

Meeting Summary for Town Council Zoom Meeting

Aug 12, 2024 07:29 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) ID: 297 850 640

Quick recap

The Racial and Social Equity Committee announced their decision to become an independent advocacy group and discussed various issues including the treasurer's report, the Film Society's fees, and the decision not to hold the Grove Triathlon. They also reviewed the Sustainability Committee's plan for an energy audit, the Dei education, and the restoration of the Conservation Meadow, while addressing concerns about snow management, noise pollution, and traffic calming measures. Lastly, they reviewed various reports and approved the minutes of previous council meetings, reminding each other about the upcoming closed session and the next regular meeting.

Next steps

1. Bruce to finalize proposal for tree removal in the meadow with Parks department
2. Barbara and Mary to schedule DEI training session with Leadership Montgomery for November 9th
3. Eva to look into removing the metal jungle gym near the baseball diamond in the playground
4. John to reach out to RJ Landscaping about sand distribution options for snow/ice removal
5. Peter to research solar-powered speed signs for traffic calming
6. Kriss to draft statement for newsletter to recruit volunteers for Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee
7. Meadow Committee to vote on Parks department's tree removal plan at next meeting
8. John to have detailed discussion with RJ Landscaping about sand distribution for problem areas
9. Peter to follow up with Steve about resurfacing the basketball court
10. Town Council to review traffic calming measures for Chestnut Road
11. Peter to repair speed bump that was pulled out on Chestnut Road
12. Gateway Committee to continue refurbishing town entrance signs
13. Sustainability Committee to provide update at next meeting
14. Peter to send John copy of April minutes with noted grammatical errors

Summary

Personal Appearances

Paula Puglisi: The Racial and Social Equity Committee's leadership team announced their decision to become an independent advocacy group to promote social and racial equity. This decision was made due to a perceived disconnect with the town government in fulfilling the promises outlined in the resolution. The committee's mission remains unchanged, and they aim to maintain a respectful relationship with the town while encouraging community dialogue and participation. The committee also sought volunteers for the upcoming Labor Day event organized by the Rec Committee.

Treasurer's Report and Film Society Fees

John led the discussion of the treasurer's report for the first month of the new year, highlighting unusual patterns with the utilities, particularly with the community solar company, Skyview. Despite these irregularities, no Skyview expenses were recorded in July. The team then deliberated on a request from the Film Society to waive their fees for the upcoming year due to a significant drop in attendance since the Covid-19 pandemic. After considering various options, the team decided to drop the admission fees for the year to see if that would help attract more attendees. The total cost to the town for this trial year would be \$1,200.

Volunteer Groups, Upcoming Events, and Projects

John praised the efforts of various volunteer groups and announced upcoming Labor Day weekend events, including a 3k foot race and a pickleball tournament. He also discussed the decision not to hold the Grove Triathlon this year due to a lack of interest and volunteers, suggesting that the Recreation Committee reach out to potential participants for next year. John provided updates on various projects, including Mt. Laney's road repaving, the stormwater infrastructure maintenance RFP, and the shared use pathway project. Lastly, he announced a "state of the district" event centered around environmental justice, scheduled for October 19th, with a speaker from the State Department of the Environment being requested.

Sustainability Audit, Maintenance Procedures, and Snow Removal

John discussed the Sustainability Committee's plan to conduct an energy audit of McCathran Hall to assess energy usage and loss, with a focus on heating and cooling. He also brought up the Maintenance of Unoccupied Properties Subcommittee's proposal to revise ordinances and procedures for occupied properties with maintenance issues. Furthermore, he announced a Parliamentary Education training session on Robert's Rules of Order, scheduled for October 13th. Lastly, he addressed the town's current snow and ice removal policy, which relies on natural melting instead of salt, and questioned whether the town should consider using sand, despite logistical challenges.

Snow Management and De-Icing Strategies

Peter and John discussed the issue of snow management on their property, considering the use of sand, similar to a strategy previously employed by Steve. John agreed to discuss this with their current contractor, RJ, who had shown reluctance to this method. They also discussed the potential environmental impacts of using salt and sand for de-icing roads, with Peter suggesting the exploration of a new de-icing chemical. John agreed to reach out to RJ for a detailed discussion about whether to devote manpower to distributing salt or sand.

DEI Education, Data Confidentiality, and Restoration

John led a discussion on the DEI education and assigned Barbara to provide an update. The team also addressed Chris's concerns about data confidentiality, with Montgomery leadership assuring strict procedures were in place. The team decided to focus on the current proposal, which included meetings with town residents, committee chairs, and councilors, before addressing the "IDI" proposal later. The council agreed to implement individual assessments for residents interested in furthering their understanding of Dei, with Paula suggesting a subsidy for these assessments. Lastly, the discussion shifted to the restoration of the Conservation Meadow, with a presentation from Bruce and Daggy outlining the committee's progress.

Meadows Committee Challenges and Solutions

John and Bruce faced technical difficulties while presenting about the Meadows Committee, but managed to share some information about the committee's members and their efforts to restore the ecological health of the meadow in the conservation park. However, they have faced challenges in engaging with Parks regarding the lower meadow, which is set to be paved. Bruce also outlined a long-term plan for the maintenance of the conservation park, including a two-phase plan to remove some red cedars from the meadow to open up space for planting a diversity of native meadow plants. The conversation ended with concerns raised about the impact of trees on attracting different wildlife and potential increase in noise pollution.

Robert Booher discussed the limitations of sound walls in reducing noise pollution, emphasizing that much of the noise comes from road traffic and electrification won't eliminate it. Bruce added that the noise will eventually decrease as the engines get older. John then introduced the Meadow Restoration project, stating that a formal proposal was due soon and encouraged the town council to express their support or reservations. He also commended the Meadow Committee for their efforts in preserving the meadow.

Playground Survey Results

Lastly, Eva presented the results of the playground survey, which will be available on the website and other platforms for public review. The group decided to remove the borders from the swings and cut paths to improve accessibility, but Eva stepped back from the

project due to time constraints, leaving the addition of new equipment to be revisited. The group also considered removing the metal jungle gym, improving drainage, and adding a handicapped sign in the parking lot.

Addressing Speeding on Chestnut Road

John raised concerns about the recurring issue of cars traveling too fast on Chestnut Road and proposed reviewing traffic calming measures. Peter suggested looking at the problem one at a time and mentioned the potential of using technology such as solar-powered speed signs. Sarah questioned the effectiveness of speed bumps and raised concerns about increased light pollution from potential new installations. The team agreed to further investigate these issues and consider potential solutions.

John confirmed that no specific action proposals have been brought to the Council and the meeting continued. There was a discussion about the repair and potential relocation of a removed item, with the current plan to return it to its original location.

Town Council Reports

The team reviewed various reports, including the town council reports, playground survey, and refurbishment updates. Kriss's efforts to revive the Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee were also noted.

The team approved the minutes of previous council meetings and added an action item from the July 7 meeting to the minutes. Lastly, they reminded each other about the upcoming closed session with SMI Environmental tomorrow night, August 13, and the next regular meeting on September 9.