

Friends of Worcester meeting minutes Meeting date: February 13, 2008

Review of Minutes. The minutes of the January 2008 meeting were approved and will be posted on the website.

Treasurer's Report. Barbara McMonagle reported that we are receiving an excellent response to our annual contribution letter.

President's Report. President Kim David stated that FOW needs to speak up at public meetings to show our involvement in issues. It's not enough to be active behind the scenes. Volunteers were solicited to attend public meetings and speak in support of open space issues.

Contribution and Support. See the Treasurer's Report above.

Fundraising/Hospitality. The Newsletter Ad Committee has been working with our advertisers for the spring issue of the newsletter. We have also raised approximately \$450 for our spring outreach activity at the elementary school.

Township Reports.

Board of Supervisors. The conditional use hearing for the Worcester Golf Course land development was held. FOW received a letter from a resident adjacent to the golf course, asking FOW to support preservation of the golf course. A letter will be sent in response, offering to meet with the residents and listen to their concerns. It was noted that preservation is up to the landowner, not the township or any other organization.

The owner of the mobile home park on Germantown Pike and W. Adair Ave will apply to the Zoning Board for a use variance or special exception to operate a produce stand (to be run by a lessee) at the site. It was decided to send a representative to the Zoning Board meeting to support the establishment of a farm stand in Fairview Village. Susan was asked to write a letter of support to the township, and an e-alert will be sent to FOW supporters closer to the date of the meeting.

Planning Commission. No meetings were held.

Zoning Hearing Board. The developers of the Kibblehouse farm had applied to the Zoning Board for variances concerning the stormwater detention basins for the development. The developers plan to work with the turnpike's engineers to design the basins large enough to accommodate stormwater from the turnpike as well as from the development. The purpose is to avoid the turnpike condemning land on this property in order to build stormwater basins to accommodate the turnpike expansion. The basins will occupy more of the lot than are permitted under the ordinance and will be closer to the property lines than allowed.

Joint Meeting. 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 met and a theme was chosen for the newsletter. A new section, "Eyes on the Issues," was proposed, to give residents a place to look for news on current issues in the township.

Outreach. Wini Hayes reported that an Arbor Day program is planned for Worcester Elementary School in partnership with Meadowood. Several Worcester businesses have pledged their support for this program. Tree seedlings will be distributed to each student, along with an information booklet. The committee will hold a "potting up day" on Saturday, April 19, in Vicki Cucé's barn to transplant the seedlings for the giveaway. There will be two shifts for volunteers – 9 to noon and 1 to 4. An e-alert for volunteers will be sent out closer to the date.

The committee reported on the Green Skills workshop attended by committee members earlier in the month. They felt that the information presented at the workshop will be useful for future outreach efforts.

Website. Updates on the PECO and turnpike projects continue to be posted as they are received. The map of preserved land was recently updated to reflect the acreage protected in 2007.

Current issues.

Open Space. Two farms are applicants for preservation in the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation Program.

The Zacharias Creek Trail is now being constructed from Kriebel Mill Rd almost to Hollow Rd. The developer of the lots along Hollow Rd will complete the trail behind those lots.

Land Development. The conditional use hearing on the development plan for the Worcester Golf Course was continued to the February 20 Board of Supervisors public meeting.

Administrative Assistant's Report.

Grant program. The committee gave a recap of the reasons they recommended that FOW consider other uses for the funds that were proposed for a grant to landowners who donate a conservation easement on their land.

New Issues.

The Newsletter Vision Committee recommended that FOW make a point of contacting homeowners associations in the township and arranging a meeting to listen to neighbors' concerns and acquaint them with FOW. Susan was asked to assemble a list of HOA contact information.

It was suggested that FOW look into establishing a municipal land trust to spearhead land preservation work in Worcester. Susan was asked to look into the feasibility. It was noted that IRS regulation of land trusts are tightening, with more oversight and stricter requirements for operation on the horizon.

FOW 2008 meetings:

Wednesdays –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