

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

September 15, 2010

Chairman Michael Langer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building. The following were in attendance:

Michael Langer	Chairman, RPOS Committee
Greg Kurey	Vice-Chairman, RPOS Committee
Dan Hill	Member, RPOS Committee
Jeff Corrigan	Member, RPOS Committee
Jay Monteith	Member, RPOS Committee
Robert Main	Member, RPOS Committee
John Conklin	Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Judy Jensen	Secretary, RPOS Committee

Absent from the meeting was Member Mark Beauchamp.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 16, 2010 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes for the June 16, 2010 RPOS meeting were approved, as written; all in favor.

Please note: There was no RPOS meeting in July.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 18, 2010 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes for the August 18, 2010 RPOS meeting were approved, as written; all in favor.

BILLS & EXPENDITURES

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

Concerning a possible expenditure at Birmingham Hill, Chairman Langer said that there is currently a problem with invasive plant growth between the fence and the wall along the trail on the Carroll's property. David Shields of the Brandywine Conservancy informed RPOS that it is the Township's responsibility to take care of the invasives. MAJIC Landscaping has indicated that they can eliminate the invasives at a cost of \$300. Chairman Langer said Mr. Beauchamp has recommended that RPOS approve the expenditure. Mr. Kurey made a motion to approve the work at Birmingham Hill by MAJIC Landscaping to clean up the invasive plant growth between the fence and the wall along the Carroll's property at a one-time cost of \$300. Mr. Hill seconded the motion. The motion was approved; all in favor. Mr. Conklin recommended that RPOS supervise the clean-up activities. He also volunteered to help supervise. Chairman Langer said Mr. Beauchamp will contact MAJIC and set up a time that is convenient for both the Carroll's and RPOS members.

THE BRANDYWINE-STRUBLE GREENWAY

Sheila Fleming from the Brandywine Conservancy attended tonight's meeting to present information on the Brandywine-Struble Greenway project. Mrs. Fleming noted that the

Brandywine Conservancy has received a grant from the William Penn Foundation to initiate planning of the Greenway, which is proposed to run from the Delaware state line north to the Horseshoe Trail. Birmingham Township is one of 16 municipalities invited to participate at no cost in the Greenway initiative. Fifteen of the municipalities are located in Chester County. The remaining municipality is located in Delaware County.

Mrs. Fleming defined a Greenway as a corridor of protected open space, which can travel through a variety of land uses, including rural, suburban and urban. It can also include both public and private land. For the Brandywine-Struble Greenway, Mrs. Fleming noted that the use of any piece of privately owned land will have to be approved by the landowner.

In her presentation, Mrs. Fleming listed the purpose of a Greenway as a means to:

- Preserve vital habitat corridors
- Promote plant and animal diversity
- Improve water quality
- Purify air
- Buffer new development
- Protect rural legacy
- Control flooding
- Restore and enhance the watershed
- Create economic opportunities
- Conserve cultural resources
- Promote recreation
- Foster outdoor education
- Allow alternative transportation such as bicycles
- Build effective partnerships between municipalities

The Brandywine-Struble Greenway project is a two-year project slated to begin in September of 2010. Between September and this winter, the Brandywine Conservancy will review and integrate existing plans, as well as map current resources. In the spring of 2011, the Conservancy will conduct three regional visioning workshops. During the summer of 2011 and into that fall, the Conservancy will formulate Greenway strategies. The Brandywine-Struble Greenway concept plan will be created during the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012.

The municipal role of participating municipalities will be to:

- Appoint a representative and an alternate to help with planning
- Provide relevant planning documents
- Participate in one public visioning workshop
- Review draft maps, strategies and plans

Debbie Hineman, 1200 Meetinghouse Road, asked how the proposed Greenway would affect Birmingham Township. Mrs. Fleming said the Greenway is not intended to change the Township. Rather, it will document various planning aspects already in the Township plan. She added that if the state sees a common vision, the Greenway plan could put Birmingham Township in a better position for obtaining funding, which could be used to acquire open space.

Mrs. Hineman asked what the ramifications might be for Birmingham Township, as a

potential participating municipality, if a trail is established along the Brandywine. Mrs. Fleming noted that the Township will be in the driver's seat and would therefore have control over development of the Greenway within Birmingham. In addition, Mrs. Fleming said that the use of private land in the Greenway is voluntary. If a landowner does not want to participate, then he or she does not have to.

Mrs. Hineman also asked who initiated the idea of the Brandywine-Struble Greenway; how much funding is in the grant received by the Brandywine Conservancy and if any Townships have opted out. Mrs. Fleming said the Brandywine Conservancy started looking into the idea of the Greenway about five years ago with the primary focus on conservation. The William Penn Grant received by the Conservancy is a two-year grant and totals \$46,000. The funds will be split between the participating municipalities. Mrs. Fleming also noted that Birmingham Township is only the second municipality she has presented information to concerning the proposed Greenway project. She plans to visit the remaining 14 municipalities in the near future. So far, she said, there appears to be positive interest in the proposed Greenway project.

Mary Pat McCarthy, 916 Adams Way, noted that there seems to be a lot of different entities interested in developing trails in the county. She wondered if anyone oversees the various trail planning efforts so that planning isn't redundant and money isn't spent needlessly. Mrs. Fleming said that both the Chester County Planning Commission and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission are keeping track of trail development in the county.

Chairman Langer said he feels the Greenway project is a worthwhile endeavor and therefore, supports it. Mr. Kurey, Mr. Hill and Mr. Monteith agreed. Mr. Kurey added that the charter of RPOS is recreation, parks and open space and feels the greenway proposal fits into the charter.

After further discussion, Mr. Kurey made a motion that due to the committee's support of the Greenway initiative as outlined by Mrs. Fleming, an RPOS member will be appointed to act as a liaison between RPOS, Mrs. Fleming, the Brandywine Conservancy and the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Monteith seconded the motion. The motion was approved; all in favor.

Doug Marshall, 1001 Meetinghouse Road, asked how RPOS will inform residents about any work the committee does on the Greenway project. Mr. Kurey said any future work on the Greenway initiative will be discussed at RPOS meetings and will therefore be part of the minutes. In addition, periodic updates by RPOS will be presented to the supervisors at their public meetings. Mrs. Fleming noted that RPOS might want to place an article about the Greenway initiative in the next Township newsletter. Mr. Marshall suggested that RPOS post Greenway updates on the Township's Web site.

Concerning the proposed public workshops, Mrs. Fleming said information on the workshops will be advertised in the newspaper. Mrs. Hineman suggested mailing information about the Brandywine-Struble Greenway initiative and any public workshops to residents who might be affected by the Greenway project.

INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

A meeting of the Interpretive Sign Subcommittee, consisting of Mr. Hill, Mr. Monteith and

two members of the Township's Historic Commission, was held in August to discuss various aspects of the sign project. Mr. Hill noted that the subcommittee is currently formulating ideas for signage and will present their recommendations at the November RPOS meeting. If approved by RPOS members, the recommendations will be presented to the supervisors at a future Board of Supervisors meeting.

BIRMINGHAM HILL UPDATE

RPOS has received calls from residents stating that they have gotten lost on the Birmingham Hill trail. To help alleviate the confusion with the trail's path and to keep walkers off Meetinghouse Road, Chairman Langer said the Board of Supervisors has approved both the cost of and the placement of trail markers that will be placed along the post and rail fence to guide walkers on the trail. In addition, a master sign explaining the trail markers will be placed in the parking lot.

Mr. Marshall noted that as a resident he is concerned about the number of signs being placed about the Township and asked RPOS to insure that the trail marker signs are tasteful. Mr. Kurey said the signs will be small and unobtrusive. The master sign will be 18 inches by four inches, while the trail markers will be four inch squares.

Mrs. Hineman inquired about the cost of the trail markers. Chairman Langer said RPOS will obtain 16 trail markers, although not all 16 will be placed along the trail at once. Several will be set aside in case markers need to be replaced in the future. The cost of the 16 trail markers and master sign is \$264.97.

SANDY HOLLOW MONUMENT

Mr. Monteith noted that a meeting was held with members of the Township's Historic Commission to discuss the logistics of moving the Sandy Hollow canon to a more prominent place at the park. He noted that Matt Bedwell (Historic Commission member) has the necessary equipment to move the canon.

Mr. Monteith, Mr. Hill and Mr. Bedwell met at Sandy Hollow and agreed on two potential sites for the canon:

- A 30-foot area behind the rock off the southwest corner of the Sandy Hollow parking lot.
- A triangular-shaped piece of land at the corner of New Street and Birmingham Road.

Mr. Main has researched the cost of moving the canon and estimates that if RPOS uses an outside agency to move the canon, it could cost up to \$2,000. Mr. Monteith said the cost would be nominal if they use Mr. Bedwell's equipment. He added that he and Mr. Hill will develop a three-tier cost proposal for moving the canon.

Mr. Kurey asked when Mr. Monteith feels would be a good time to move the canon. Mr. Monteith said Mr. Bedwell suggested moving the canon when the land is either very dry or frozen.

Mr. Monteith noted that if the canon is moved, he is concerned about children climbing on it and possibly getting hurt. Chairman Langer suggested that if RPOS decides to recommend moving the canon to the Board of Supervisors, part of the recommendation should include safety aspects, such as the possibility of fencing the canon off.

TRAILS UPDATE

Chairman Langer announced that Mrs. Fleming will use the remaining funds under the Martin Foundation Grant to study the feasibility of establishing a trail that would connect Birmingham Hill to Sandy Hollow.

Chairman Langer also announced that he received an e-mail update from Jake Michaels of the Chester County Planning Commission on a regional trail plan that could link sites in Chadds Ford, Pocopson and Birmingham Townships.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Hineman asked about the proposed connector trail to link Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill and how the trail would cross the street. Mr. Conklin said the trail would probably cross at Birmingham and Meetinghouse Roads.

Mr. Marshall asked if RPOS has considered joining with other Townships to clean up trash along Township roads. Both he and Mrs. Hineman periodically clean up trash along Birmingham and Meetinghouse Roads. Chairman Langer thanked Mr. Marshall and Mrs. Hineman for their continued efforts to clean up the Township roads and asked them to contact RPOS if they see an increase in trash near Birmingham Hill. He also noted that RPOS holds an annual clean-up day at both Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill and in the past, committee members have not had too much success in getting volunteers to help with the clean-up activities.

The next RPOS meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2010.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Jensen
RPOS Secretary