

Bondsville Mill Park Committee Meeting, January 27, 2022

In attendance: Rocky Stone, Sandy Moser, Charlie Lindsay, Jim Ladrew, Doug Freeman, Carl Capriotti, Arne Jensen, Jeff Nye, Joe Buccella, Beth Watts, Bob Watts, Nancy Kirchgasser, Hud Voltz (8:45), Jim Buczala

Meeting start: 8:08

December Minutes: Approved, with minor edits.

Volunteer Hours for this month: 364 (279 Garden; 85 Construction/Trails Crews)

2021 Budget Status (year-end):

- Capital Fund: \$3071 over budget.
- General Fund: \$1362 over budget.
- It was noted that this was the first year that the Park's budget has been exceeded.
- Capital Fund for Garden Project (grants reimbursable): \$122,677 remaining for Phase II

2022 Budget Status (as of 01/26/22):

- General Fund:
 - Budget for 2022: \$10,252; \$9513 remaining (\$350 of spending was on Volunteer Lunch approved by BOS; needs to be moved to Twp admin)
- Capital Fund:
 - Budget for 2022: \$75K, remains intact
 - It was noted that \$229,704 was requested for the Park Capital Fund (which included \$100K for equipment rental to finish Garden Project); this was cut to \$75K during the budget approval process.
- Capital Fund Garden Project (grants reimbursable):
 - \$121,235 remaining; \$1442 spent
 - **Projected Cost to finish Phase II of Garden Project** (based on input from Rocky, Jim Balbierer, and Carl):
 - \$141K estimated to finish (will need to reserve about \$20K from the Park's Capital Fund to cover difference); factors in the cost include equipment rental. This would leave about \$55K of the Capital Fund for other Park tasks
 - **Rocky will firm up these numbers so we have better confidence on available funds: ALL SPENDING ON CONSTRUCTION TASKS ON HOLD UNTIL THIS IS COMPLETED).**
 - Jim will follow up with Jake Chalfin at Laurel Valley Soils for an update on costs for the amended soils.
 - Jim will talk to Matt VanLew regarding Township support for man-hours/equipment for the Garden Project work.
 - 1204 man-hours estimated to finish; that's 38 weeks at the current pace of 32 man-hours per week (the weekly number of man-hours will need to be increased to meet the completion schedule of the end of August). Jim Balbierer's main task will be to man the transit to survey the layout/progress of work.
 - It was agreed that the priority for 2022 needs to be the Garden Project.
- Budget status approved by BMP Committee.

Construction Report:

Construction Crew volunteer hours this month: **85** (45 for well installation; 40 for Park related tasks)

- **Well Installation:**
 - Well boring to 540 feet deep; currently providing 0.05 gpm
 - Static level is currently 60 ft below the surface/ there's about a 380 ft water column (about 622 gallons)
 - Fracking is scheduled for Wednesday or Thursday, with testing afterward to determine yield
 - It was noted that the 140 feet of extra drilling (400 foot depth was budgeted) and the fracking operation to improve the yield of the well will at \$5K to the well installation cost.
- **Building Work:** On hold until an accurate cost of finishing Phase II of the Garden Project has been calculated.
 - It was noted that Doug has spent \$169.10 of the approved \$250 expense for BX electric cable.

Gardens Report: Garden Crew volunteer hours this month: **279**

- The Gardeners have taken down the holiday decorations and most of the ornaments on the White Trail.
- The Gardeners have decided to move forward with the **Amphitheater Project**; plan to schedule a February community work day. Bruce Rawlings has designed a landscaping plan for the Project (shows native plants in a shade area) and has taken soil samples to confirm compatibility with the plants he'd like to install. Charlie is planning the design for the benches and a post rail fence to go along the top of the bank above the Amphitheater. Grants are planned to pay for the plants.
- Applying for a HPS grant to cover some of the plant cost (about \$1K). Will apply in September to PECO for grant to cover the remaining plants needed for the project (\$10K). Also applying for a grant to purchase benches for Culp's Clearing (Garden Project) (\$9K).
- **Meeting with the Chester County Beekeeping Association** was held on January 25th (Joe, Fairlie, Sue, Jim B, Beth, and Sandy met with Mark, George and Jock from CCBA). Jim B provided a summary from his notes:
 - They would like use of the Park for their monthly programs and would support our programs.
 - They have monthly orientation meetings to teach the fundamentals and commitment of beekeeping. Anticipate around 30 people per event (they have a rotating of long term members in the range of 600 that has been, which has been growing with about 50% of membership not lasting 3 years). Each of these programs would split the time between indoor instruction and the hive (about 50% for each). The period of the monthly courses would be March through October.
 - The goals of their program include:
 - Education
 - Providing an example of an outdoor aviary (for backyard setups)
 - WiFi will be key for what they want to do; and they will provide support for the system.
 - They would establish a beehive (located on the concrete pad on the North side of the pollinator garden); approximately 20 x 20 feet in size. This would be reviewed/monitored frequently (approximately every 10 days) with regard to health of the hive and to monitor indication of their desire to swarm. They plan to install instructional and safety signage in the area of the hives and install a post/rail fence with turkey wire around the area, at their expense.
 - The hives would be inspected by a local aviary person from the State approximately every two years to document the health of the hives.
 - They would limit their programs to 20 people and, if necessary, shuttle people from the Township's parking lot if parking at the Park is limited.
 - They're looking to partner with BMP for programming and will have an aviary manager for this location to work with.
 - They have provided us with a draft Contract for the arrangement, and will add the Township to their insurance and an additional-insured.
 - Rocky pointed out that there is drainage issues in the area targeted for the hives that will need to be addressed.

- A motion was made to **partner with CCBA**, as discussed above. The BMP Committee approved the motion.
- **Expenditure/Reimbursement requests:**
 - Charlie and Jim Balbierer have scoped out the materials needed for the Amphitheater benches and the post/rail fence at the top of the bank (750 feet of fence). Materials are estimated to cost \$2605.
 - The BMP Committee approved this expense with the understanding that this may be the only expenditure for the Park's gardens and trails for the year.
 - Sandy's per diem:
 - \$67.43 for 3 bags of soil for milkweed program and bird seed.
 - 38.15 for Deer Out spray.
 - Total expenditures were \$105. 58, but only \$38.15 needs to be reimbursed to Sandy; this was approved by the BMP Committee.
- **Library/Programs:**
 - The Animals in Winter Program is scheduled for Jan 29th; both explorer camps are full (limit 12 kids, each)
- **Internet:** Jim B is arranging for installation of the Verizon FIOS service for access to the internet. Installation is currently scheduled for Feb 7th. Sandy will contact the Police with regard to the security angle. Sandy is looking for funds to support the security system.
- **Instagram:** Beth Watts has set up an account; if you are an Instagram user, please add and encourage your friends to post to **@bondsvillemillhistoricpark**.

Events:

- Jim B led the annual First Day Hike on Jan 1st. There was a light turnout.
- Animals in Winter Program: Jan 29th
- No new programs scheduled at the Park as of Jan 24th
- To be scheduled:
 - Earth Day and Official opening of the Library
 - Downingtown Library's Fairy Houses
 - Endangered Species Day
 - Yoga in the Park
 - Gardens as therapy
- **January 1st:** First Day Hike scheduled for 10:30; Jim B will lead
- Event Ideas with **Restore Our Roots** (Cammie Johnston):
 - Foraged Cooking/Cooking in the Wild
 - Animals in Winter
 - Guided Hikes
 - Stream in Winter/Fall (ecology)
 - Live Staking
 - Tree Hike
 - Yoga in the Park (charge after 1st visit; would need a vendor permit)

Strategic Plan for Park Project: Kathy Cook is in the process of interviewing key members of the Park Committee and those associated with the Park's development over the years to get background for the project. The information gathered will help to identify goals, options for getting there and specific requirements to then collectively build alignment for the best plan forward. Functional lines for consideration include trails, construction and historic, gardens and Culp's Clearing, nature library, and finance/Foundation.

Concrete Pad / Horticultural Gardens (Grant Applications / Scope of Work):

- Jim B, Hud, and Sandy met with Nate Cline and his horticultural/grant people via Zoom at Pennoni to discuss the specifications for the Plant Supply bid on Jan 20th. Jim B attended the BOS meeting on Jan

20th to obtain their permission to move forward with preparation of the bid document for this and permission to advertise for bids when complete. Plans are to present the bid document to DCNR and the Twp by Jan 28th, and advertise for bids sometime around Feb 11th. The goal is to get approval of the selection by the BOS at their March 3rd meeting.

- Hud will be asking the County for an extension on the first round grant from them (which includes the Phase I and II work scopes).
- A partial reimbursement was requested from DCNR last Fall; they provided \$59K to the Township towards the end of December.

Trails Report: 54 Volunteer Hours

- Tobacco Signs: Dave Summers (Twp Parks & Recreation Committee) spoke at Jan BOS meeting about approval for a Non-Smoking Policy for the Township; they approved it. This clears the way for providing the needed credentials for the proposed tobacco signs from the Health Department (?)
- The Trails Crew worked on filling in erosion areas along the Yellow Trail.
- They would like to stockpile stone up in the area of the White Trail; Rocky will facilitate this.
- There are a number of dangerous trees along the trails in the Park. Ryan Sipple will provide services from his company (The Tree Connection) to take care of this.

Marketing/Fundraising:

- Sandy and Beth will be speaking to the Elverson Garden Club on March 1st
- Beth will present on Zoom to the SE Chapter of Wild Ones; as of the end of 2021 Wild Ones has a membership of 6283.
- Potential Donation: Mike McGrath presentation on pesticides; a Zoom meeting has been scheduled. Topic: West Pikeland township Environmental Advisory Council Speaker Series: The Dirty Little Secret of Lawn Care. Time: Feb 24th at 7:00pm. Mike McGrath is a well known radio personality on garden topics.

Parking Lot: No Report

BMP Committee Officers for 2022:

- Jim Buczala for Committee Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer
- Hud Voltz for Committee Vice-Chairman and Grant Administrator
- Approved by the BMP Committee

Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 10:05 AM.

Next BMP Committee meeting: February 24, 2022.