

Friends of Worcester Meeting Minutes **Wednesday, March 11, 2009**

Review of Minutes. The minutes of the February meeting were discussed. They were approved with two changes and will be posted to the website.

President's Report. President Kim David reported that our February meeting, which was held at Meadowood, was very well attended. We were able to attract some new attendees who are Meadowood residents. He encouraged the group to think of other public venues in the community where we might be able to hold meetings periodically. The elementary and high schools were suggested. No action was taken at this time.

Kim noted that we neglected to include The Conservancy of Montgomery County in the list of nonprofit organizations to which we approved contributions at our February meeting. The group approved a \$50 contribution to CMC.

Kim noted that the FOW Board will convene a Strategic Planning Meeting later this month to prepare a 5-year Strategic Plan for the organization. The group will also review FOW's internal structure. A report will be presented at a future FOW meeting.

Current Issues.

Municipal Land Trust – At our February meeting, we discussed the two options available to municipalities that wish to act to preserve land. These options were informally discussed with some members of the Board of Supervisors, but a formal presentation was not made. It was decided to write a letter to the supervisors outlining the two options and offering FOW's assistance to implement whichever one the board deems feasible and desirable for Worcester.

Worcester Golf Course – The golf course appeal is ongoing, but landowner Mike Malone has indicated his desire to sell the development rights as opposed to building homes on the golf course. That will require an ordinance to enable development rights to be transferred from one property to another.

Turnpike Expansion Project -- The stormwater basins are in the final design stage. Homeowners, FOW, state and township officials, and DEP have been meeting with the turnpike engineering consultants to determine how to reduce the required area of the basins. The turnpike has been receptive to suggestions, and their revised plans are now being reviewed by DEP.

PECO Substation Project -- PECO has received approval from the Public Utilities Commission to build the substation on 9 acres owned by the utility south of Fisher Road. Site construction has already begun.

New Business.

WHS Flea Market. We will have an information table at the Flea Market as in past years. A sign-up sheet was passed around. Anyone else wishing to sign up should contact us at info@friendsofworcester.org.

County Farm Board. Susan attended the March meeting of the Montgomery County Farm Board, at which it was announced that there are 14 new applicants, including several in Worcester. The rankings will be announced at the April meeting.

Transfer of Development Rights. We discussed how development rights can be transferred from the golf course, and how FOW can support the landowner in this effort. It was decided to approach the supervisors informally to talk up the concept of TDRs as a win-win for the township, landowners, and developers.

Stormwater Project. Ciro Tornambe, a resident who is also an environmental consultant, spoke about his proposal to naturalize the stormwater basins at Worcester Elementary and possibly also Meadowood. This project could be expanded to include construction of bird blinds, monarch butterfly way stations, and a certified National Wildlife Federation habitat at the school. Ciro has spoken with the school principal, the district facilities supervisor, and the teacher who heads the Environmental Club. He will be meeting with a representative of Meadowood next week. He discussed the possibility of partnering with DEP and the Montgomery County Conservation District to get a state-funded grant to do a Master Plan for this project. We agreed that FOW would be happy to support such a grant. Ciro will work with the Outreach Committee and Susan on the details.

Newsletter. Two articles have been submitted. The deadline for articles and ads is March 30.

Land Preservation Committee. Drafts of the land preservation introduction brochure were circulated and a design was chosen.

Website. No report.

Outreach Committee. Committee Chair Jen Strouse reported that the committee is working on the three outreach projects they chose for this spring -- welcome baskets, Arbor Day at Worcester Elementary School, and the Horse Show in June. Potting day for the Arbor Day trees will be Saturday, April 18. More details will follow at the next meeting.

Township Reports.

Board of Supervisors. Following a conditional use hearing, four riparian corridor crossings were approved for the Paone development on North Wales Road. Concern was expressed about the dumping that has occurred over the years at Paone's Whitehall Road property, which is planned to be preserved as wooded open space and possibly deeded to the township. We discussed the advisability of the township investigating this property thoroughly before accepting dedication. FOW will send a letter to the Board of Supervisors noting that the township needs to be aware of possible environmental issues on this parcel.

The board approved Meadowood's request for 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.

Planning Commission. The Planning Commission tabled the application of the Gambone properties on Potshop and Whitehall Roads to join the Worcester ASA pending receipt of the county's review letter. They also tabled T-Mobile's proposal to build a cell tower on the Nike Park property because more information was needed.

Zoning Hearing Board. The board tabled an application for a variance from the riparian corridor protection ordinance, which was presented at the January meeting. T-Mobile's application to build a cell tower on the water tower property on Township Line Road was continued.

Joint Meeting. The Joint Meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission which was scheduled for Monday, March 2, was cancelled due to weather. The next Joint Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 1, at 9:30 a.m. in Community Hall, Fairview Village.

Contributors/Supporters. Secretary Barbara McMonagle reported that our contributions for 2009 are meeting our budgeted amount and will allow us to present programs and newsletters this year as planned.

Administrative Assistant's Report. Susan worked on the issue of transfer of development rights, finalized the first Land Preservation Committee brochure, and met with residents and turnpike engineers regarding the proposed stormwater basins.

FOW 2009 meetings: Wednesdays: 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