

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

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

Treasurer's Report. There was a discussion about moving some of the funds in the money market account to an account that pays a higher interest rate.

President's Report. Kim David thanked Meadowood for hosting the meeting, and also thanked Meadowood residents who have contributed their time and skills to FOW. He reported that Senator John Rafferty may be able to address FOW on issues of common interest.

Current Issues:.

Cell Tower: T-Mobile proposed to build a cell tower behind Community Hall, which is permitted by our ordinances. The supervisors felt that the tower could be an eyesore in the middle of Fairview Village and proposed that it be built on property that the township owns in front of Mt. Kirk Park. The township is in discussions with the company as to the style of tower (possibly a flagpole) and the location on the property.

Turnpike Expansion Project: Susan Caughlan reported on the Open House plans display on Sept 25. There were no handouts, but photos of the displays are posted on FOW's website. There was extensive discussion with turnpike engineers, the project manager, and several residents concerning the location and size of the stormwater basins. FOW will meet with the residents and then send a letter to the turnpike officials stating our concerns regarding the noise barriers and stormwater basins.

Hollow Road Traffic Study. The study has been sent to PennDOT with the engineer's conclusions regarding a traffic signal, as reported at the September meeting. Meadowood proposes to move its entrance to align with Hollow Road to decrease the conflict between cars turning west out of Meadowood and traffic turning south onto Hollow Road.

New Business.

Sustainable Agriculture: Tabled to next meeting.

Stony Creek Village: Barb McMonagle reported that Stony Creek Village, a 4.5-acre parcel on the corner of Township Line and North Wales Roads which received final plan approval for an office/retail complex in April, is now on the market. There was discussion regarding whether the zoning variances will apply to a new owner. It is believed that they will, even though many residents decided not to oppose the variances at the time, because the applicant is known for doing quality work in Worcester. Now that the property is for sale, any developer can build according to the zoning variances, with no guarantee that the building facades, landscaping, and other materials will be attractive and compatible with Worcester architecture. It was noted that stricter conditions on the zoning variances or the plan approvals could have addressed this issue.

Polls. We need a polls coordinator for the Bethel poll. Kim David reviewed the poll assignments. Coordinators are responsible for organizing the schedule of volunteers to hand out FOW flyers. We will contact those contributors who indicated their willingness to volunteer for activities. Ideas for the flyer were discussed. Susan will prepare the flyer and will also look into having more FOW brochures printed.

School District Facilities Report. Wini Hayes reported that the report's conclusions will be presented to the public at the next school board meeting. We discussed FOW's position on the recommendations to build a new football stadium, including 80' to 100' high lights, new bleachers, artificial turf, and increased parking. Several people noted the high cost of such a proposal (both construction and ongoing operations and maintenance) when there are academic issues that need to be addressed.

It was noted that although the stadium might afford some residents a pleasant social experience on the weekend, the proposal will detract from the quality of life for other residents, resulting in no net gain for the township as a whole. In particular, the safety of student drivers, students attending the activities, and surrounding residents would be an ongoing issue. Allowing such a stadium in one location in the township will have ramifications everywhere else, whether it is done via a new zoning ordinance or a variance.

Newsletter Committee. The newsletter will be printed the week of Nov. 3. A label party is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 8, starting at 8:30 a.m. at Bean Road Nursery. Ideas for the spring 2009 issue were discussed.

Land Preservation Committee. Susan Caughlan reported that a draft of the committee's goals and guidelines has been reviewed by the board. The board gave its approval. Susan explained how the committee will work. Rob suggested checking with the Advisory Council Development Committee to see whether anyone on the Advisory Council (if one is formed) could help with contacts.

Advisory Council Development Committee. The committee has not met yet, so the report was tabled to the November meeting.

Website. There have been no major changes or additions to the website. The "Worcester News" section on the home page is updated as these issues develop.

Outreach Committee. For the fall outreach, the committee discussed preparing welcome baskets for new residents of the township. They would include information about Worcester Township, FOW, and WHS. Someone asked about feedback from realtors on their experience with welcome baskets. It was suggested that Meadowood resident could help put the baskets together. It was suggested that we get sponsors to finance printing a reusable bag, like the one for Arbor Day, instead of using baskets. The committee will meet to finalize these details and report back in January.

Neighborhood meetings are targeted for early 2009, before outdoor activities start. It was also proposed to ask the HOAs to give FOW 15 minutes at their annual meeting to make a presentation. Other ideas were an informal gathering in someone's home in the neighborhood. It was suggested that FOW make a presentation at one of MRA's (Meadowood Residents Association) meetings, and ask for volunteers there. Bill Fox noted that Meadowood has 6 to 10 new residents a month, and that our brochures can be included in the information given to new residents by Meadowood's Greeters Committee.

Township Reports.

Board of Supervisors. John Harris reported that the township will be hiring a code enforcement officer to handle complaints regarding zoning violations and to improve enforcement of zoning regulations, such as the sign ordinance.

The township is looking to spend its open space allotment from the county Green Fields/Green Towns program to purchase Heyser Field (in back of Community Hall) and to complete the Zacharias Trail west to Evansburg State Park and east to Heebner Park. An unpaved equestrian trail will parallel the main trail.

Planning Commission. Revised preliminary plans for the construction of a new building and expanded parking at the Korean Church on Morris Road were sent to the supervisors with a recommendation for preliminary approval, subject to the engineer's recommendations and with all waivers. A conditional use application for this expansion project was approved by the Board of Supervisors in January.

Zoning Hearing Board. The hearing on the application for a variance to operate a counseling center in the former Schweiker house on the corner of Hollow Road and Skippack Pike will probably be concluded in October, and a decision is expected to be announced in November.

Joint Meeting. The next Joint Meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, December 1, at 9:30 a.m. in Community Hall, Fairview Village.

Contributors/Supporters. Barb McMonagle reported that the minutes mailing list is being updated.

Fundraising/Hospitality. Marie Amato reported that all the advertisers for the newsletter have been secured.

Administrative Assistant's Report. Susan attended the Turnpike Commission Open House plans display and the PECO Residents Advisory Committee meetings, and prepared goals and guidelines for the Land Preservation Committee.

FOW 2009 meetings: Wednesdays: January 14, February 11, and March 11. Meetings are held at Bean Road Nursery) beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Holiday Potluck: Monday, December 29, 6:30 to 10 p.m. at the home of Rob and Wini Hayes. An announcement will be included in the newsletter.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Caughlan