

MINUTES
Nature Preserve Committee Meeting
Monday, September 19, 2016

Present: Sam Bryant, Tom Price, Peter LaMontagne, Jo Shuler, Marge Eberz, Betsey Klinger. **Absent:** Bob Binkley, Halsey White, Dave Horne, Patrick Huss, Jim Chant.

I. Unfinished Business

- A. Nature Preserve Committee ordinance
 - 1. Election of chair and vice-chair
 - 2. Members' terms of office
 - 3. Membership expectations

Deferred until next month due to lack of quorum

- B. Landis Mill Rd. entrance
 - 1. Seeding

After review of the area, the decision was made not to seed. We will continue to keep any green growth in the area mowed.

- C. Directional signage to Preserve (Two signs on Butler Ave.)
 - 1. Planning Commission and CBC have approved
 - 2. Council funding for application approved
 - 3. Nature Preserve Committee approval for application
 - 4. Include as budget item for 2017

Approved by Committee. Sam to continue with application.

- D. Miller property appraisal

Sam presented a detailed report regarding the status of the acquisition. The time line is anticipated to be 1) clarify steps with Mike Savona; 2) contact with property owners to determine price; 3) review by Finance Committee to determine financial viability with and without the grant; 4) review by Nature Preserve Committee; 5) committee recommendation to Council and Council decision on whether to make application to Orphan's Court; 6) application to Orphan's Court; 7) authorization by Council to make DCNR grant application.

E. Orphans Court ruling on uses of Groner funds

Peter shared a paragraph from Miriam's will and raised the question of interpretation regarding the use of funds. Mike Savona will be asked to review.

F. Sept. 17 Work Day: Completed tasks

1. 20 native shrubs planted
2. Weeding / mulching of Miriam's Meadow / borders

The workday was very successful. The student volunteers from CB South's NHS were diligent and all goals were met. The cages placed around the newly planted shrubs will stay in place until the shrubs grow above browsing height.

G. Future habitat restoration plans

It is anticipated that we can stop watering the white pines in the spring. Watering the red cedars may continue as well as the newly planted shrubs.

Tom shared that Natural Lands Trust uses smaller plantings when restoring an area with trees. We may want to consider using their method as we continue with our larger areas.

Peter suggested that we consider using some protected space at Covered Bridge Park to propagate trees which would then be moved to the Preserve.

Tom has asked Ann Rhoads to do a walk through the Preserve to identify some of the specimens. A date to be announced...Note: Marge is not available 9/25-29.

Mowing of the meadows was discussed. It was decided to try mowing Miriam's meadow in two sessions: the front half in December and the back half in the Spring. The goal is to provide more winter cover for wildlife.

Moving the arbor was discussed. It was suggested to relocate it to the center of the meadow where the walk paths meet. It could be placed in a mowed circle with the hope that it would draw people to walk into the meadow.

H. October 8 Work Day: Remaining tasks

1. Transplanting of perennials at main entrance sign
2. Weeding / mulching of Miriam's Meadow shrub borders
3. Removal of invasive shrubs
4. Clearing of growth at Miller's Point
5. Clean out bird houses
6. Installation of additional screech owl boxes

- I. Bamboo / Weed ordinance
 - 1. Approved by Planning and currently being reviewed by solicitor
 - 2. Vote by Council in October to advertise.

Committee has reviewed. The only comment received was that perhaps 5 days is not enough time for property owners notified of a violation to begin correction.

- J. Message board for main entrance (DEFER until next month)

II. Deferred Items

- A. Incorporation of Chant tract into Preserve / installation of boundary signs
- B. Chant dedication stone
- C. Preserve map
- D. Preserve brochure
- E. Tree identification tags

III. New Business

- A. NLT's Force of Nature training / PHS's Tree Tenders classes.

Halsey and Tom will be attending the NLT training sessions (Feb. –Apr). Tom is attending the Tree Tenders classes over the next three weeks.

- B. Review of 2016 budget / expenses to date

Expenses for the year to date were reviewed. An effort will be made to reduce the cost of pizza provided to the student volunteers on the workdays, as we did not budget for this. Although the maintenance of the Groner house and grounds is no longer our committee's responsibility, the details of the recent \$1,200 Pod Landscaping expense was questioned, as we are now \$500 over budget on the maintenance of the Groner grounds. Looking at our overall 2016 budget, we have spent \$18,511.99 to date and currently have a remaining balance of \$6,807.01.

C. Tree work proposal

Tom reported that Chris Gilbert cleaned up the cherry tree that had fallen across the Creekside Path at a cost of \$250.00. An estimate was obtained from Gilbert for additional tree work in the Preserve:

- **Remove dead tree on Landis Mill Rd. - \$1400.00 (includes grinding the stump) Chris would drop the tree in the meadow and suggests that this be done after the meadow is mowed in December.**
- **Remove dead hazard limb on oak on Matthews Ave. - \$100.00**
- **Remove walnut tree leaning out over the East Meadow and trim back some limbs of trees that are encroaching into the lower part of the meadow - \$650.00**

The total cost of this work, \$2150.00, was approved. Sam will be asked to contact Gilbert.

D. Groner Fund / Investment Options

Sam cautioned that the investments are not keeping pace with inflation. The fund is currently losing 1% per year.

E. Miriam's Meadow well

“The Borough agrees to sample the subject well on a biannual basis for site-related volatile organic compounds using a US Environmental Protection Agency (“USEPA”) approved method for a period of eight (8) years, and to provide copies of results of this sampling to the Department. This sampling and reporting will be initiated upon conversion of the well to active use. At the conclusion of the monitoring period, the Department will consider our request for modification of this requirement.”

Although it would be very convenient to have a water source in the Preserve, the consensus was that this option may not be worth the convenience. Concern was expressed about continued testing responsibilities and costs for electric and pump

F. Groner Funds residual

The decision was made to have Sam apply for the residual funds. The holder appears to be an insurance company and it is thought that the amount is perhaps a premium refund and therefore does not involve a significant amount of money.

G. 2017 Budget

A special budget meeting of the committee was scheduled for Wednesday September 28 at 7:30 p.m.