

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

October 8, 2007

CALL TO ORDER: Comm. Crilly called a meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:05 p.m.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Comm. Crilly announced that the Board of Commissioners will hold an Executive Session on Thursday, October 11, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. regarding a redevelopment matter.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE:

CALL TO ORDER: Comm. Efkowitz called a meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Comm. Efkowitz, Chairperson took roll call. Present: Commissioners Lisa Romaniello and Richard Booth.

Others: John Crawford, Assistant Township Manager, Dick Watt, Township Solicitor and Patrick Stasio, Director of Parks & Recreation Dept.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Comm. Efkowitz accepted the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting of September 17, 2007 into the record as submitted.

REPORTS:

There were no questions of the Parks & Recreation Monthly Department report. There was no quorum for the September PRAC meeting.

Mr. Stasio said the PRAC continues to consider the “Dogs on Leashes” in specific parks, and it will be discussed again at our November meeting.

Library Board Report:

Comm. McKenna reported that the Library Board worked on their budget and will submit it to John Crawford.

OLD BUSINESS:

Boileau Park Phase I Update:

Mr. Stasio said the plan is moving along and the field has been graded and laid out. They just started working on the parking lot. Starting on Wednesday, an irrigation company will come out and install irrigation to the field, which will take about seven days to complete. When they are finished, they will seed and fertilize the field. We will curb the end of Orangeman's Road, finish the parking lot and add sidewalks. Once the project is completed, the field will not be open until fall, 2008 or spring, 2009.

Boileau Park Security Lights:

Comm. Efkowitz said we have a request from the Historical Association for security lighting in Boileau Park. This project should go out for bid and what is the timeline for it?

Mr. Stasio replied we will put this project out to bid. The Historical Association has given him the specs for the lighting and he will review it and pass it on to our Lighting Engineer to review as well. We will advertise the bids and send them out and have a bid opening in two months. It is possible that the project will begin in late December or January of next year.

Comm. Efkowitz noted that the lights will be paid for by the Friends of Boileau from the grant they received from the State.

Comm. Booth asked is the lights for the barn and the house?

Mr. Stasio replied yes.

Comm. Romaniello asked that a letter be sent to Joe Thomas, President of the Historical Association regarding the timeline of the project.

Public Comments:

Mr. Scull said the lights will be behind the farmhouse and will have motion sensors.

Boileau Park Barn Status:

Comm. Efkowitz said an insurance inspection was done in March, 2007. All of the buildings were inspected on the parcel and recommendations were made. She and Mr. Stasio asked Hans Stein, who is an architect, and who has worked on historic barns to make some recommendations.

Comm. Romaniello commented this committee directed Mr. Scull to solicit a proposal for a scope of work to be done to the barn.

Comm. Efkowitz said she spoke to Pat Stasio, and it was decided that we would have Hans look at the barn; however, a suggestion was made by the Friends of Boileau to remove the back portion of the barn, which is past the stone wall on the north side. She has no scope of work to review from the Friends of Boileau regarding a cost estimate for structural repairs. She asked Mr. Stasio, with the support of her committee, to go out for bid to remove the back shed portion of the barn and to demolish the entire lumbar structure and leave only the stone foundation of the barn along with the stone gate around it. What is the cost to remove all of the timber and the roof? It is clear by our insurance carrier that they are in eminent danger of falling. The Friends of Boileau should look into the idea of cataloging and storing that timber for future use.

Arthur Hall Adams, Architect, said he has been working on the specs for the bid documents, which he did not bring with him tonight. He was led to believe that this was going to be done as an emergency repair. He and Mr. Scull met with two contractors, Chip Rapp of Rapp Construction and Steve McIntyre of Twining Construction to develop an appropriate scope of work that they felt they could do within a minimal budget.

Comm. Efkowitz said when we put it out to bid then we will determine who can do the work for the least amount of cost. Can we consider deconstructing the entire barn?

Solicitor Watt replied regarding the Stein memo, there is a portion of the structure that is in danger of collapsing and the cause of that collapse could be wind and not just snow. The removal of that portion of the structure is an emergency repair and the Township could contract the removal of that portion without going through the bidding process.

Comm. Efkowitz said if we are going to remove a portion of the barn; we should look at other pieces of the barn that are in danger. She does not want to piecemeal it and then find out what the cost is to stabilize the entire barn, but she is not in favor of the Township pay for cataloging timber and storing it.

Mr. Adams said we can stabilize the barn to gain time to identify a productive use for the property. If the Friends of Boileau can raise \$2-\$3 million dollars over the next few years, it could be turned into a Performing Arts Center.

Comm. Efkowitz asked Mr. Adams if he realizes how difficult it is for any civic organization to raise that kind of money. We have a building of useable space not a whole lot bigger than this council room. A performing arts center use has already been identified in the master plan as not feasible. She would rather see the Friends of Boileau raise money for the farmhouse and not a barn that is too small to be used as a performing arts center.

Comm. Romaniello commented all important projects take time, dedication, support and compassion. We asked for specs and a bid for the work.

Comm. Efkowitz replied we do not have specs and a bid and that is why we will continue Item D on the agenda.

Comm. Romaniello said she does not know if the Friends of Boileau or the community wants a brand new facility for this location. This was supposed to be an adaptive reuse, which means to reuse the buildings that we already have.

Comm. Booth replied they have never found an adaptive use for the barn.

Comm. Efkowitz asked Comm. Romaniello if she agrees that it would take an extraordinary amount of money to restore this barn to an adaptive reuse.

Comm. Romaniello replied it would not only take an extraordinary amount of money, but an extraordinary group of citizens, who would be able to pull this off.

Comm. Efkowitz asked Mr. Stasio to move forward with the bid process to deconstruct the barn.

Mr. Adams said if the Township is going to engage in the deconstruction of the barn, he suggested that the Township put out an RFP to engage professionals, who can do it properly, then get bid documents together and put it out for bid. But, in the meantime, we still have the wooden portion of the barn that may collapse at any time.

Comm. Romaniello asked Mr. Adams to explain the cataloging process.

Mr. Adams replied we have digital photographs in which we mark each beam and each beam is identified in the photograph of its location where it was taken from and stored in the barn.

Comm. Efkowitz said she likes the idea of an RFP. This is the best thing for the Friends of Boileau because this allows them to deconstruct the barn, catalogue the parts of the barn, and come up with a million dollars to reuse the building and, in addition, to carry on with their fundraising efforts to restore the farmhouse because she is concerned about that building as well.

Comm. Romaniello asked could the barn be rebuilt in stages?

Mr. Adams replied yes, but it would still have to be deconstructed because the roof timbers are not adequate to support the roof.

Comm. Efkowitz asked what is the cost for a roof for that barn?

Mr. Adams replied he does not know.

Comm. Booth asked are the taxpayers of Upper Moreland willing to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to repair this small barn. He feels the taxpayers are going to have to do this based on past performance of the Friends of Boileau, who have proved that they cannot raise any significant money to-date, and any other civic organization would have a difficult time raising the amount of money required for this project. The original agreement was that the Friends of Boileau would do all of the work and take responsibility for repairing the buildings, barns, etc., which they have not done.

Hans Stein's report says \$75,000-\$100,000 would be needed to repair both sides of the barn, and he is willing to support having the Township pay for it. People have questioned Stein's credentials and he feels they are good. He and his firm have designed/restored five barns for various uses and have been asked to consult on barns in various stages of structural and architectural neglect. It is his professional opinion that, "A sizeable windstorm and/or snow load will cause a partial collapse of the barn. Even if we fix both sides of the northeast corner, this is a band-aid approach and the barn will not be weather tight and the deterioration will continue."

There is 1,800 sq. ft. of the lower level of the barn, which has a lot of supporting beams, and can be used for storing, but not adaptable for reuse. The upper floor is 2,325 sq. ft., which is mostly open space, but once the shed is torn down, we will lose 500 sq. ft. so we have 1,825 sq. ft. of usable space. As Hans suggested in his letter, the total cost of fixing the barn will be in the range of \$800,000 - \$900,000.

As suggested in the historical report, we should see if we can find someone who would lease or buy the property and condition it upon requiring them to restore those buildings and open up the grounds a few days a year. These structures will continue to deteriorate and the Friends will come back and ask for more money.

Comm. Efkowitz said we have a master plan for this property and she refuses to nickel and dime our taxpayers for paying for constant emergency repairs.

Mr. Adams said he needs direction on whether to continue working on the bid documents for tearing down a portion of the barn.

Comm. Efkowitz said we will discuss Mr. Adams document at the next Parks & Recreation Committee meeting in November. She would like to know the cost and scope of work involved in removing the barn down to the bear bones so we are not hit with another emergency repair anytime soon.

Comm. Crilly said the committee can direct the Director of Parks & Recreation to get an estimate on removing a portion of the barn and/or deconstructing the barn to its original state.

Public Comments:

Nick Scull, President of the Friends of Boileau, said the reason we are trying to save the shed is because if it falls down the timbers will break and never be useful again and those timbers have roman numerals on them. If Boileau Farm is torn down and rebuilt to another configuration, it will not be the same. He is against tearing it down.

Comm. Efkowitz said she is against tearing it down too.

Mr. Scull said if the Township spends 1% of its \$16 billion dollar budget on historic preservation; it would be \$160,000. There is a cost and a responsibility of the local government to preserve this site. The largest grant we can get from the State is \$200,000, to stabilize the 1740 Farmhouse in which we do not know the historical value.

Comm. Efkowitz said our insurance carrier assessed the farmhouse. The mold growth throughout the building, ceiling deterioration in the foyer and flooring failure in the kitchen are significant safety concerns. Given these issues, they recommended keeping the public at the door of the building. So will \$200,000 pay for a study or pay for repairs.

Mr. Scull replied four years ago, when the plan was developed, the buildings should have been stabilized. These buildings have been there for 200 years and the Township is out of touch about how the community feels about historic preservation. His plan is to do what should have been done four years ago, which is to stabilize the buildings. He does not believe that the barn is in eminent danger of falling down other than the shed portion on the west side.

Bill Flemming commented it is four years later and the Friends have not even raised \$50,000 and there is a safety issue there.

Comm. Efkowitz replied that Mr. Scull has said on many occasions that the Township owns these buildings and we are responsible for their demise, safety or reuse. She is choosing deconstruction and will keep the historic portion of the barn in tact for future use.

Mr. Flemming suggested attacking one building at a time.

Barbara Rothenau commented that deconstruction is not the issue; it should be demolition. We have a five year plan and we were guaranteed that no taxpayers' money would be used for these buildings. Enough is enough and she urged the committee to consider demolition.

Comm. Efkowitz said to Mr. Stasio that she would like to see the cost associated for taking the barn down to the structure.

Mr. Stasio replied he will have someone look at it and make a recommendation.

Friends of Boileau to provide Committee with scope of work and cost estimate for structural repairs:

Comm. Efkowitz said this item will be continued until next month.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was none at this time.

OTHER PARKS & RECREATION ITEMS:

Halloween Event – 18th Pumpkins on Parade:

Mr. Stasio said Pumpkins on Parade will be held on Saturday, October 20, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. at Masons Mill Park with a rain date of Sunday, October 21st. There will be scarecrow stuffing, hayrides, pumpkin decorating, and a storytelling witch that evening.

There were no visitor or Commissioner comments.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Elizabeth Vile