trail easement is worth more than the value of a conservation easement. J. Erb shared that the appraisal for donated easements is for the landowner's taxes.

10. Grant Announcements. T. McCloskey reviewed open grant programs.

- a. T. McCloskey stated that the DCNR C2P2 grant round is due next week on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, and she is submitting three grant applications.
- b. T. McCloskey stated that as S. Buck shared, the Regional Trail Program is now open and due May 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- c. T. McCloskey stated that applications for funding under DCED's Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program are due May 31<sup>st</sup>. She asked the Committee to get all scopes of work to her as soon as possible.

11. Partner Updates.

- M. McKinnie, UPT-The spring cleanup event will be held at the Althouse Arboretum in April. The Arboretum recently won an award for its Environmental Information Program. The Township recently acquired 10 acres of open space on Gilbertsville Road.
- B. Keohane, LPT-The Easter Egg Hunt was a huge success and was held at Gerald Richards Park. In Sanatoga Park, the new pavilion is being constructed and concrete will be poured soon.
- J. Erb, NCT-A resident was thrilled to learn about the Chestnuthill Access at Coventry Woods. The resident is part of a homeschool group and wanted an alternate place to park. J. Erb thanks PAHWF for the funds that recently resurfaced the parking area and access drive.
- C. Valentine, WPT-No update.
- M. Bedle, WT-The Comprehensive Recreation, Park and Open Space Plan has been finalized. The Township received more acreage from the developer adjacent to Barto Community Park than was initially expected and has acquired 3.55 acres to add to the park. The Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy will hold a stream cleanup in Forgedale Park. Finally, Kutztown University students will conduct a wetlands study at three Township parks in 2024 and 2025.
- K. Nocella, EVT-The Township's 5k and 10k race on the Schuylkill River Trail will be held on April 13<sup>th</sup>. The stream cleanup is on the 20<sup>th</sup> at Parkerford.
- M. Powanda, DT- The Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy stream cleanup will be held at Smith Road Park on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The Douglass Park Tennis Court Project Township awarded the contract for the tennis court/pickleball court project. The Boyertown Baseball League donated funds to the Township to pave the area of the dugouts behind the fence which tends to get muddy. About 15 yards of concrete was poured for the project.
- M. Lenhart, PB-The Riverfront Bridge Project is underway and the streambank stabilization should be completed next week. The new bridge will be constructed in fall. The Memorial Park bridge project should run from April to June. Pottstown Borough received an Excellence in Recreation Award for the Manatawny Greens Spooky Golf program.

- C. Colistra, PAHWF-The Home Garden Contest, administered by the Mosaic Land Trust has expanded to include all communities in PARRC. There are seven categories and cash prizes.
12. Action Items-M. Lenhart stated that the Financial Sustainability Committee should meet.
  13. Next PARRC meeting-M. Lenhart stated that the next PARRC meeting will be held on 4/24/24, and to send all agenda items to T. McCloskey.
  14. Adjournment- A Motion to Adjourn was made by J. Erb and seconded by B Keohane; the meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.