

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Open Space Committee Members: Peter Mattes, Chair; David Poston, Vice Chair; Kathleen Goodier, Secretary; Rob King, Member; Sarah Sharp, Member; Helene Badeau, Member; Michael Pessagno, Member; and Lois Saunders, Ad Hoc.

Open Space Committee Professionals/Administrators: Noelle Barbone, Board of Supervisors Liaison and Emily Pisano, Assistant Township Manager.

Election of Officers: Peter Mattes was elected as the Chair, David Poston was elected as the Vice Chair, and Kathleen Goodier was elected as Secretary of the Open Space Committee for 2023.

Meetings: January 12, 2023; February 9, 2023; March 9, 2023; April 13, 2023; May 11, 2023; June 8, 2023; July 13, 2023; September 14, 2023; October 12, 2023; and November 17, 2023.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS & AGENDA ITEMS:

Policy Reviews & Recommendations:

Township Tree Donation Policy: In order to have a clear process in place for the Township and any future donor to follow when donating a tree to plant on behalf of a loved one or in recognition of an achievement. When a donor applies to the Township, the application will be reviewed by the Open Space Committee and, if recommended, will move to the Board of Supervisors. If approved by the Board, the donor will provide a check to the Township to cover all costs associated with the tree and its planting. The Township will be responsible for purchasing, planting, and installing the tree with the funds submitted by the donor. Trees will be planted in the fall or spring and will be covered by the warranty policy of the selected installer. The Open Space Committee has created a list of trees native to the region that the donor will choose from. After one year, should the tree be damaged or die, it is the responsibility of the original donor to replace the tree. Maintenance of the tree will be the responsibility of the Township.

The Open Space Committee recommended the Township Tree Donation Policy to the Board of Supervisors on March 9, 2023. The Board of Supervisors approved the policy on June 7, 2023.

Recreation Line Item: A designated line item for community event/recreation expenses.

The Open Space Committee recommended to the Board of Supervisors that a recreation line item be added to the Township budget in the amount of \$5,000 on July 13, 2023. The line item was added to the Township budget adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 19, 2023.

Ordinance Reviews & Recommendations:

SLDO List of Approved Street Trees: As the Planning Commission discussed changes to the Township's SLDO, the Open Space Committee reviewed Appendix 1, Street Trees. The Committee discussed removing Bradford Pear and Green Ash and adding Sugar Maple, Black Gum, American Hybrid Chestnut, Pin Oak, and White Oak. The Committee's suggestions were shared with the Township's Landscape Planner and forwarded to the Planning Commission.

SLDO Landscape Plan Review: The Open Space Committee reviewed SLDO Section 110-36, Trees and Landscaping and the following definitions: Biological Resources, Natural Environment, Notable Trees, and Planting Screen. The Committee was asked to submit their comments prior to the August Planning Commission meeting.

Community Events:

Easter Egg Hunt: The Township's first Easter Egg Hunt was held on April 2, 2023, at the Township Park. The event was broken into two age groups (1-3 and 4-6). The Easter Bunny attended to take photos and handout candy.

Storytime: A weekly summer story time was held for the second year in a row at the Township Park. Every Wednesday between June 21st and August 23rd a volunteer reader from the community read two books to those in attendance. Rachel Kohl Community Library provided a book list based on the theme chosen for each week of Storytime.

Pumpkin Paint & Carve: On October 15, 2023, the Township held their first Pumpkin Paint & Carve event in the Township Park. Attendees had the opportunity to paint a pumpkin to take home and watch pumpkin sculptor Linda Allen as she sculpted a pumpkin for the Township.

The Open Space Committee recommended the Pumpkin Paint & Carve to the Board of Supervisors with cost not to exceed \$1,000 on July 13, 2023. The Board of Supervisors approved the expense on July 26, 2023.

Tree Giveaway: For the second year, the Open Space Committee added a tree giveaway as part of the township's annual Recycling Day event on October 28th. For the 2023 event, Township residents could pick up an American Sycamore sapling. Sixty (60) American Sycamore trees were donated by Chadds Ford Tree Service.

The Board of Supervisors approved expenses for the tree giveaway not to exceed \$700 at their September 6, 2023, meeting.

Miscellaneous Discussions/Action Items:

Sunset Hill Preserve: To honor what was formerly the Girl Scout Camp known as Sunset Hill, and is now open space owned by the Township, the Open Space Committee suggested naming the land, Sunset Hill Preserve.

The Open Space Committee recommended to the Board of Supervisors that the Girl Scout Camp property be formally renamed to Sunset Hill Preserve on May 11, 2023. The Board of Supervisors adopted the name Sunset Hill Preserve on June 7, 2023.

Sunset Hill Preserve Improvements: A new gate was installed, invasives were cleared, and cesspools were filled. The Committee discussed a natural trail located at Sunset Hill Preserve for the public to access.

Pavilion Staining: As part of the original plan for the Township Park, the pavilion was to be stained. At their March 9th meeting, the Open Space Committee recommended a stain to be reviewed by HARB. HARB recommended the stain to the pavilion in March 2023. The pavilion was stained in June 2023.

Memorial for Debbie Reardon: In memory of Debbie Reardon, former Open Space Committee member, the Committee is working with the Brandywine Conservancy and Museum of Art to plant two Bur Oak trees and install a plaque along Harvey Run Trail to honor Debbie and all she accomplished for the Township. The Committee will recommend the final plaque design and tree to the Board of Supervisors in 2024.

Signage for Township Open Space: The Committee discussed installing signage at Township open space to distinguish the land as township property. The Committee discussed a logo and sign materials. Discussions continued into 2024.

Letter to Property Owners: The Committee discussed mailing a letter and booklet on land conservation/preservation to all Township property owners with 5+ acres. The materials will be recommended to the Board of Supervisors in early 2024.

Wayfinding Signage: The Open Space Committee was asked by the Board of Supervisors to provide feedback on the wayfinding signage presentation from the Chester County Visitor's Bureau. The Committee provided a list of questions for the Board to consider.

1381 Baltimore Pike: The Committee discussed possibilities for the use of Township owned property located at 1381 Baltimore Pike.

The Open Space Committee recommended to the Board of Supervisors that the property at 1381 Baltimore pike be kept as open space, with plans to remove invasive species and dead trees and replant with native species as needed.