

White Township Stewardship Committee
Regular meeting
6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 31, 2022
Meeting minutes

Chairperson Barb Hauge called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Committee: Chairperson Barb Hauge present; Vice Chairperson David Dahlheimer present; Secretary Sierra Davis present; Jeff Geesey present; Matt Klunk present.

Staff (non-voting): Township Manager Chris Anderson present (online); Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer present; Recording Secretary Chauncey Ross present.

(Five guests reported their in-person attendance on the sign-in sheet; about 12 logged in on GoToMeeting.)

Public Comment on agenda items

- Tom Miller, Indiana, commented on the uses of White's Woods. Discussion followed.
- Sara King, White Township, commented on the mission of the committee, the minutes of the Feb. 17 meeting, and the public input progress. She provided hard copy handouts.
- Rick Ritenour, Lower Burrell, commented on the uses of White's Woods, the mission of the committee, and carbon sequestration.

(None of those who virtually attended the meeting gave comment.)

Minutes

Mr. Geesey moved and Ms. Davis seconded the approval of the minutes. Mr. Dahlheimer provided a handout with a list of items to be amplified, added or clarified on the minutes of the Feb. 17 meeting. He stated that an incorrect reference to Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry made during discussion/review in the Feb. 17 meeting should have referred to the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. A motion by Mr. Dahlheimer to accept the list was not seconded. Discussion followed. The committee voted 4 to 1 (Mr. Dahlheimer opposed) to approve the minutes as presented. Discussion followed.

Mission of the Committee

Ms. Hauge recited the committee's mission.

Chairperson Overview

Ms. Hauge thanked the committee members for agreeing to reschedule the meeting, noted the new format of the agenda, and characterized the stewardship plan as a "living, breathing document ... (that) should be reviewed on a regular basis and ... updated fairly regularly."

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Discussion/New topics, speakers

- Ms. Hauge spoke on the uses of the park for purposes of conducting a survey, and requested suggestions from the committee and others. Discussion followed concerning survey accuracy, purposes of White's Woods, and uses of White's Woods.

Discussion concerned the meaning of "timbering." Ms. Hauge asked Ms. Davis to draft a statement establishing the committee's definitions of timbering and woodland stewardship.

- Referring to a map of White's Woods, Ms. Hauge spoke on access and entries to the park. Discussion concerned development of parking, access for people with disabilities, protection of elements and species in National Heritage Inventory, and touring White's Woods.

Discussion/Review:

- Mr. Shaffer presented information from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Eberly College of Business, concerning research/survey assistance for the committee.

Mr. Geesey moved and Mr. Klunk seconded a recommendation for Mr. Shaffer to engage in conversation with Eberly College of Business to work on a project with the committee. Discussion followed. Mr. Dahlheimer moved to amend the motion to develop criteria to be used with other sources. Discussion followed. Mr. Dahlheimer revised the amended motion to consider several options before committing resources to any source. Discussion followed. Ms. Hauge recommended the language of the motion to be "to write a description that could be sent to multiple places." Discussion followed. Mr. Dahlheimer said other sources have prepared proposals to the committee. Mr. Klunk amended the motion to consider all options. The motion failed on a voice vote of 2 to 3 (Ms. Davis and Mr. Dahlheimer in favor). Discussion of the procedure followed. The amended motion then failed on a show of hands by a vote of 0 to 5.

Mr. Dahlheimer distributed a handout describing additional options for research assistance from IUP. Discussion followed concerning timeliness and costs of all the research programs.

- Ms. Hauge reported that she contacted Penn State Extension, whose community engagement specialists could provide assistance to the committee at a cost of "several thousand dollars." Ms. Davis recommended as an action item that the committee review each of the documents provided, to be shared by email, to be acted upon at the next meeting. Discussion followed. Ms. Hauge asked Mr. Shaffer to draft a proposal. Mr. Geesey asked that documents be presented to the committee in advance of the meetings.
- Mr. Shaffer reported that efforts to reach Indiana County Parks & Trails for information on carbon capture have been unsuccessful. Ms. Hauge said the item would be placed on the April 21 agenda.

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Discussion/Review (continued):

- Discussion turned again to community outreach assistance proposals.
- Mr. Geesey proposed that the committee hold biweekly meetings: a work session at mid-month and a regular meeting late in the month. A motion to meet Wednesday, April 13, and Thursday, April 28, proposed by Mr. Geesey, seconded by Ms. Davis, discussed by the committee, failed on a vote of 2 to 3 (Mr. Geesey and Ms. Davis in favor). Discussion of alternatives followed.

Public comment on non-agenda items

- Susan Dahlheimer invited committee members and others to view a webinar and participate in other activities sponsored by Friends of White's Woods. She provided a handout.
- Sara King commented on carbon sequestration activity by Indiana County Parks & Trails.
- Rick Ritenour commented on uses of White's Woods and on selective harvesting.

Announcements

None were presented.

Members' comments for the good of the order

- Mr. Dahlheimer presented handouts, "Stewardship Plans Sent by Dave to Subcommittee.: Discussion followed.
- Ms. Hauge invited those present to participate in a scavenger hunt Saturday, April 16, in White's Woods and other events and programs related to active transportation planning.
- Ms. Davis summarized a list of action items to be completed before or at the April 21 meeting:
 - ▶ A draft of a position statement defining timbering and other terms;
 - ▶ A draft of a proposal for community outreach service from Eberly College of Business;
 - ▶ Mr. Shaffer to verify township regulations for leashing dogs in parks;
 - ▶ All to review proposals for outreach assistance;
 - ▶ A summary of uses of White's Woods to be compiled in a Google doc; and
 - ▶ A draft of a definition of stewardship.
- Mr. Dahlheimer presented a handout "Recommendations for Speakers for Stewardship Subcommittee." Ms. Hauge asked others to suggest sources. Discussion followed.

Next meeting

6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21, at White Township municipal building, 950 Indian Springs Road.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Geesey, the committee adjourned at 8:52 p.m.