

Friends of Worcester meeting minutes

20 September 2004

Present: Kim David, Wini Hayes, Dave Cardy, Charley Muir, Jeannie Steigerwalt, John Harris, Doug Rotondo, Rob Hayes, Susan Caughlan

President's Report. Kim David reported that the Board has amended FOW's bylaws to omit the township residency requirement for Board members. The Board also developed a Meeting Code of Conduct to facilitate more efficient meetings. The "New Issues" agenda item was moved to the top of the agenda in order to allow meeting attendees to introduce and comment on new issues without having to wait through an entire business meeting.

The group endorsed the new agenda plan and agreed that monthly business meeting will follow the suggested Meeting Code of Conduct. It was suggested that FOW hold public outreach meetings two or three times a year to recruit additional supporters and raise the visibility of FOW and our issues in the township. These meetings would be held at Worcester Community Hall. An outreach program needs to be developed to support these meetings. It could include speakers, programs, and social events. The Outreach Committee members are Wini Hayes, Jeannie Steigerwalt, and Susan Caughlan, and additional participants will be recruited as needed.

The Board is looking into hiring someone to perform secretarial duties for FOW, 10 to 15 hours per month. The Board prepared a list of proposed duties.

Membership. Committee members are Barb McMonagle and Marie Amato. There was no report.

Fundraising/Hospitality. Committee members are Marie Amato and Jeannie Stiegerwalt. Jeannie reported that the Montgomery County Horse Show did not work as a fundraiser. The fall fundraising letter will get under way.

Township Reports.

Supervisors. John Harris briefly explained the township's work with Natural Lands Trust under a DCNR grant to have NLT redesign our residential land development ordinances to follow the Growing Greener conservation by design model. Under this model, the municipality and the developer work together to arrive at a preliminary plan that preserves the open space that the township feels is most valuable. The township has also contracted with NLT to have them design a conservation subdivision on an 86-acre parcel that otherwise would have undergone conventional development.

Planning Commission. Rob Hayes reported that work sessions are on hold until the Open Space Plan can be interfaced with the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning. Susan Caughlan reported that the operators of a horse boarding stable applied for a variance to build an indoor riding ring on the farm they currently lease. Although the operators felt that the township's ordinances permit this use by right, the township disagreed and required them to request a zoning variance. Susan met with the Planning Commission to discuss how to make our ordinances more compatible with current uses in the township, such as horse stables.

Joint Meeting. In preparation for the ordinance design work with NLT, the PC and BOS has a video presentation on Growing Greener conservation subdivision design. The Open Space Committee reported on the progress on the Open Space Plan. The Committee is planning a public meeting in November at which residents will be asked to identify places in Worcester which they feel are important to preserve.

Newsletter. Charlie Muir reported that the fall newsletter is in process and is targeted for mailing in mid-November.

Outreach. Wini Hayes reported on the status of the brochure. Dave Cardy offered to set the preliminary text and photos. More photos will need to be gathered.

Website. The revised mission statement and the winners of the 2004 FOW photo contest will be posted on the website. After the November 9 public meeting, the maps of important local features will be posted as well.

Current issues. Susan Caughlan reported that several open space projects under the farmland preservation program are moving forward. The Greenway Report was accepted by the supervisors, and construction of the initial segment is now in the supervisors' hands. The Dubner property in Fairview Village is no longer being pursued by developer Allen Kann as a village shopping center. As a result of conversations and communications between DEP and the township, the sewage treatment plan for the Scott-Thompson development has been revised to include pumping the treated effluent to the Valley Greene sewage treatment plant in Center Point.

The Worcester Historical Society has undergone a revitalization this year. They will be holding an Open House of their collection at Farmers Union Hall the weekend of October 2-3. There is now a real possibility of WHS and FOW partnering on joint projects, including open space preservation issues. Charley Muir and Susan Caughlan will act as liaisons.

The slip ramp was discussed, following an editorial in Montgomery Life which called for it to be built. There was speculation that it could be revived in the wake of the recent hirings at Merck. Wini Hayes offered to check with Rep. Fichter.

FOW Meeting dates: October 19 (Tuesday) and November 11 (Thursday), 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Bean Road Nursery, Bean & Whitehall Rds.

FOW Holiday Party: December 30 (Thursday), 5 to 9 p.m., home of Wini & Rob Hayes, 3033 Fisher Rd, families welcome, potluck (RSVP by Dec 26).