



Franklin Township Trails Committee Meeting

September 12, 2018

7:00PM

PRESENT:

Jim Kuligowski, Chair

Vanessa Jones, Vice-Chair

Anne-Marie Orlusky

Charles Martin

Tara Kenyon, AICP/PP – Land Preservation and Management Consultant

ABSENT:

Mayor Phil Kramer

Mark Fortin

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kuligowski at 7:09pm.

APPROVAL OF JULY 2018 MINUTES

Anne-Marie Orlusky made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 11, 2018 meeting. Charles Martin seconded the motion. All approved and the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charles Martin made a motion to open the public session, which was seconded by Anne-Marie Orlusky. All approved and the session was opened for Public Comment.

Bapinder Long (18 Lexington Road, Somerset) was surprised to see new “sporting structures” at Middlebush Park. Chairman Kuligowski explained that preserved open space can still be developed for the purposes of recreation.

Tom Sherman (69 Almond Drive, Somerset) stated that he was very impressed and grateful for what the Trails Advisory Committee does in the Township.

Melba Battin (289 Bennetts Lane, Somerset), a member of the Open Space Advisory Committee, stated that the trails need to be maintained better by the Township. There are many invasive plants sprouting up at Negri-Nepote Grasslands Preserve, which needs to be handled in a timely fashion to protect the grasslands.

Charles Martin added that during his work with Melba Battin at Negri-Nepote Grasslands Preserve, he has noticed a breakdown in communication with the Department of Public Works. He has a concern that the grasslands will turn into a “deer savanna”, meaning that they will be overrun with multiflora rose and red cedar. Mr. Martin also questions the appropriateness of the mowing schedule at the grasslands now in place.

Seeing no other members of the public present, Anne-Marie Orlusky made a motion to close the public session, which was seconded by Vanessa Jones. All approved and the session was closed for Public Comment.

PRESENTATION OF WINNERS – 2018 PHOTO CONTEST

The Trails Advisory Committee presented the winners of the 2018 Photo Contest with a certificate, hat and calendar (to be provided next month). The winners include:

Christopher Sherman – 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place Winner for Kids Photo Contest
Bapinder Long – Inman Park Area Winner; Griggstown Grasslands Area Winner; Middlebush Park Area Winner
Caasi Santiago – Six Mile Run Area Winner
Kristen Polo – Negri Nepote Grasslands Area Winner
Navjot Singh – Bunker Hill Natural Area Winner; Colonial Park Area Winner
Corrine Prochazka - D&R Canal Area Winner; Overall Winner

The Trails Advisory Committee and the Township of Franklin are grateful to these photographers for sharing their art with our residents. The 2019 Photo Contest will be advertised soon.

NEW BUSINESS

County's Pedestrian and Bikeway Plan

Somerset County Planning Division has been seeking comments for their update to the Pedestrian and Bikeway Plan. Members of the Committee have submitted individual comments related to the future of the North-South Trail in the Township, connections to the Tow Path along the D&R Canal and the potential for a Rails-to-Trails Program.

Tara Kenyon will draft letters to winners and participants for Chairman Kuligowski's signature. Contest Winners will be invited to the September 12th TAC meeting to accept recognition for their accomplishments. She will also work with Laurie Kramer to layout the 2019 Trails Calendar.

OLD BUSINESS

Camera at Griggstown Grasslands Preserve

Tara will follow-up with IT to get a status report. There is additional hate graffiti at Griggstown, which makes a camera desperately needed. Vanessa Jones stated that all offensive and hate graffiti needs to be reported to the Franklin Township Police Department.

Pathways and Trails Plan

The TAC needs to review the "obstacles" section of the document. Tara will continue working on the update of this Plan over the next few months.

Trail Maintenance Reports

- Griggstown Grasslands – see above under "Camera at Griggstown Preserve"
- Negri-Nepote Grasslands – see above under "Public Comment"
- Bunker Hill – Vanessa Jones reports that she found and removed trash. There is continued evidence of small fires being started near the benches at the site. She continues to work on the re-routing of the brown trail.
- Middlebush Park – no report
- Inman Park – trail is still impassable due to overgrowth and downed trees

REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

No reports due to lack of representative from Trails Committee on Open Space Advisory Committee and vice-versa. Vanessa Jones stated that she had some access to Mr. Connelly via Facebook and would try to contact him to find out what his status is in terms of his membership on the Trails Advisory Committee.

Tara Kenyon reported that an Intern from Rutgers University will be starting over the next few weeks. She will assist with open space and farmland monitoring, trail maintenance, and other issues related to open space.

Anne-Marie Orlusky asked if there were additional copies of the updated "Things To Do Map". Tara Kenyon replied that there are older versions of the maps, which she will give to the Trails Committee for distribution at Franklin Day. She will also follow-up with IT to find out where the updated version is housed.

ADJOURNMENT

Anne-Marie Orlusky made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Vanessa Jones. All agreed, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:23PM.

NEXT MEETING OF THE TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 10, 2018 at 7:00pm