

## PTHS Advisory Board Meeting

April 12<sup>th</sup> \* 2018 - 5:30 PM

This quarterly meeting of the PTHS Advisory Board took place in the Salt Wing at Norristown Farm Park located in the municipality of East Norriton.

### PTHS Members Present:

Don Orcutt  
Leigh Altadonna  
Carl Kelemen

Cathy Gauthier  
Jim Webb  
Beth Pilling

### Not Present:

### Staff:

David Clifford  
Scott Morgan  
Ken Shellenberger

- **CTO** - Meeting called to order at 5:58 PM by Board Chair, Don Orcutt.
- **January 10, 2018** - meeting minutes were motioned for approval by Leigh A. and seconded by Carl K.
- **Region 3 Updates** – Scott Morgan (R-3 Manager) opened his regional summary update touting great (and continuously growing) attendance numbers at Lorimer Park and most significantly, along the Pennypack Trail. Additional updates of importance included:
  - In-house improvements and custom alterations were made by Lorimer staff to the scout cabin (Camp Melmar) along the Pennypack Creek. The cabin was too primitive and was in need of some modern amenities and additions.
  - Along the Pennypack Trail; the winter ribbon cutting and formal (and long overdue) recognition of the fatal train crash site was well attended. The entire process from concept to design/content to sign fabrications and the final unveiling event was crafted by the historic interpretive sign committee for the Pennypack corridor.
  - Weather, specifically snow, high wind gusts, and severe rain events wreaked havoc throughout Lorimer, the Pennypack corridor, and along the lower Wissahickon Creek corridor over winter and early spring.
  - Peter Wentz Farmstead was preparing for their most popular event, Sheep Shearing at the end of April. Public Property was scheduling a full exterior paint restoration for the historic homestead this summer (major internal undertaking).
  - Cross County Trail was a focal point for a local scout clean-up project. The trail is currently underutilized since it doesn't connect (yet) to other regional trails or greater points of interest; hence the frequency of illegal dumping and daily littering.
- **Norristown Farm Park Updates** – Ken Shellenberger (NFP Site Supervisor) covered many topics taking place at the farm park, below are some of notable highlights:
  - Pavilion Restrooms were finally open for use this spring and this was the County's demonstration project for the hopeful success of waterless restroom facilities.

- The Germantown Pike Trail corridor experienced the first of three phases of tree plantings and greening/softening efforts to reduce the vehicular intensity and create the desired recreational experience.
  - Attendance was a bit lower in 2017 and no overriding factor could be pinpointed. The total numbers were still within a healthy range when considering historical figures and the number of visitors interacting within the park's micro environments.
  - Major engineering analysis and designs are underway ranging from parking lot expansions, storm water BMP facilities, fishing pond study, and structural/mechanical examination of the Milk House (park office). The internal bridges will hopefully be incorporated into an overall bridge/culvert inventory for entire Division.
  - The deer hunt was substandard in harvest yields and the State along with County introspective may consider bi-annual hunts compared to the traditional annual schedule.
- **NFP Land Swap Update** – Scott, Ken, and Dave met with DCNR regional and Harrisburg staff to propose the land donation of NFP to the County and in-return, the County would donate open space/woodland parcels along the Wissahickon Creek adjacent to Fort Washington State Park. DCNR staff were open to the concept, however the mechanism to execute this type of swap is complicated and historically, the State prefers equal acreage in-return (lopsided NFP > FT Wash). The County solicitor was currently researching mechanisms for the State to sell (donate) either Commonwealth residual parcels or specific State department issued land parcels.  
Board members offered suggestions on how to assist with the physical and/or political processes. Creative ideas were shared (under future County ownership) as well; for instance, telling historical stories and installing interpretation panels along 'history paths'. Focus on the Washington era and shortly thereafter (agriculture).

- **Board Open Forum – Advisory Board Tours and Sunrise Mill Board Committee**

*PTHS Tours* - The Board members created a draft schedule for two (2) informal excursions to explore and analyze other County and non-County parks/open space lands/historic sites. Don Orcutt updated the Board with details on the follow-up tour with greater emphasis on the Wetzel Mill and the Highlands proposed trail networks:

- **Month of May – PHASE II Follow-up Tour w/ Don Orcutt & Company:** Wetzel Mill; Rogers-Hiester House; and the Highlands Area/Trails

*Sunrise Mill Board Committee* – There was lively discussions regarding the process in which this committee progresses through the site and programming phases and when to include outside stakeholders and eventually the public. The steps to advance this committee's agenda are recorded below:

- I = Info gathering/Site Visits → Prioritize the objectives, goals, and opportunities/weakness → Formulate internal solutions
- II = Focus meetings w/ PTHS Board
- Identify stakeholders and commence interviews w/ info sharing.

Additionally, a consensus was reached that a site plan was essential to the grant process.

- **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM