

**BIRMINGHAM TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY  
RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE (RPOS)**

**November 17, 2010**

Chairman Michael Langer called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Township Building. The following were in attendance:

Michael Langer	Chairman, RPOS Committee
Greg Kurey	Vice-Chairman, RPOS Committee
Mark Beauchamp	Member, RPOS Committee
Robert Main	Member, RPOS Committee
John Conklin	Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Judy Jensen	Secretary, RPOS Committee

Absent from the meeting were Members Dan Hill and Jeff Corrigan.

**APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2010 MEETING MINUTES**

Due to the lack of a quorum at the commencement of the meeting, approval of the September 15, 2010 RPOS minutes was tabled until the December RPOS meeting.

**BILLS**

There were no bills to review at tonight's meeting.

**INTERPRETIVE SIGNS**

Due to Mr. Hill's absence, a discussion of the interpretive sign project for Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill was tabled until the December RPOS meeting.

**TRAILS UPDATE**

At the August RPOS meeting, Sheila Fleming of the Brandywine Conservancy presented an update on the Brandywine Struble Trail initiative, which is aimed at cultivating a "greenway" and accompanying trail easements along the Brandywine River corridor. The project has been funded by a grant and involves several Townships in our area.

One of the concepts discussed at the August meeting was the feasibility of developing a trail along the Meetinghouse Road corridor. Mrs. Fleming noted that there was \$500 remaining in the grant and suggested using the funds to study the viability of establishing a trail that would connect Birmingham Hill and Sandy Hollow. After a lengthy discussion, which included consideration of the points of view of all stakeholders (state, county and local authorities, public and landowners potentially impacted), RPOS approved a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the remaining grant money be used to study the feasibility of establishing a connector trail between Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill.

At tonight's meeting, Mr. Kurey noted that based on the feasibility study, feedback from the community and all other factors under consideration for this potential project, RPOS should not continue to investigate the feasibility of a trail extension along Meetinghouse Road. Chairman Langer agreed, as did Mr. Main. Mr. Main also indicated that while he feels the trail study should be abandoned at this time, he would like to be able to revisit

the idea of an extension trail if a number of these factors change in the future.

Mr. Kurey made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that: (1) based on the initial feasibility study; (2) feedback from the community; and (3) all other factors under consideration for this potential project, that RPOS and the Township should not continue to investigate the feasibility of a trail extension along Meetinghouse Road at this point in time. Mr. Main seconded the motion. The motion was approved; all in favor.

Dave Murtagh, 1159 Meetinghouse Road, said beer cans and trash are often tossed onto Township roads and trails. He added that the fact that trash is left on trails is one of the reasons why residents are opposed to trails in the Township.

Doug Marshall, 1001 Meetinghouse Road, said that a contract clause with the Brandywine Conservancy requires the Township to clean up trash along the trail at Birmingham Hill. Mr. Conklin noted that the clause to which Mr. Marshall was referring to is not a contract between the Township and the Brandywine Conservancy. It is instead part of an arrangement between the Conservancy and the landowner. Mr. Conklin added that the trail at Sandy Hollow is on Township property, while the Birmingham Hill trail was developed on easements negotiated by the Brandywine Conservancy.

Chairman Langer thanked Mr. Marshall for regularly cleaning up trash along Meetinghouse Road. Concerning efforts by RPOS to keep the trails trash-free, Chairman Langer noted that RPOS holds an annual clean-up day at both Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill. Additionally, he and the other RPOS members regularly walk the two trails and pick up trash. Concerning dog waste left on the trails, Chairman Langer said that several months ago, RPOS evaluated the cost of installing dog waste disposal centers but declined to install one at Sandy Hollow due to the cost. Mr. Kurey has previously coordinated waste clean ups with high school students as a means to manage the problem at Sandy Hollow. RPOS will continue to consider feedback and reevaluate its options regarding dog waste at both parks.

Robert Aiken, 1225 Birmingham Road, noted that years ago, when he first moved to the Township, he could safely cross Birmingham Road on foot. Today, due to development and increased traffic, Mr. Aiken said the Township roads, including Birmingham Road, are not safe for walking and he does not feel that a trail could ever be developed that would allow walkers to safely cross Birmingham Road.

Lloyd Roach, 1025 Meetinghouse Road, noted that many residents along Meetinghouse Road put in a great deal of effort to keep the road clean of trash and debris. He said the residents along the road are not trying to be argumentative, but people and dogs on trails impact the efforts they have put into their surrounding area.

Debbie Hineman, 1200 Meetinghouse Road, asked for clarification of tonight's motion concerning the extension trail down Meetinghouse Road. Mr. Kurey restated that, based on the initial feasibility study, feedback from the community; and all other factors under consideration for this potential project, that RPOS should not continue to investigate the feasibility of a trail extension along Meetinghouse Road and the motion therefore recommends to the Board of Supervisors that the Township should not pursue the trail extension. Mrs. Hineman noted that the motion indicates that RPOS is not pursuing an

extension trail at this time, but wondered what steps would be taken if RPOS decides to pursue the extension trail at a future date. Chairman Langer said if the extension trail is ever considered again, landowners will be contacted and asked their opinion about the proposed trail. He added that Sheila Fleming of the Brandywine Conservancy initially contacted landowners and it was due to the lack of interest among the landowners, among other things, that tonight's motion to abandon consideration of the potential extension trail was passed.

Mrs. Hineman said there was an article in the local newspaper about the proposed Struble Greenway that indicated a trail might be developed along Meetinghouse Road. Chairman Langer said the Struble Greenway is a multi-Township effort and that given feedback from residents on Meetinghouse Road, it is unlikely that Meetinghouse Road would ever be considered for a trail.

Mr. Marshall said he is concerned that motions passed at RPOS meetings are not discussed at Board of Supervisors meetings. Chairman Langer said motions by RPOS are recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Some recommendations are approved by the Supervisors. Some are not.

Mike Ganges, 1178 Meetinghouse Road, suggested that an RPOS member attend Board of Supervisors meetings when a motion has been passed by RPOS. Mr. Kurey said that an RPOS member can attend the Board of Supervisors meeting to discuss any motions passed, including tonight's motion that recommends abandoning efforts to establish the connector trail.

## **2011 EVENT**

Mr. Kurey noted that the Township is approaching the 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding and that RPOS would like to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Township residents come together as a community to celebrate the anniversary. For the past several months, Mr. Kurey has been working on proposed ideas for the celebration, which he presented at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Kurey noted that, among other things, the primary purpose of the event would be to: (1) celebrate the founding of Birmingham Township; (2) inform residents and visitors about the Township's history and heritage; (3) formally recognize recent accomplishments; and (4) connect residents to the Township's numerous resources.

The tentative date for the 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration is Saturday, August 27, 2011 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The raindate is Saturday, September 3, 2011.

Since the event is in the early stages of planning, the exact costs are not known and activities have not been formalized. However, Mr. Kurey outlined many activities that will be considered by RPOS, including having reenactors at either Sandy Hollow or Birmingham Hill; a tour of the Lafayette Cemetery; educational programs for adults and children; educational games for children; high school theatrical involvement (story telling, historical characters); booths and presentations by local historical groups (Chadds Ford and Chester County Historical Societies, Brandywine Battlefield officials, Brandywine Conservancy); involvement of the Birmingham Friends; a display of artifacts found at Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill, as well as displays of artifacts from local contributors; and music (West Chester University Marching Band, Unionville High School

Marching Band, Fife and Drum Corp). Donations of water and snacks from local businesses are being considered, as well as donations of receptacles and recycling bins for trash. Volunteers will be sought for event set up and clean up.

Expenses could include costs associated with closing Birmingham Road during the event; PennDot permits; police presence; insurance for the event; and porta-potties.

Mr. Kurey said that in the coming months, RPOS will refine the schedule details and costs. In this regard, the committee will also seek feedback and direction from the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Roach said he thinks it's a wonderful idea to plan a community-wide celebration. He noted that he and his wife Jacqui helped plan the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and it was a wonderful day. To help plan for the anniversary celebration, Mr. Roach suggested Mr. Kurey consider seeking assistance from a professional event planner. He also said the Brandywine Visitors Bureau and the Delaware Valley Visitors Bureau might be able to help as well.

Mary Denadi, 1190 Meetinghouse Road, thanked Mr. Kurey for both the presentation on the proposed anniversary celebration and his hard work spearheading the planning the event.

Vaughn Hoplamazian, 1120 Meetinghouse Road, commended Mr. Kurey on his presentation, adding that he supports the proposed anniversary event and would be happy to volunteer some time to help with the event. He feels other residents would also be willing to volunteer time. Once the event activities are approved by the Board of Supervisors, a notice describing the event will be placed on the Township Web site. Mr. Kurey said a note seeking volunteer help could be included in the notice.

#### **SANDY HOLLOW/BIRMINGHAM HILL**

Mr. Beauchamp noted that the annual maintenance work at the two parks has been completed. Additionally, clean-up work was completed around the wall at Birmingham Hill on the Carroll's property. Mr. Beauchamp said RPOS needs to keep up with the wall during 2011 to insure that poison ivy does not grow back.

Chairman Langer said he received an initial quote of \$2,400 from Fenceworks to partially repair the stockade fences at Sandy Hollow. Additional detail is needed and a revised quote has been requested.

Jack Simpson, 1111 Meetinghouse Road, noted that someone drove through part of the fencing at Birmingham Hill. RPOS will look into the matter.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Hineman asked if a list of tonight's attendees could be included in the minutes. Chairman Langer said that due to privacy issues and established Township meeting protocol, only the names and addresses of those residents who spoke will be noted in the minutes.

Mr. Marshall asked how the Township can deal with the trash and debris on Township trails. Chairman Langer said RPOS has been very responsive to feedback about people

who use the trail and leave trash behind. RPOS is very sensitive to Township funds and has been trying to devise ways to keep the trails clean that will not impact the taxpayers. For example, the committee looked into installing a dog waste disposal center at Sandy Hollow, but found it to be expensive. Mindful of keeping costs down, Mr. Kurey has organized a group of high school students who volunteer to walk the trail at Sandy Hollow, picking up and disposing of trash. Mr. Kurey said perhaps RPOS could find a group of volunteers who would walk the trail once a month and pick up any trash and debris left on the trail. Mr. Marshall noted that perhaps volunteers could sign up to walk and clean sections of the trail on a regular basis.

The next RPOS meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2010.

With no further public comment, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Jensen  
RPOS Secretary