



MP3 COG Board
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
6:00 PM
Reading City Hall

Members: –L. Olsen (County), , L. Kelleher (Reading), K. Barnhardt (County), J. Baez, Jr. (Reading), S. Dierolf (Alsace Twp rep Manager), K. Bradley (Alsace rep elected off) – in person and - A. Sellers (Lower Alsace), D. Pottiger (Lower Alsace) - virtually

Members absent: B. Petrov (Mt. Penn), T. Goodman (Mt. Penn), J. Moore (Alsace Twp)

Others attending –B. Lederer and L. Faulk – in person and L. Kissinger - phone

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Barnhardt called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm and announced that a quorum is present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Barnhardt opened the floor for public comment. As no one present indicated their desire to speak, the public comment period was closed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES & AGENDA

Mr. Barnhardt noted the need to consider the minutes from the July/September 2024 meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

There was no objection to the contents of the meeting minutes and they were approved by acclimation.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Mr. Olsen, Acting Treasurer, presented the Treasurer’s Report - the MP3 bank account has a balance of \$45,737.68, noting that there have been no bills to process. He noted the receipt of the Lower Alsace 2025 dues. He also noted the need to ratify the \$250 sponsorship for the New Year’s Eve fireworks event and authorize the submission of the Reading Music Foundation grant application for \$4,500 for the 2025 musical events.

Mr. Olsen moved, seconded by Mr. Baez, to ratify the above listed sponsorship and the submission of the grant application. The motion was approved unanimously.

In response to a question, Mr. Olsen explained that the funding held in a Berks County Community Foundation account was donated by Boots Fehr. Ms. Kelleher added that this funding was set aside for capital needs.

MP3 COG REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

Natural Lands Stewardship Plan and Trails Feasibility Study

Completed and distributed to the board and the public.

B and C Closure of Skyline – Duryea Dr to List Road, & Security Cameras

Mr. Kissinger stated that the gate installation is almost complete. A problem with one of the remote closures is being addressed. He stated that the installation of the security camera is underway; however, LTW discovered a problem with the poles. Due to the extreme wind conditions on Skyline Drive, the poles need to be upgraded to prevent them from moving during windy periods.

In response to a question, Ms. Kelleher reported that 11 poles are being installed and each pole will have 5 cameras, with one of the cameras having zoom and pan abilities. The cameras are the same as those installed on City streets. The Reading Police and Central Berks Police will have live feeds to the videos.

In response to a question, Mr. Kissinger stated that the gates will be closed remotely at 9 pm. This time complies with the City Code.

§ 396-304. Time of use.

[Amended 7-11-2022 by Ord. No. 63-2022]

A. Parks are open 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. prevailing time from October 1 through April 30 and 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. prevailing time from May 1 through September 30, except with a permit. During hours the park area is closed, law enforcement authorities described herein shall have the ability to clear the area of all parties and property.

B. This shall not apply to City personnel engaged in the performance of their duties or to those having a permit or authorization from the Public Works Director, or his designee, Police Department, Pagoda Foundation or the Reading Recreation Commission to conduct activities during closed hours.

Mr. Kissinger stated that signage has been installed at multiple locations about the closure of the gates and the times. Ms. Kelleher added that the City's intent is to provide an educational period and initially warn those who fail to leave the area prior to the closure of the gates. After the educational period, citations will be issued. She noted that Central Berks has jurisdiction to enforce several of the City's ordinances when they respond to complaints on Skyline Drive.

Ms. Sellers suggested adjusting the gate closure time to 10 pm so people have time to view the city lights from this vantage point.

Mr. Baez noted that the closure time was selected due to the timing of the quality-of-life complaints received from District 2 and 3 neighbors.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the need for the 9 pm closure is supported by the multiple years of complaints coming from Hessian Camp residents, Hillside neighborhood residents, Lower Alsace residents and now College Heights residents. She stated that the closure of the Pagoda parking lot has pushed actors to the List Road Overlook which has relocated the noise, and the complaint calls to Central Berks.

A. Amendment to the COG Agreement

Ms. Kelleher explained that this amendment was driven by Mt. Penn’s continued lack of participation and the change in the participation of the existing members and the need to address the Alsace Township manager’s decision to step away from the board.

Ms. Kelleher reported that the Mt. Penn Manager called this afternoon and asked the Board to consider providing Mt. Penn with a 30-day delay in approving the amendment to remove the borough as a member. He stated that he has been encouraging the Borough to reengage with the MP3, as it will fit nicely with their desire for economic growth. She added that Mr. Hunter also hopes that the MP3 will continue its previous offer to stay the requirement for the payment of dues until the borough begins to participate.

Mr. Barnhardt explained the origin of the MP3 and how former Mt Penn Councilman Mark Dudash supported the creation of the MP3 and Mt Penn’s participation and the overall disinterest after Mr. Dudash left the borough Council. He agreed with allowing Mt. Penn the 30-day window and to continue the offer to stay the annual dues.

All present agreed with Mr. Barnhardt’s position.

Ms. Kelleher explained that COGs (Council of Governments) are usually composed of elected officials only. However, when the MP3 COG was being created Mr. Barnhardt identified the need to have a combination of elected officials and municipal officials who can assist with some of the work required to move the MP3 forward; therefore the COG was drafted to require the appointment of an elected official and either the municipal manager or municipal secretary from each government member, which retains the primary need to have the participants close to each municipality’s decision makers.

Ms. Kelleher stated that the first amendment to the membership allowed the elected official to select a community member to serve in their place, which has been invoked by Alsace Twp. The new need for an amendment was raised when the Alsace Twp manager decided to step away. Rather than add an additional citizen, it would be best to have the government members select another public official to replace the manager or secretary. She added that the State Ethics Code defines “public official” as a certain municipal employee or a citizen appointed to serve of a municipal board, authority or commission. This again would retain the public official’s ability to communicate with the elected officials and manager.

There were no questions about the amendment.

Mr. Barnhardt stated that a vote on the amendment will be delayed until the March meeting to provide the extension to Mt. Penn.

D. Frisbee Golf Project

Ms. Kelleher stated that there is no update. She reminded the group that this project was selected at the request of the Marketing Committee to use to support sponsorships for MP3 events

E. COG Events

No update.

COMMITTEE REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS – submission in written form only

- Finance & Capital - none
- Promotions & Marketing - attached to the agenda
- Public Safety & Public Services - none
- Environmental & Land Use Committees – attached to the agenda. Ms. Kelleher reported that the new chair of this committee is Ross Harter.

WRITTEN REPORTS FROM PRESERVE STAKEHOLDERS

None received.

NEW BUSINESS - Election of Officers

Mr. Barnhardt stated that the agreement requires officers to be elected annually to the position of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Nominations were opened.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Mr. Baez, to nominate Mr. Barnhardt as chair. There were no further nominations and no objections to the nomination. Mr. Barnhardt was elected to Chair unanimously.

Ms. Kelleher moved, seconded by Mr. Barnhardt, to nominate Mr. Baez as Vice Chair. There were no further nominations and no objections to the nomination. Mr. Baez was elected to Vice Chair unanimously.

Mr. Barnhardt moved, seconded by Mr. Pottiger, to nominate Ms. Kelleher as Secretary. There were no further nominations and no objections to the nomination. Ms. Kelleher was elected to Secretary unanimously.

Mr. Pottiger moved, seconded by Mr. Baez, to nominate Mr. Olsen as Treasurer. There were no further nominations and no objections to the nomination. Mr. Olsen was elected to Treasurer unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Meeting locations. Mr. Dierolf stated that he will check with Mr. Moore about the availability of the Alsace Township building tomorrow.

Mr. Baez suggested scheduling locations only through the end of May, so Mt. Penn can be considered as a location if they decide to participate. All agreed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one present indicated their desire to comment and the public comment period was closed.

The next MP3 meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26th at 6 pm at the Alsace Township Municipal Building.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:35 pm on motion of Mr. Baez and Ms. Sellers respectively.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary

Action Items:

1. Ms. Kelleher to follow-up on meeting locations.