

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

May 15, 2017

Chairman Siemer called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. in the Township Building. The following were in attendance:

Anne Siemer	Chairman, RPOS Committee
Jim Rosenthal	Member, RPOS Committee
Michael Langer	Member, RPOS Committee
Jim Kelican	Member, RPOS Committee
Judy Jensen	Secretary, RPOS Committee

Absent from the meeting was Vice Chairman Chuck Feld.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 17, 2017 MINUTES

The minutes of the April 17, 2017 RPOS meeting were approved, as written; all in favor.

BILLS

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

BIRMINGHAM HILL UPDATE

Mrs. Siemer attended the April 27th meeting of the Township's Historical Commission (HC) to inform the committee that RPOS is planning to develop another interpretive sign for Birmingham Hill. She gave the proposed text to HC Vice-Chairman Mike Forbes for his review. She has not heard back from him yet.

Mrs. Siemer noted that a couple of rails have fallen from the fencing at Birmingham Hill. The committee plans to repair the rails.

Mrs. Siemer also noted that she plans to place Brandywine and U.S. flags at both Birmingham Hill and Sandy Hollow on Memorial Day.

SANDY HOLLOW UPDATE

At the April RPOS meeting, the committee considered the idea of spreading a clover/wildflower seed mix along the trail edge at Sandy Hollow to impede the growth of the Canadian thistle. Since the committee is not planning to replace wood chips on the Birmingham Hill trail this year, RPOS decided to use the \$300 budgeted for wood chips on the purchase of a clover/wildflower seed mix and passed a motion to authorize Mr. Feld to purchase the seed mix.

At tonight's meeting, Mr. Langer noted that he has spread the wildflower/clover seed mix along approximately half of the trail at Sandy Hollow.

RPOS discussed the three trees that the committee planted near the cannon at Sandy Hollow. Two of the trees do not have leaves, indicating that they may not be alive. RPOS plans to ask Mr. Feld if the trees are still under warranty, since it might be necessary to replace the two dead trees.

The committee also discussed the four trees that were planted along S. New Street at Sandy Hollow. Although they do not know who planted the trees, it does appear that two of the trees are struggling. The committee discussed whether to remove the two trees, ultimately deciding to table the issue until the June RPOS meeting when Mr. Feld will be in attendance.

At its January meeting, RPOS noted that the paint on the replica cannon at Sandy Hollow is peeling and there is a crack on the top of the cannon. Mr. Langer has been in contact with Forrest Taylor, the maker of the cannon. Mr. Taylor said he would order the necessary parts and would pick up the cannon around mid-April to make the needed repairs. Mr. Taylor has not made any repairs to the cannon as of tonight's meeting and RPOS would like the cannon repaired before the reenactment in September. Mr. Langer will email Mr. Taylor again and inquire as to when he thinks he can make the necessary repairs to the cannon.

CACCHIO PROPERTY

On March 28, 2017, engineers with Steinle Construction Engineers, a division of Vandemark & Lynch, Inc., visited the Cacchio site to evaluate the barn. In a letter dated April 14, 2017, structural engineer Nicholas Kowalski noted that the barn is generally in fair condition, adding that the observed deficiencies of the roof, gutters and downspouts; windows; and board siding, in conjunction with the general openness of the structure, are all sources of continued water infiltration, as well as entrance points for insects, animals and humans. These issues, Mr. Kowalski noted, will result in continued deterioration of the structure.

Mr. Kowalski also said that the original construction of the barn appears to be less than adequately braced to resist wind loading and would not meet the design requirements of current building codes. In addition, the height of the barn further exacerbates the deficiencies. Without prompt repairs to the specific deficient components, and regular maintenance of the barn, Mr. Kowalski noted that the deterioration of any damaged beams, columns or posts could quickly advance to the point of a very real concern of collapse of these components and then portions of the barn.

At tonight's meeting, Mrs. Siemer noted that she has sent a copy of the Steinle Construction Engineers study to Sheila Fleming of the Brandywine Conservancy.

While attending the April 27th HC meeting, Mrs. Siemer asked if HC had any information on the historical significance of the barn. Carla Westerman, HC Chairman, said that the Cacchio property barn is located in the Brandywine Battlefield Historic Landmark and is part of the Birmingham Township's Historic Corridor. The property was part of the Dilworth family compound and has been in the family for over 300 years. British and Washington's troops marched across the Cacchio property on September 11, 1777. Due to deterioration, the 176-year-old house was demolished on July 25, 2014, as per the owner's request. Mr. Cacchio agreed to permanent deed restrictions to preserve the scenic landscape on 2.5 acres between Birmingham Road and S. New Street. The barn and property remain historic resource PHMC#40 Class 2.

Before considering the possibility of preserving the barn, RPOS agreed that the costs of any preservation work would need to be determined.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Siemer noted that the Town Tours and Village Walks scheduled for July 6 will not take place at either Sandy Hollow or Birmingham Hill.

Mrs. Siemer plans to purchase six more Brandywine flags and a couple more U.S. flags to place at Sandy Hollow and Birmingham Hill to commemorate U.S. holidays, such as Veteran’s Day and Memorial Day. Due to the small amount of money involved in purchasing the flags, Mrs. Jensen said the committee does not have to pass a motion to approve the purchase.

Mr. Langer talked about the Crebilly property in Westtown Township and the current plans by Toll Brothers to develop the property. Birmingham Township has party status to the conditional use hearings in Westtown Township. Committee members asked if Birmingham Township plans to appoint a representative to attend the hearings. Mrs. Jensen said she will ask Township Secretary/Treasurer Quina Nelling if anyone has been appointed to attend the hearings to represent Birmingham Township.

The next RPOS meeting is scheduled for June 19, 2017.

With no public comment, the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Jensen
RPOS Secretary