

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

February 20, 2017

Chairman Siemer called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Township Building. The following were in attendance:

Anne Siemer	Chairman, RPOS Committee
Jim Rosenthal	Vice-Chairman, RPOS Committee
Chuck Feld	Member, RPOS Committee
Jim Kelican	Member, RPOS Committee
Michael Langer	Member, RPOS Committee
Mike Shiring	Member, Board of Supervisors
Judy Jensen	Secretary, RPOS Committee

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 16, 2017 MINUTES

The minutes of the January 16, 2017 RPOS meeting were approved, as written; all in favor.

BILLS

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

BIRMINGHAM HILL UPDATE

Mr. Feld said he will contact MAJIC Landscaping to check on the maintenance costs for Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill for 2017. The contract with MAJIC is renewed every spring.

Chairman Siemer noted that at some point in the spring it would be a good idea if RPOS scheduled a workday at Birmingham Hill and Sandy Hollow.

Concerning the second interpretive sign proposed for Birmingham Hill, Chairman Siemer said she has contacted Andrew Outten of the Brandywine Battlefield, as well as Mike Forbes of the Birmingham Township Historical Commission, about possible topics for the interpretive sign. When she hears back from Mr. Outten or Mr. Forbes, she will let RPOS members know of their thoughts on the matter.

SANDY HOLLOW UPDATE

At the November RPOS meeting, Mr. Feld noted that due to the rapid growth of Canadian thistle at Sandy Hollow, he felt the edges of the trail along S. New Street should be mowed with a bushhog. As a result of his suggestion, RPOS obtained cost estimates from various landscapers for mowing the thistle.

At the December meeting, RPOS discussed the cost estimates they received. The lowest estimate was from Lakeside Cultural Care (LLC) at a cost of \$75 per hour. LLC estimated that it would take approximately 8 hours to complete the work. At the December meeting, RPOS passed a motion to recommend that the Board of Supervisors hire Lakeside Cultural Care to mow the invasive plants, including the Canadian thistle, growing along the trail at Sandy Hollow.

At tonight's meeting, Mr. Langer said he will contact LCC and ask them to get in touch with Mr. Feld concerning when the work will be completed.

Additionally, at last month's meeting, RPOS members noted that the paint on the replica cannon at Sandy Hollow is peeling and there is a crack on the top of the cannon. At tonight's meeting, Mr. Langer said he has spoken to Forrest Taylor, the creator of the cannon, about the cannon issues. Mr. Taylor said he would stop by Sandy Hollow sometime in February to evaluate the repairs needed. As of tonight's meeting, Mr. Taylor has not come by to evaluate the cannon. Mr. Langer will email him again about the cannon repair issues.

NEW PROPERTIES

CACCHIO PROPERTY

In a memo to RPOS members, Mr. Shiring noted the following about the Cacchio property:

The Cacchio property has been purchased by the Civil War Trust. Transfer to the Township is pending the completion of the Easement with the Brandywine Conservancy. This Easement is in draft, but all specific terms will not be nailed down until the Township is able to make a final decision on how the property will be used. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is in agreement with RPOS that the property will be used for a walking trail and parking. The primary concern the BOS has is the barn structure and its accompanying liability concerns and costs (maintenance, replacement, etc.).

At tonight's meeting, Mr. Shiring noted that there are a few options concerning the barn:

- There is some discussion by county representatives that the county might want to use the barn at some point. Mr. Shiring said the BOS will check and see if the county is truly interested in using the barn. If there is county interest, then perhaps the county could own and maintain the barn, and the Township could own and maintain the land.
- The barn could be removed and the building area along Birmingham Road could be used as open space. Additionally, since access to the property will likely have to come off of South New Street, Mr. Shiring noted that a small parking lot could be installed immediately adjacent to South New Street, rather than constructing a road across the tract, leaving the entire tract as a field for walking trails, etc.
- Since there is concern about the structural integrity of the barn, the Township might wish to have the barn evaluated by a structural engineer.

Mr. Shiring said the BOS would like RPOS's thoughts on the barn. Mr. Langer noted that if the Township keeps the barn, it could be leased out to a farmer for equipment storage. However, Mr. Langer has reservations about the structural integrity of the barn. Mr. Rosenthal asked if there is historic significance of the barn. Mr. Shiring said that David Shields of the Brandywine Conservancy is looking into that question. However, there is no obligation in the easement with the Brandywine Conservancy to keep the barn.

After a discussion, RPOS members agreed that before a decision could be made as to whether to keep the barn, considering liability issues and cost of maintenance, the committee would have to know if the barn was in good structural shape. For this reason, Mr. Feld made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Township's Building Inspector Richard Jensen hire a structural engineer to evaluate the integrity of the existing barn on the Cacchio property. Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion. The motion was approved; all in favor.

RIVER PROPERTY

In a memo to RPOS members, Mr. Shiring noted that there have been many ideas and opinions on the uses or extent of uses for the river tract if the Township obtains the property. There have also been some good points made with respect to improved river access, security, maintenance, liability, etc. At tonight's meeting, Mr. Shiring said the BOS would like RPOS's thoughts on the river property and its potential uses.

Chairman Siemer said she has spoken to Mandie Cantlin of East Bradford. The Township has developed several properties along the Brandywine River, including Shaw's Bridge Park, Ingram's Mill Nature Area and the Harry J. Waite Jr. Nature Area. Ms. Cantlin said the parks, which give people access to the Brandywine River, are open from dawn to dusk.

Mr. Langer noted that Shiela Fleming of the Brandywine Conservancy is willing to help RPOS develop a plan for the river property, which is currently located on the Fenceworks property, as well as the Cacchio property. Concerning the river property, Ms. Fleming could help with such things as creating maps of existing features, identifying opportunities and constraints of the site, and preparing a conceptual sketch plan that would illustrate potential uses of the site. After a discussion, RPOS members agreed that obtaining Ms. Fleming's insight as to the possible development of a park along the river, as well as her thoughts on the Cacchio property, would be very helpful to RPOS. Ms. Fleming also has grant money available so the cost to the Township would be negligible.

Mr. Langer made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Township accept the generous offer from Shiela Fleming of the Brandywine Conservancy to help with the planning process of both the Cacchio property and the Fencework property. Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion. The motion was approved; all in favor.

The next RPOS meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2017.

With no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Jensen
RPOS Secretary