

Friends of Worcester Meeting Minutes **Wednesday, February 11, 2009 Meadowood**

Review of Minutes. The minutes of the January meeting were discussed. They were approved as written and will be posted to the website.

Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Wini Hayes reported that fundraising has made a very encouraging start.

President's Report. President Kim David distributed revised copies of the list of Standing Committees.

We will have a table at the WHS Antique and Flea Market, held on the first Saturday in May, as we usually do. A sign-up sheet will be sent around at the next meeting.

Donations of \$50 to the following organizations were approved: MCLT, NLT, Farmers Union Horse Company, and Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance.

Members of the FOW board discussed the possibility of a historic preservation ordinance with a member of the Board of Supervisors and were told that this type of ordinance is not viewed favorably at this time.

We welcomed Representative Matt Bradford. He announced that he will be opening a district office in the office complex at the corner of Bustard Road and Skippack Pike. Matt discussed the state stabilization portion of the federal economic stimulus package, the possible consolidation of school districts (which is unlikely to affect Methacton), PennDOT funding, and the turnpike widening project.

Current Issues.

Heyser Field – It was announced that the settlement will take place as soon as the Montgomery County Commissioners approve the project. Funding for the purchase is being provided by the Montgomery County Open Space Fund (80%) and Worcester Township (20%).

Municipal Land Trust – There are two options – Worcester Township can form a municipal land trust under state law, or it can contribute funding on an annual or other basis to an existing land trust to be used specifically to preserve land in Worcester. These options have not been formally presented to the supervisors.

Worcester Golf Course – Golf course owner Mike Malone was present and clarified that he has filed a appeal in Common Pleas Court of the supervisors' decision to deny his conditional use application to develop the golf course with 24 homes. Mike indicated his desire to continue to operate the golf course rather than develop it. He stated that he has been pursuing land development approval only to establish the number of development rights to which he would be entitled if he were to sell them. We discussed possible ways to transfer the development rights from the golf course to a location where development would be appropriate.

New Business.

Tax-Exempt Status. We discussed whether to change FOW's status to that of a 501(c)(4) organization to enable the group to participate in political campaigns. This would require amending the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, filing an application with IRS, and setting up a separate bank account to prevent commingling of funds from the two groups during the transition period. The group was not in favor of such a change.

Opportunities To Partner with Meadowood. The Arbor Day event at Worcester Elementary School, in which we partnered with Meadowood last year, was discussed.

It was suggested that we develop a video or powerpoint presentation showcasing the various properties in Worcester which have been preserved. This could be shown at Meadowood, and copies could be given to the school for their use in programs or classes. The Outreach Committee will consider this at their next meeting.

MRA (Meadowood Residents Association) and FOW will establish links to each other on our websites.

We discussed the possibility of holding a public forum at Meadowood this spring in connection with the upcoming election.

We did not specifically designate a point person to pursue partnership opportunities with Meadowood.

Newsletter. The spring newsletter theme will be “Saving Land Saves Money.” Articles will include an introduction to the Conservancy of Montgomery County, a review of the various land preservation projects in Worcester and the different methods by which they were accomplished, an introduction to sustainable agriculture, and Eyes on the Issues. We discussed whether to interview all the candidates for supervisor regarding their views on issues that are important to FOW. The newsletter schedule was set, with articles (rough drafts) and ads due March 16.

Land Preservation Committee. Susan and Barb are working with several landowners who have expressed interest in preserving their land. The committee is preparing two flyers, one that can be mailed to landowners as an introduction to land preservation options, and the second that can be given to landowners after an initial meeting, which summarizes the details and information on the various programs. Susan was asked to put together a list of landowners who own parcels 10 acres or larger, for an initial mailing.

Website. The flyers being developed by the Land Preservation Committee could be posted on the website.

Outreach Committee. Committee Chair Jen Strouse reported that the committee is starting their community welcome basket project.

The committee is discussing an Arbor Day event with Worcester Elementary School.

Township Reports.

Board of Supervisors. Meadowood requested a waiver of land development requirements for two sections of construction under their proposed master plan -- two additional free-standing homes in West Hill, and the demolition and rebuilding of two attached residential clusters, Bluebird Crossing and Cardinal Crest.

T-Mobile made a presentation concerning their request for a zoning waiver to construct a cell tower on the water tower on Township Line Road. The township asked them to consider the township-owned property adjacent to Mt Kirk Park (Dyka property) or else Nike Park, on N. Trooper Road.

The board acknowledged the application to add a 100+ acre horse farm on Potshop Rd (Our Farm) to the Worcester ASA, as part of the owners’ application to the county Farmland Preservation Board to preserve this property as farmland.

Planning Commission. Rob Hayes reported that Sal Paone has applied for variances to cross several riparian corridors as part of the development plan for The Preserve at Worcester. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the variances.

A revised design for the Kibblehouse subdivision was recommended by our county planner and will be considered by the developer.

Zoning Hearing Board. An application for a variance from the riparian corridor protection ordinance was discussed. The landowner is proposing to relocate an existing nonconforming use (a guest house) and also to remove an existing nonconforming driveway in the riparian corridor and “trade” this for a new patio, which the owner wishes to build within the riparian corridor. It was noted that the ordinance does not provide for “trading” one nonconforming use for a new one, and that a Corridor Management Plan, which is required by the ordinance before any construction takes place in a riparian corridor, has not been prepared.

Joint Meeting. The next Joint Meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission is scheduled for Monday, March 2, at 9:30 a.m. in Community Hall, Fairview Village.

Contributors/Supporters. We are seeing a very positive response to the annual contribution letter.

Administrative Assistant’s Report. Susan researched the riparian corridor zoning issue, worked on the Land Preservation Committee’s handouts, and worked with landowners on the turnpike stormwater issue.

FOW 2009 meetings: Wednesdays: March 11, April 8, May 13. Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. and are held at Bean Road Nursery unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Caughlan