

SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
GREEN TEAM MEETING NOTES

August 2, 2022

APPROVED MEETING NOTES

The South Strabane Township Green Team held its Regular Meeting on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 5:04 p.m.

Present: Bracken Burns, Chair; Janie Deemer; Mary Helicke; Barry Johnson; Colleen Johnson; Roger Shaw; Don Sisul; and Penny Steggles

Also Present: Jim Sutter, Assistant to the Township Manager; Paris Szalla, Administrative Intern; Richard Luketich, Township Supervisor; Jason Kilgore, Professor of Biology, Washington and Jefferson College; Jennifer Dann, District Manager, Washington County Conservation District

1. Discussion with Dr. Jason Kilgore Regarding Tree Programs

Chair Burns welcomed special guests Jason Kilgore and Jennifer Dann to discuss various programs to increase tree coverage in the Township. He noted the Community Park Master Plan recommends an arboretum be established in the Community Park. He also noted he and Township Supervisor Richard Luketich had discussed a dearth of trees in the Township and are looking at reviewing the requirements for trees in new developments in the future.

Dr. Kilgore asked if the Township currently has a Shade Tree Ordinance. Chair Burns stated there is not and the Township is currently a blank slate. He stated they are counting on their guidance in getting started. Ms. Dann mentioned other municipalities have requirements for the number of trees required in new developments. Chair Burns stated there are currently requirements in the Code. A discussion ensued on the current requirements.

Dr. Kilgore stated a good first place to start is to adopt a tree ordinance. He recommended reviewing the ordinances on the books in other municipalities in Pennsylvania. Dr. Kilgore stated another approach is to encourage the retention of existing trees, though this requires an inventory and he has not seen this approach taken very often. Dr. Kilgore asked how the Township defines “green space” when it comes to development. Ms. Dann asked if retention ponds and storm water controls are included in the definition. Assistant to the Township Manager Jim Sutter stated storm water controls are not included in the “green space” definition.

Dr. Kilgore stated with the rapidly changing landscape, it is important an ordinance with more enforcement is adopted. He stated an assessment is necessary to identify ecologically sensitive areas. He recommended seeing what the County has regarding a Natural Features Heritage Inventory. A discussion ensued on various programs for obtaining trees. Chair Burns stated his opinion there needs to be a tree inventory done and then next steps will be taken from there.

2. Fall Community Clean-up Day Planning

A discussion ensued regarding the character of the event. Ms. Deemer stated she envisioned it as procuring several dumpsters for individuals to bring come and bring their trash. Chair Burns

expressed caution regarding a similar even in Monongahela. Trash collected from this event could not be disposed of for six weeks. A discussion ensued.

Mr. McCurdy stated he had experience with a successful event at his previous community in Greene County. Mr. Luketich stated there should be separate dates for cleaning roads and expressed confidence in obtaining a dumpster. Mr. Johnson stated that there should be volunteers on hand to coordinate trash collection.

3. Property Beautification Update

Mr. Sutter provided an update on the number of applications received to date. He stated 6 residential, 2 commercial and 0 agricultural applications have been received. He stated the deadline has been extended to August 15th and now is the time to turn in submissions. Ms. Steggles stated she has gift certificates for the winning properties. Mr. Sutter stated he has yard signs for the winning and nominated properties.

Chair Burns asked if anyone would be offended if a member of the Green Team was nominated. The general consensus was this would be acceptable given a third party will be judging. Ms. Deemer expressed disappointment with the lack of nominations from individuals outside the Green Team and from the community at-large. Ms. Johnson noted the reality is that 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people. She added there needs time for the program to grow.

4. Report on Meeting with Dr. Donald Snoke, Trinity Area School District

Mr. McCurdy reported on his recent meeting with Dr. Donald Snoke at Trinity High School. He stated he met for an hour and learned much of what they are doing with hydroponics. He stated he did not want to press too hard regarding recycling given it was an introductory visit. He asked for permission to develop an action plan to present to Dr. Snoke.

Ms. Steggles asked if any of the student groups regularly pick litter. Mr. McCurdy stated he asked Dr. Snoke about this, but he couldn't recall. A discussion ensued on student volunteer requirements.

5. Litter Pickup

Ms. Steggles asked if there had been any further discussion on using prisoners from the jail for litter pickup. Mr. Burns stated there are requirements for the program related to scheduling and the road being a state road. A discussion ensued.

A discussion on when to have the next Green Team litter pickup ensued and it was tentatively decided to hold it August 27th at 9 a.m. at Berry Road. A discussion ensued regarding recycling.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Green Team, the meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.