THOMPSON WOODS PRESERVE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, September 13, 2023
4:00 PM
1481 E. College Avenue, State College PA 16801
2nd Floor Meeting Room

ATTENDED BY:
Bill Keough, Chair
Earl Moore, Vice Chair
Eric Silver

STAFF:
Jasmine Fields, State College Borough
Mike Bloom, College Township

CALL TO ORDER:
Mr. Keough called to order the September 13, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Thompson Woods Preserve – Governance Committee at 4:05 PM.

PUBLIC OPEN DISCUSSION:
There were no items introduced under public discussion.

CONSENT AGENDA:
Mr. Moore made a motion to accept the July 12, 2023 meeting minutes, Mr. Silver seconded. Approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:  OB-1 Branding
Mr. Bloom provided a brief overview of the draft GIS-based website for the Thompson Woods Preserve, noting that the draft site still uses some general photos and needs to be revised with additional information from Clearwater Conservancy.

The Committee discussed adding scrolling photos to help keep the look fresh, adding a “Get Involved” section, and linking the site to the I-Naturalist software program that Ferguson Twp has utilized with assistance from Juniata College.

A “Report Issues” section needs to be included, but we must first determine the key point of contact. The Committee also noted they didn’t see anything that needed removed from the site, but we’ll likely need support in filling in some of the blanks on how to use the Preserve.

OLD BUSINESS:  OB-2 Signage
Ms. Fields noted that Penn State Sustainability is interested in doing a project on signage in the Preserve. The Committee felt it was key that Gateway signage be consistent, clear and easy to use. It was noted that smaller signs could be considered for secondary access and potentially
some wayfinding. Mr. Keough noted that this could be a multi-phase project starting with Gateway designs, then internal wayfinding and finally implementation.

NEW BUSINESS: NB-1 Tree Maintenance

The Committee had a brief discussion on how diseased trees should be managed in the Preserve. The group needed additional information before it could offer any recommendations and suggested this may be a point of discussion in a Joint Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: NB-2 Big Picture Topics

Chair Keough noted that he is intending to present to the College Township and State College Borough Councils in the coming months and wanted to frame some bigger picture topics where guidance was needed.

The Committee noted that the Preserve is a complicated issue, as it has multiple owners and involved parties. Additionally, the relationships and responsibilities of those parties is complex and confusing for all involved.

The Committee acknowledged that the Preserve has a lot of untapped potential as a passive recreation destination, but more use of this sensitive environment also invites the potential for misuse and damage.

The Committee noted that before it can dive into the work at hand, they need to better understand what the respective visions for the Preserve are from each of the property owners and involved parties. The Committee also discussed a need to understand both the funding and staff capacity available to undertake projects within the Preserve.

Mr. Keough also noted there remains a few key unresolved issues, those bring the relationship with West Penn Power and how they approach easement maintenance, and identifying a central point of contact for all things Preserve related.

Other topics included the construction of the new Walnut Springs Bridge, which may invite more users into the Preserve, trail maintenance and, in particular, how to deal with washouts, and better mapping of the access points to the Preserve.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Keough accepted a motion from Mr. Moore to adjourn the September 13, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Thompson Woods Preserve – Governance Committee, which was seconded by Mr. Silver. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Mike Bloom
College Township Assistant Manager