

Bondsville Mill Park Committee Meeting, June 26, 2025

In attendance: Rocky Stone, Sandy Moser, Charlie Lindsay, Arne Jensen, Carl Capriotti, Nancy Kirchgasser, Dan Tieri, Sally Bovell, Bruce Rawlings, Luke Reven, Jim Buczala; Via Zoom: Bob Watts, Beth Watts

Meeting start: 7:40

Volunteer Hours for this month: Gardens – **NR**; Construction: - **80**

May Minutes: Approved with minor edits

2025 Budget Update: (based on 06/23 Financial Report from Township)

- General Fund: (\$20,000 budget; \$18,000 Development & Maintenance/\$2000 Events & Marketing)
 - \$8041.23 spent to date; June charges:
 - Charged to D & M:
 - \$189 Blosenski
 - \$59.99 Verizon
 - \$2248.51 Gardens (weed control, tools, plant markers)
 - Charged to E & M:
 - \$44.99 American Flags
 - \$11,958 remaining (\$10,091.74 D&M / \$1867.03 E&M)
- Capital Fund Park Development: (\$23,335 budget; \$10,000 of this has been earmarked for Bld B Masonry).
 - \$3914 spent to date
 - No June Charges
 - \$19,421 remains (with \$10K of that earmarked for masonry work)
- BMP Funds in EB Foundation:
 - Total BMP Funds: \$17,150.98:
 - \$7692.20 Unrestricted (unchanged from May)
 - \$4357.35 Buildings (up \$100 from \$4257.35 last month)
 - \$4331.67 Gardens (\$300 donations; \$1418.92 expenses in last month)
 - \$669.76 Grants (unchanged from May)

The Financial Report was approved by the BMP Committee.

Trails:

- Trails need to be weed-wacked.
- New bench on Blue Trail, below gardens on Creek.
- Kiosk at main entrance needs repair; Bob will look at it when he gets back into the area.
- Would like “we are here” signs to replace the existing ones (they are getting worn/faded). Jim B will help with this.
- There is a hanging branch on the White Trail; Jim B will try to clear.
- AXA XL did some gravel placement on the stairs (Yellow Trail); still needs a little more work.

Construction: Volunteer Hours: Construction – **80**

- **Building A:**
 - Milling work done at the Trythall Mill:
 - Pulled about 600 BF (remainder of Poplar)
 - Surfaced 3 passes to 13/16”
 - Straight line joined one edge

- Parallel ripped each piece to yield maximum width (installation is vertical)
 - 1st pass shaper Groove
 - 2nd pass shaper Tongue
 - 3rd pass shaper Bead
 - Loaded truck and delivered to BMP
 - Moved chairs, tables, TV in Bld A to make room to receive lumber
 - Sorted and stacked material to facilitate installation
- **Other:**
 - Carl and Arne organized Building F to facilitate an area for a table and chairs (for gardening crew).
 - Work continued on window treatments.
 - Attended East Brandywine Foundation meeting in support of purchasing a sanding system.
- **General Comments:**
 - It was pointed out that the construction crew has provided significant support towards gardening projects, specifically towards the development of the Culp Clearing garden: to date, over \$90K in budgets earmarked for construction work; additionally, use of Rocky's backhoe and skid steer have been donated to these efforts, with hours of use approaching 1000. The time given to the Culp Clearing project has resulted in significant delays in the building work (previous to this year).
 - There is concern that the remaining budget will be insufficient for the scheduled work remaining this year; this considers the \$10K reserved for the Building B masonry work, and the Pennoni invoices applied to this year's budget.
- The **Building B masonry work** was discussed, with Luke taking the lead:
 - The scope of work is unclear:
 - The North wall of the building is not currently being considered, although it needs to be addressed at some point.
 - Demo phase
 - Labor cost
 - Equipment rental
 - Disposal
 - Construction phase
 - Liability and Responsibility issues were discussed.
 - Rocky suggested that an engineer needs to get involved to develop a detailed scope of work; Luke stated that we didn't have the budget for an engineer this year.
 - Sandy suggested having Matt VanLew take a look at the task; Luke stated that he does not plan to use in-house staff for this.
 - Rocky is willing to help as best he can, but needs direction from Luke.
 - Fence relocation requirements (re Western access to the Culp Clearing):
 - Exterior of Building C needs to be complete
 - Building B needs to be stabilized
 - Sandy stated that she wants to move the fence this year based on previous statements from Pennoni on the issue.
- **Building A Interior:**
 - The Welcome Center is the core purpose of the space. There will be flexibility in using the central area for programs, with the current occupancy of 20 people, until additional space at the Park (e.g., Building C) can be provided.
 - **Display Cabinets**, to be placed around the exterior walls between the windows, was discussed:
 - A depth of 24" versus 30" was discussed (30" will avoid the concern for a tipping hazard).

- A motion was made to approve the placement of display cabinets at 30” deep (note that the concept of the layout was previously approved). This motion was approved by at 5 to 3 vote, with Sandy abstaining, and Bob not voting (he was out of the room).
- **Use of Building A during construction work:** A motion was made that no use of Building A would be allowed until the interior work is complete. This motion was passed by a 6 to 3 vote (“Yes” votes were Arne, Carl, Rocky, Bruce, Jim B, and Charlie; “No” votes were Dan, Nancy, and Beth).
 - Luke stated that he thought the temporary use restriction would help to expedite the finishing work. He also said that he’s open minded about the use of the construction budget this year to complete this work.

Garden Report: Volunteer Hours: **NR** (no report)

- The AXA XL Volunteer Global Day of Giving was June 18th. Work was done at the Park through the AXA XL event. We have been entered into a contest by AXA XL for best project; prize money is \$2K if we’re successful (Sandy has high hopes).
- Vinegar: 20 gallons of vinegar has been used to date. Luke has ordered a gadget to pen the vinegar containers. The Twp will take the empty containers. Luke’s transfer device is not working; Mike Corbin was not able to repair it, and has now purchased and will donate a transfer device to the Park.
- Sandy requested a “No Spray” sign. PennDOT has sprayed weed killer along Bondsville Road; this spary has left the ground barren and garden plants have been killed. In addition to the damage done to the garden, the sprayers are spraying poison directly toward and provably into Beaver Creek. Elected officials should be made aware.
- **Animal Problems:**
 - Deer have been wandering in Culp Clearing. Deer Scram has been spread on walkways at the East end of the garden on June 15th.
 - Thre is a groundhog living in the Building D rubble, and coming into the Culp Clearing. Luke has been asked to order fox urine to sprinkle along the fence line.
- The Tractor Shed (Bld F) has been cleaned up; thank you to Bob, Carl, and Arne.
- **Arboretum:** A Riverbirch Tree by the front parking lot has died and needs to be replaced in the Fall. Sandy reported that it was not realized how much rock and muck and been left in this area by Hurricane Ida, until work on the Fern Garden a month ago. The tree’s root flare was buried in several feet of debris. The witch-Hazel in this area has also died.
- **Grant Items:**
 - AXA XL: Grant application has been submitted; expect notification in July.
 - Wilds Ones: Beth has submitted a grant application for \$1K. Last month, she provided more specific information requested by the grant administrator; still waiting to hear back.
 - A Beekeeper grant has been awarded for Bee-approved shrubs and perennials.
- **Expenditure report:**
 - Purchases from Sandy’s Stipend:
 - Reimburse Sandy, directly:
 - \$16.16 for marker flags to locate new plants (Hatts hardware)
 - Purchased directly by Luke:
 - Monarch tags for \$50
 - Gadget to open vinegar containers for \$7.79
 - Fox urine for \$31.99 (box damaged; will need to be replaced)
 - The BMP Committee approved these expenditures.
- **Expenditures to be paid from EB Foundation:**
 - Plant purchases:
 - Groff’s: \$68.94
 - Cavanos: \$1489.90
 - Sam Brown: \$102

- The BMP Committee approved these expenses.

Events:

- Beekeepers program – July 21st, August 16th, September 20th, and October 18th. They will be meeting at the hives for these events (Building A is not needed).
- AXA XL Global Day of Giving – June 18th ; the event went well (see Garden Report, above).
- Series of **Park-Wide Open Houses** being planned; the first would tentatively be Saturday or June 28th.
 - Planning for this will occur via email.
- West Chester Garden Club – A visit is planned for late June.
- Monarch/Endangered Species event, August 23rd
- PawPaw Festival – September 20th
- Hardy Plant Society Visit, Sunday, September 21st
- Philadelphia Horticultural Society visit, Thursday, September 25th
- Garden Open House Celebration, Saturday, September 27th ; the concept would be something like the Culp Clearing opening day, with artists working in all the gardens.

Miscellaneous:

- **Park Brochure:**
 - David has his marketing people looking at this issue.
- **Culp Clearing Maintenance:**
 - Heavy rain floods (makes puddles) on the trails of Culp Clearing. Doug had suggested last month putting holes through the boundary wall to provide drainage. This was further discussed, and it was decided that this task was not needed.
- **Tractor Service:** Carl spoke to Little's (John Deere, Downingtown) and got a service cost estimate of \$700; up to \$1000 for hydraulic line work/repair, if needed. A motion was made to approve an expenditure of up to \$1000 for the tractor service/ repair work; this was approved with a unanimous vote.
- **Future Repair Work that may Affect the Park:**
 - The Lower Bridge final/permanent repair work (supported with FEMA/PEMA grants) was bid out by the Township, and an engineering firm has been selected. It is unclear when this work will occur, but it will close the Lower Bridge when it does, affecting activities at the Park.
 - PennDOT was at the Park during the first week of May to look at the vertical soil bank created by the Creek immediately adjacent to Bondsville Road. This will be repaired to reduce the hazard it poses to the road. The timeline is unclear. Through conversations between the PennDOT and Luke, who was present for the site visit, there will be some disruption of the Blue trail during the repair work, but they will avoid the historic masonry structures (e.g., dam ruins) in the area adjacent to the repairs.

Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at about 9:45 AM.

Next BMP Committee meeting: July 24, 2025.