

Friends of Worcester meeting minutes Meeting date: January 8, 2008

Review of Minutes. The minutes of the November 2007 meeting were approved and will be posted on the website.

Treasurer's Report. Barbara McMonagle presented the proposed budget for 2008. Changes were noted and discussed, and the budget was then approved.

President's Report. President Kim David reported that the Board of Officers met early in January to discuss goals for 2008. A handout with goals and an action plan was distributed, and items on the action plan were discussed, including the newsletter, neighborhood meetings, programs at Worcester Elementary School, growing FOW's volunteer base, and corporate sponsorships.

A list of standing committees was presented and discussed. Several attendees volunteered to join committees. A team of volunteers was formed to attend Board of Supervisors meetings and report back. The list of standing committees was adopted with these changes.

Contribution and Support. The annual contribution letter will be mailed later this month. It was suggested that we include check boxes for various volunteer opportunities. This will be done.

Fundraising/Hospitality. Possible advertisers for the spring newsletter were discussed.

Township Reports.

Board of Supervisors. The Board approved the application of the Montgomery Presbyterian Church on Morris Rd to expand the facilities, subject to conditions.

At the Nov 21 public meeting, the Board announced that Cindy Haines has donated a conservation easement on her 14-acre farm and that the township intended to reimburse her expenses up to \$15,000 in recognition of the value to the township of this donation of open space. In December, Pat Sparango Inc. filed a lawsuit against Cindy Haines to block her donation of the conservation easement.

The Board discussed the Kibblehouse farm revised sketch plan, including issues concerning a trail easement, sidewalks, street trees, stormwater basins, and the effect of the turnpike expansion.

The Board announced that PECO has chosen the site for its proposed substation, at the intersection of three powerlines just west of Fisher Road. FOW will continue to post updates on our website.

Preliminary and final approval was granted for the Frank D'Lauro subdivision, which is a reconfiguration of the lot lines to form three lots, all of which will be preserved with a permanent conservation easement, as Frank directed in his will.

Preliminary and final approval was granted to the Cucé lot line change plan, clearing the way for the Cucés farm to qualify for preservation by the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program.

The Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program and Montgomery County Lands Trust will be placing signs on their respective preserved properties to inform the public of the preserved status of the properties. The township's name can be added to the sign in cases where they contributed funding for preservation.

Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is finishing up the update to the Comprehensive Plan. The Board of Supervisors will appoint Doug Rotondo to the vacant seat on the Planning Commission.

Zoning Hearing Board. Nothing to report.

Joint Meeting. The December 3 Joint Meeting was cancelled. The next Joint Meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, March 3, at 9:30 a.m. in Community Hall, Fairview Village.

Newsletter. The newsletter “vision committee” will be meeting later this month to discuss issues such as a theme for each issue. It was suggested that FOW exchange newsletters with other community nonprofit organizations in the area, to broaden our perspective.

Outreach. The committee will be working on a spring activity at Worcester Elementary School. Other outreach possibilities under discussion are community-oriented meetings and programs presented by land trusts. Attendance at the Philadelphia Green Skills Conference later in January was discussed.

Website. Updates on the PECO and turnpike projects continue to be posted as they are received.

Current issues.

Open Space. In December, two farms in Worcester were preserved through the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program – 100 acres of Willow Creek Orchard on Stump Hall Road, and the 23-acre farm on Fisher Road owned by Oliver and Rosalie Smith. Together with Frank D’Lauro’s donation of a conservation easement on his 103-acre property on Valley Forge and Stump Hall Roads, and Cindy Haines’s donation of a conservation easement on her 14-acre farm on Country View Lane, this brings the total land protected by conservation easements in Worcester to 712 acres and the total preserved and protected land (including publicly owned land) in the township to 1344 acres, or 13% of the total acreage in Worcester.

Land Development. A conditional use hearing on the development plan for the Worcester Golf Course is scheduled for the January 20 Board of Supervisors public meeting.

Administrative Assistant’s Report.

Contribution letter. The annual contribution letter will be mailed later this month. Personalized letters will be sent to our list of approximately 300 contributors.

Grant program. A committee met in December to discuss possibilities for a FOW grant program to reimburse landowners for expenses incurred in donating a conservation easement on their land. It was noted that such a program could increase FOW’s visibility and image in the township. A corporate sponsor or specific open space fund for this effort was discussed. Susan was asked to check on the legal issues involved in setting up such a grant program.

Other business. Rob and Wini Hayes were thanked for hosting the very enjoyable annual Holiday Potluck party.

FOW 2008 meetings:

Wednesdays –February 13, March 12, April 9, May 14

Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. at Bean Road Nursery (corner of Bean & Whitehall Rds.)

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Caughlan