



MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2021

Attendees:

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Shane Morgan | April Schmitt | Ed O'Donnell | Don Peters |
| Martin Wells | David Hawk | Melinda Daniels | Tracey Surles |
| Sarah Bursky | Kelley Dinsmore | Kristen Travers | Rick Mickowski |
| Martha Narvaez | Andrea Withers | Aileen Parish | |
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Ed O'Donnell chaired the meeting.

Approval of June minutes.

New Business

The committee voted unanimously to reappoint Don Peters as the PA Co-chair for another 3 year term.

No one from Natural Lands was in attendance to present the information on the Homsey Property in Franklin Township. Shane gave a brief overview of the materials Kate Raman provided but the committee abstained from voting on the release of funds until someone from Natural Lands can present the material.

The committee approved \$510 dollars from our Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Projects line be awarded to Teti Farms for the purchase of new stakes and tree re-staking at the Pierson property following damage to the buffer after Hurricane Ida.

The committee approved a cost share mini grant up to \$2500 in Restoration/WQIP be put towards a tree planting cost share opportunity with an HOA in New Garden Township. The HOA is replanting trees that were affected by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Shane will attend an upcoming HOA meetings to go over the impacts of EAB and the importance of replanting a diverse mix of trees. She will help the HOA select appropriate replacement trees. The HOA will be solely responsible for any dead tree removals or any suggested treatments to the trees. The cost share would help cover the cost of replacement trees up to \$2500.

Shane noted that the application to the National Park Foundation to work with Avondale Borough to reduce the impact of flooding in the amount of \$75,000 was funding. She also

noted that NFWF would be making a public announcement on September 20th regarding their application to the Delaware River Conservation Fund (also for \$75000). Shane asked the committee for feedback on how to spend the additional \$75,000 if both grants were awarded. The committee supported more robust outreach to the Avondale Borough residents (many of whom only speak Spanish). Melinda indicated that there are two scientists at Stroud who speak Spanish as a first language and that they could assist with outreach. Shane mentioned that John Jackson thought a hydrological study of the entire drainage area was needed. This would be out of the scope of the current proposal and funding and the committee and National Park Service prefer to spend the money on outreach and at least one GSI project implemented in the Borough. Shane will reach out to USGS and UD WRC to see if they could help shed light on the hydrology of the drainage basin.

Shane mentioned that a landowner in Franklin Township, Bessie McAneny, reached out about preserving her land. She has 20 acres; 10 in forest and 10 in meadow which is currently managed as a hay field. She is requesting \$125,000 over 5 years for sale of the development rights. John Goodall mentioned it would cost @\$35000 just to ease the property, bringing the total dollar amount to \$160,000. John Goodall also mentioned to apply for a Vision Partnership Grant from the County there would need to be a trail component to the conservation easement. Shane will reach out to Franklin Township to see whether they have any interest in supporting this.

Old Business

The committee briefly revisited the potential of watershed wide botanical study pitched initially by John Goodall. Laura Lee wasn't present to share any information she gained from DNREC on what has been done by the State the discussion was tabled. The committee will revisit this project idea again in December when we reconvene. Shane noted that there are currently \$10,000 unreserved funds in the White Clay Restoration Fund that could be put as match towards this survey and that we could add additional funds to it in the next budget round with NPS if the proposal gains support.

Shane gave a brief update on the status of the Big Pond Area in White Clay Creek State Park. The project will be reviewed by NPS via the USACE permit application. To date nothing has been submitted and we are still waiting on the Feasibility Report to be completed. Ed O'Donnell noted that the feasibility study should be completed this fall.

NPS River Manager Update

Sarah provided an update on the RTCA planning. The planning team is looking for a Lenape tribe liaison for the White Clay and has reached out to both the Lenape nation of Pennsylvania and will be reaching out to the Delaware tribes next.

Wild and Scenic Updates

Shane followed up on proposals mentioned at the last meeting. The Harmony Park Rain Garden project supported by the Dockstader Foundation had its kick off meeting last week on site with the Rutgers team and West Grove Public Works Department. Construction is scheduled to begin September 27, 2021. It is expected that construction will take two weeks and the third week would be the planting. Shane is going to try and get volunteers to assist with this planting.

The Keen Farm reforestation project is moving forward. The Landowner agreement signed and submitted in early September by Cori Trice (CCCD). Teti farms is lined up to do the site prep and installation during the late fall 2021 - spring 2022 cycle. This project should start in Fall 2021 with extensive invasive species management, followed by a spring 2022 planting on about 5.5 acres. Franklin Township has pledged \$20000 cash and \$10000 in-kind to buffer management post implementation.

Shane noted that the Catch the Rain Program had 21 applicants to date in 2021 and that most money in the existing budget has been spent down. She also noted that she has been pushing for more rain gardens as a way to use the funds awarded by the University of Delaware study as an additional match. There are currently three applicants currently meeting with contractors to get estimates.

Shane mentioned that she would provide a full update on Water Quality at the December Meeting. She is waiting for results from the summer recreational bacteria sampling from both DNS and Stroud. She is also planning to submit the past 5 years of data to PADEP for inclusion in their integrated water report (due September 30, 2021).

Shane noted that the scenic evaluations are completed for 10 sites in the White Clay as part of the Visual Resource Inventory to be used in the White Clay State of the Watershed Report. We will complete the importance ratings for each site during the fall/winter.

Shane noted that the Christina Watersheds Municipal Partnership will be hosting another workshop on October 8th from 8:30am -12:30pm. It will consist of a bus tour illustrating installed road best management practices in both urban and rural settings as well as presentations by Jim Demchak (CCCD) on the Dirt and Gravel Roads Program and another presentation back at the Browning Barn (BRCA) by Ellen Kohler on creative funding options. We are looking ahead into 2022 and will be planning another workshop on meadow installation and management for HOAs and municipalities.

Shane also noted that several municipalities are now conducting the needed stewardship of installed GSI practices. These municipalities include New Garden Township (New

Garden Park Buffer), New Castle County (Papermill Park Rain Garden), and the City of Newark (Hunt at Louviers Stormwater Basin Retrofits). Shane will continue to help as needed to all the municipalities where we have supported GSI implementation.

Shane noted that while the properties that we have supported with Open Space funding have closed but that we haven't be billed yet. The 108 acre Smedley property (Loch Nairn golf course) in which we pledged \$15000 and the 7.8 acre Penn Green/Hiles acquisition both in New Garden Township in which we pledged \$10,000 (\$5000 of which is on hold until we can get more information on the existing fishing shack).

Dave Hawk noted that the John Evans House emergency stabilization report was completed and submitted to DCNR for their feedback. Should they move forward with the work that needs to be done there will be a massive fundraising effort. Dave also noted that the London Britain Historic Committee is moving forward with a Mason Dixon Arc Corner Heritage Plan. This plan would involve four municipalities, Elk, Franklin, London Britain and New Garden. Aileen Parish is the chair of this committee and they are working with a consultant from the Brandywine Conservancy who recently applied to the Chester County Vision Partnerships Program.

Financials

Shane reviewed the current budget status and the status of the White Clay Restoration Funds. She noted that COVID did not impact the amount of restoration funding we received this past year as it is already on record our second highest year. She also reviewed some additional sources of non-NPS funding that we received, including the \$6000 from the CWMP planning group received this past June. This funding is coming from municipal partners in the CWMP program and we are set to receive another \$6000 in March of 2022, and again in March of 2023 for a total of \$18,000 over three years.

Remaining 2021 Meeting Dates:

December 14, 10am

Other White Clay Announcements:

Kelley Dinsmore noted that our MST data from our bacteria study was used to add a segment of sewer system testing to the proposed sewer maintenance work. This area was not originally part of the prosed work. Kelley, Shane, Dr. Jinjun Kan and the contractor for the City of Newark are planning to meet and discuss this area further to determine if it warrants additional testing.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.