THOMPSON WOODS PRESERVE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, June 14, 2023
4:00 PM
1481 E. College Avenue, State College PA 16801
2nd Floor Meeting Room

ATTENDED BY:
Earl Moore, Vice Chair
Charles Fisher
Bill Ray
Eric Silver

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

CALL TO ORDER:
Mr. Moore called to order the June 14, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Thompson Woods Preserve – Governance Committee at 4:04 PM.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:
The Committee reviewed and approved the following two Consent Agenda items:
- CA-1 May 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- CA-2 May 11, 2023 Advisory Committee Meeting Report

NEW BUSINESS: NB-1 Refine and Define Issues/Work Tasks
Prior to discussion on the agenda item, Mr. Moore noted for the record that the College Township Parks and Recreation Committee has officially passed the role of oversight and any prescribed authority over Thompson Woods Preserve to the newly formed Thompson Woods Preserve Governance Structure.

Mr. Bloom provided a brief overview of the committee’s last discussion and the May 11th discussion by the Advisory Committee. Specifically, both committees were narrowing their respective focus onto 4 topic areas:
- Branding/Education
- Enforcement
- Vegetation/Forest Management
- Maintenance
Branding/Education – Mr. Bloom noted that in particular, the focus so far has been upon defining “what a preserve is” and how it can be enjoyed. Both committees underscored that the messaging in the future needs to be clear and positive in differentiating a preserve from a traditional park.

The Governance Committee noted that development of an online presence and general email account for Preserve matters would be a good initial step. This centralized presence should be a clearinghouse of information on the Preserve including items such as:

- History
- GIS mapping of the property and trails
- Rules and Regulations
- How to Help section (volunteerism)
- Etc.

Physical signage in the Preserve should include a QR code that links the user back to this centralized site. The site should be widely shared/linkedin amongst the TWP partners.

Enforcement – Mr. Bloom noted that the enforcement in the Preserve has been limited and reactive to citizen concerns. Given the available resources and staff capacity, this will be a touch topic to tackle effectively.

The Governance Committee acknowledged that enforcement is a challenge and felt that the best proactive use of resources would be to lean into education about the conservation and preservation intent of the Preserve.

Vegetation/Forest Management – Mr. Bloom noted that the Advisory Committee had a good discussion on this topic, noting that what is required to manage the vegetation the Preserve correctly represents a likely expensive and significant staff capacity lift. Further, they expressed some reservations on how the community may perceive the use of herbicides within the Preserve.

Maintenance – Mr. Bloom noted that the majority of the Township’s maintenance efforts have been limited to maintaining the integrity of the property boundary and access points. Routine internal maintenance of the Preserve and reaction to safety concerns has often fallen to Centre Region Parks and Recreation.

The Governance Committee felt the priority order of these tasks should be as follows:

1) Branding/Education – Messaging, development of the central site and push for volunteerism as priorities.
2) Maintenance – Focused on maintaining access points, litter management and safety.
3) Vegetation/Forest Management – sharing of Spotted Lanternfly info could be an early priority
4) Enforcement

The Governance Committee would like to see some mock-ups of potential messaging and the site prior to tasking refinements to the Advisory Committee.
The Governance Committee also sees the potential for future corporate support for the Preserve mission.

Staff was also asked to discuss primary points of contact. Mr. Bloom noted that a meeting with the respective municipal managers and assigned staff members will need to be scheduled in the near future to discuss this topic.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Vice Chair Moore accepted a motion from Mr. Ray to adjourn the June 14, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Thompson Woods Preserve – Governance Committee, which Mr. Moore seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By,

*Mike Bloom*

Mike Bloom
College Township Assistant Manager