



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

## **PARRC Meeting Minutes**

June 23, 2021

a Virtual Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

Cathy Paretti, Upper Pottsgrove Township  
Michael Lenhart, Borough of Pottstown  
Charlie Valentine, West Pottsgrove Township  
Pete Hiryak, Douglass Township

Jay Erb, North Coventry Township  
Craig Colistra, PAHWF  
Rachel Griffith, Senior Trails and Open Space Planner, CCPC  
Tim Konetchy, Community Planner, MCPC  
Tricia McCloskey, PARRC Planner

### **Meeting notes:**

1. Call to Order – 4:03pm. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Introductions were made-The summer interns, Alyssa DeFlavia and Gina Gatto were introduced. Alyssa will be working with Tricia on social media and Gina will be working with Craig on collecting park data and GIS.
3. Meeting minutes from May 26, 2021, were motioned for approval by C. Paretti and seconded by C. Valentine with no revisions.
4. Presentation by Natural Lands.  
Jack Stefferud and Robyn Jeney gave a presentation to the group regarding Open Space Tax Programs. Highlights from the program included: open space taxes provide a revenue source that preserve quality of life, protects groundwater, and reduces traffic noise. A map was shown that provided information on townships with existing open space tax programs. Three enabling acts in PA support open space tax programs, including PL 992 of 1968, entitled "An act authorizing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the local government units thereof to preserve, acquire or hold land for open space uses," also Act 153 of 1996 and Act 115 of 2013. Act 115 states that open space taxes may now be used to develop, improve, design, engineer and maintain open space acquired with dedicated open space taxes in order to provide open space benefits. Setting up a political action committee can facilitate the development of the open space tax program prior to the referendum. Another issue to consider is the timing of when the question should be placed on the ballot: during the primary or the general election. The general election provides for a more balanced turnout of voters. Once the referendum passes, an ordinance must be passed that enacts the tax approved by the referendum. An Open Space Review Board will need to be established of between 5 and 7 residents who develops open space criteria and makes suggestions to the Board of Supervisors. The criteria must include a rating system by which to rank potential properties to conserve. Over 20 acres is the typical minimum standard but this can be adjusted up or down according to the needs of the community. Outreach must be conducted to residents and get their input regarding the location of important placed/properties in the township that may be in need of protection. 25% of open space funding can be used toward the improvement and maintenance of open space. A question was posed, which raises more taxes, income tax or property tax? Jack indicated that income tax raises more money than property taxes. C. Colistra asked if Natural Lands provides technical assistance for the development of open space tax programs and Jack indicated that they do, and it can be comprehensive or just meeting support. R. Griffith asked about the opportunities to protect smaller parcels like those 10 acres or less. Jack indicated that there is value to preserving parcel such as these so long as they contain attractive and valuable attributes.



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5. Executive and Sub-Committee reports.

Events Committee: C. Colistra stated that he, J. Erb and K. Nocella need to set up a meeting. C. Paretti indicated that the Revenue Sustainability Committee will begin to meet in July.

*Treasurers Report* – C. Paretti presented the report and stated there is \$5.00 in the savings account and \$21,804 in the checking account. C. Paretti stated that she was an additional \$14,336 to deposit but is waiting for more checks to come in before going to the bank. She stated that the municipal share is \$7,168 and that invoices are due at the end of the week.

6. Planner's Report. T. McCloskey reviewed the Quarterly Trail Sensor Report Data for the seven municipalities. She indicated that a few of the sensors need maintenance and she will attend to that. T. McCloskey also presented the Quarterly Utilization Report, which was combination her time and M. Lane's time. The highest category was Administration time, which Tricia thinks will decrease now that her training time and studying for the CPSI exam is over with. She is continuing to meet with township Boards and Commissions for introductions. Next on list are West Pottsgrove and East Coventry Township. She is working on four grant applications and several on-going trail and park projects.

7. Old Business –

- a. Interns for 2021 – C. Colistra asked the interns to talk a bit about what they would be doing for the summer. G. Gatto indicated that she has her degree from East Stroudsburg University and will be working with Craig on collecting data within the parks on visitor use data. G. Gatto mentioned her experience with using Strava to help collect data on the parks and along the trails and C. Colistra indicated an interest in looking into this. A. DeFlavia stated she is working on her degree at Drexel and will be working with T. McCloskey on social media engagement and marketing for PARRC.
- b. Strategic Plan – See notes under #5.
- c. PARRC Future Meetings/Format. August will be the first in-person meeting for PARRC. Currently, 10 people can be in the conference room at the same time. C. Paretti mentioned that Bill can get Sunnybrook if we need it. The July PARRC meeting will be on Zoom.

8. New Business –

- a. SOPARC Training – C. Colistra indicated that there was a small group for the training, and that there were a few last minute cancellations. He mentioned that if the training is held next year, he will schedule it for earlier in the season.
- b. 2021 PAWHF/PMRPC Grant Projects – T. McCloskey stated that the Strategic Plan grant was closed out, and T. Konetchy stated that the PMRPC grant for Ellis Woods Park was closed out. T. McCloskey mentioned that the SHCL mini-grant for the east Coventry signage project was submitted for closeout. C. Colistra mentioned that townships should be working with T. McCloskey to provide the documents necessary for closeout so that new grants can be applied for.

9. Grant Announcements

- a. Giant/Healing the Planet Grants. T. McCloskey mentioned that she is working on four applications for East Coventry, North Coventry, Upper Pottsgrove and Pottstown. They are due June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- b. PAWHF Winter Grant Round - C. Colistra discussed that the grant open July 1, and Letters of Interest are due August 1. PAWHF will hold a webinar next Wednesday to go over the new grant application frame work and T. McCloskey will attend.
- c. Schuylkill Highlands Mini-Grant Round – T. McCloskey stated the program is still not open.
- d. American Rescue Plan and Recover Act. T. McCloskey indicated that J. Erb sent her information on this program and that each municipality received a certain amount of funding from the state. Although it is not specifically stated, some of this recovery money might be able to be used towards parks and recreation. The funds were supposed to have been received by the end of June.



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10. Partner Updates –

- Douglass – P. Hiryak stated that the basketball courts at Douglass Park have been resurfaced and the township is working on finishing the drainage and landscaping so the grant can be closed out.
- East Coventry – No update.
- Lower Pottsgrove – No update.
- North Coventry – J. Erb indicated that they will be hosting a portion of the Rumble at River Bend Park, and that there are trail races being held in Coventry Woods. He also mentioned the boat dock project in Riverside Park and indicated that a general permit is needed but he is not sure of the current status of that permit.
- Pottstown Borough – M. Lenhart stated that the Rumble is taking place and looks like a more “regular” Rumble in terms of social distancing. Most of the planned fourth of July activities are set for downtown Pottstown. Only the fireworks display will be held at the park. Designers are working on the Riverfront Park drawings for the streambank stabilization project. \$125,000 was received from CFA, instead of the \$50,000 the Borough asked for.
- Upper Pottsgrove – C. Paretto indicated that Fox Hill Trail improvement project is well underway and that the closeout documents are started. The closeout documents for the Sunset Park improvements have been completed. The Open Space Committee is also looking into the algae problem at the pond in Sunset Park. J. Erb indicated they had a problem with algae and worked with Solitude Lake Management to control the problem.
- West Pottsgrove – No update.
- MCPC – Holding a webinar next Wednesday and the details are on the MPCP website
- PAHWF – No additional updates.
- CCPC – R. Griffith indicated that the county is getting questions about why the trail is still closed at Linfield Road. The new section is about halfway complete. The next round of Vision Partnership Program grants is opening in August, and there will be a mandatory pre-application meeting. A new Community Planning Director is coming on board soon.

11. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.

12. Action items – none.

13. Next PARRC Meeting Agenda items – Please send to T. McCloskey. The next meeting is July 28, 2021, at 4:00pm. It will be held virtually.

14. Adjournment – 5:25pm.

Recorder: T. McCloskey

**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: July 28, 2021    Location: Virtual Meeting 4:00 PM**