Trails Committee Meeting Minutes

East Brandywine Township Building
January 12, 2016 @ 7:00 PM

Members Present: Chairman Mike Wagoner, Ian Plane, Dave Summers, Muriel Kennedy, and Recording Secretary Dick Williams.

Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Trevor Weiss.

Guests: Vice-Chairman of the East Brandywine Township Board of Supervisors Jay Fischer, and Assistant Township Manager Luke Reven.

Chairman Wagoner called the meeting to order and introduced a motion to accept the minutes of the last Trail Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Dave Summers and then affirmed unanimously with an "Aye" from all.

Chairman Wagoner, advised that all Trail Committee members had been officially reappointed to as Trail Committee members in a previous vote taken by the Township supervisors.

Assistant Township Manager Luke Reven reported on recent activities involving the routing of the East-West Trail through the Hopewell development. Mr. Reven stated that McMahon and Associates, Transportation Planners, had been solicited to report on how best to route the E-W Trail across open space in Hopewell. Chairman Wagoner asked if there was a scope as part of the request. Mr. Reven responded that the report would include surveying, a feasibility study, and creative buffering and that a description of the easement would be provided and the Township would have it audited.

Chairman Wagoner asked if there was a timeline to engaging McMahon and Mr. Reven responded that the Board of Supervisors would decide at their first working session in February (first Thursday) whether or not to retain McMahon for this project. This would be followed with a working session with the Trail Committee.

Chairman Wagoner stated that the consultants should provide two options in terms of conceptual entrances/exits to give Hopewell homeowners an idea of what the Trail Committee is proposing. Chairman Wagoner asked if a second bid was required. Supervisor Fischer indicated that if the bid was less than $18,500 no bid would be required. Mr. Reven stated that in a bid for "professional services", there may be no limit, adding that the Township's "Engineering" budget was sufficient.

Chairman Wagoner asked Mr. Reven if we should be comfortable working with McMahon and Mr. Reven noted that McMahon had helped with the VPP application to the county late last year.

Supervisor Fischer raised the issue of a Heather Wynd West homeowner whose home is closer to the E-W Trail easement than the homeowner expected and the homeowner is requesting a relocation of the routing. Chairman Wagoner led a discussion of the various aspects involved, noting that while the E-W Trail standard is "macadam," and that it may be necessary to "bridge" – creating a raised boardwalk, but not elevated high enough to require a handrail. The Chairman added that the viability of such a potential solution wouldn't be known until a layout of the route was completed.

Chairman Wagoner inquired about the status of the connection to the Community Park. Assistant Township Manager Reven responded that the Township Open Space Committee reviewed and recommended the purchase of a 50-foot strip 650 feet long with a portion of Open Space funds. Chairman Wagoner inquired about the approval by the Township Supervisors and asked if the acquisition would be cheaper if it were executed as an easement purchase. Assistant Township Manager Reven responded that the Supervisors were OK with the acquisition and that an easement purchase was less desirable due to the fact that it could result in an ongoing liability.

Chairman Wagoner asked if construction would occur by year-end. Supervisor Fischer replied that construction would not happen this year, given all the activities required. At least one year will be required before construction can begin.

Chairman Wagoner reported that he spoke with Rob Daniels re: reforestation and he can do it for us. He can also provide a hedgerow buffer and save us some dollars and minimize the cost.

Chairman Wagoner asked if the Committee would be resubmitting an application to the County for funding for planning the trail. Assistant Township Manager Reven recommended it. Feedback from the unsuccessful fall application, he added, had been that there were simply a large number of applications. Mr. Reven added that no substantive changes to the previous application would be required in a new application for funding. He noted that a pre-application meeting would be held on February 26 and that there would be one more Committee meeting prior to the submission of the re-application at which we should ensure the application is ready to submit.

Chairman Wagoner asked for a vote of Committee Members on the question of resubmitting the application for County funding. The Trail Committee voted unanimously in favor of resubmitting the application.

Assistant Township Manager offered to provide all Trail Committee Members with a link to the application, noting that reading the application could be considered "homework" to be completed prior to the next Trail Committee Meeting.

Chairman Wagoner stated that we should have everything the application ready by the February meeting to ensure we are ready for the March 26 meeting with the County. The Trail

Committee's last meeting prior to March 26 will be March 8. Trail Committee Members should get any changes to Assistant Township Manager Reven by the end of January.

Mr. Reven stated that preparing the application for submission would be one of his "to-do's" for next month and that he would seek to get the review of the application on the agendas of West Brandywine and Uwchlan Townships and to present to their Board of Supervisors meetings. Chairman Wagoner offered to accompany Mr. Reven to these meetings.

Supervisor Fischer asked if Brandywine Conservancy Senior Planner Sheila Fleming had any other funding sources to recommend. Chairman Wagoner noted that a state grant could be easier and a Federal grant would take too long.

The Committee identified its priorities for the year ahead as follows:

(1) Re-application for the VPP Grant from the County
(2) Creating the Hopewell to the Community Park link
(3) Trail Feasibility Study – get Hopewell Community onboard

(4) The Heather Wynd to the Sunoco sidewalk connection is referred to as "The Learning Experience" (Heather Wynd to Hopewell to Guthriesville). Supervisor Fischer noted that he had spoken with the Hopewell Homeowners' Association Board and they see the value of a sidewalk on Hopewell Road for their kids. Supervisor Fischer inquired as to the size of the right of way on Hopewell Road. Chairman Wagoner responded that the right of way was 30 feet on either side.

Trail Committee Member Kennedy asked when in the course of building a path, how is it decided on which side of the road to build -- is it always the path of least resistance? Chairman Wagoner responded that a study would look at existing easements, noting that the path would have to be 5 feet off the cart way and that a guiding principle is to minimize the amount of time required to cross roads.

Chairman Wagoner asked if there were any non-agenda items to be discussed. None were offered up by the Trail Committee Members present.

Trail Committee Member Summers moved to adjourn. Chairman Wagoner seconded and all agreed by saying "Aye".

The next meeting will be February 9, 2016. (This meeting was subsequently cancelled due to weather.)

Respectfully Submitted,

Dick Williams