



## **VISTA 2025 Goal 1:**

***Maintain and enhance “quality of place” as a key component of economic health***

### **Goal 1 Team Meeting**

**March 17, 2016**

#### **Meeting Notes**

**Team Members Attending:** Beth Harper-Briglia, Kim Brumbaugh, Michael Cotter, Blair Fleischman, Don Hannum, Claudia Hellebush, Regina Horton-Lewis, Roger Huggins, Michelle Kichline, Susan Marshall, Molly Morrison, Bill Steadman

**Also Attending:** Pat Bokovitz, Bill Gladden, Mike Grigalonis, Susan Hamley, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith, David Ward

#### **Michelle Kichline**

Opened the meeting and welcomed those attending. Asked if there were any questions or comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were offered.

#### **Molly Morrison**

Described the background to the Return on Environment study completed by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Noted the intention to elevate the discourse on greenspace through a focus on the economic value of greenspace. Added that the study was completed by Econsult with funding from the William Penn and Lenfest foundations. Added that the study documented the increase in value of real estate located closer to protected open space. Gave example of Radnor Trail that was unpopular when proposed but now heavily used. Questioned whether the concept of economic value of open space still resonates. Noted that a focus on the topic was

timely due to VISTA 2025 and the beginning of the early work on the successor to Landscapes 2.

**David Sciocchetti**

Noted the copy of the executive summary to the Return on Environment study and the discussion guide for a possible Chester County Return on Environment event.

**Claudia Hellebush**

Noted that the Chesco 2020 events were always well attended

**Michelle Kichline**

Indicated that information to assist with the development of this meeting is critical for the event and for the next evolution of Landscapes 2. We want to hear from all of Chester County on this issue.

**Don Hannum**

Commented that while Chester County 2020 was still in existence, it was not as active as it once was. Added that there was more of a focus on manager training now.

**Pat Bokovitz**

Pointed out that whatever shape the event took it should lead to something. Asked how the results will be used.

**Kim Brumbaugh**

Stated that one result would be intelligence on the issue. Added that marketing of the event would be key and that marketing through the County municipalities would be important. Noted that we are still the trailblazers.

**Molly Morrison**

Stated that the event could be a listening session and still send a message about the importance of this issue as part of the kick-off for Landscapes 3. She added that the speakers at the event will be important.

**Dave Ward**

Indicated that open space is part of the Chester County culture but added that 65% of the elected officials have changed since the beginning of the County's open space initiative. Added that a marketing effort was needed on the general topic leading to some form of summit. Noted that preservation means different things to different people and different parts of the county.

**Michelle Kichline**

Noted the importance of the Chester Valley Trail and its positive impact on nearby commercial buildings despite initial resistance to expansion of the trail. Commented on the different audiences for a RoE event including elected officials, municipalities, the business community and county residents.

**Claudia Hellebush**

Agreed with the notion that we are a different county than when the open space effort began with different residents and elected officials.

**Michael Cotter**

Noted the challenges facing municipalities to comply with new storm water regulations and how open space could be a part of that response.

**Michelle Kichline**

Added that it would be helpful for the public to hear how critical problems are being addressed.

**Gary Smith**

Indicated that the county had evolved from a bifurcation on the issue of open space to a situation where we are now on the same page. The focus of VISTA 2025 on progress and preservation reflects that change. Suggested that the different parts of the county should be a part of the process.

**David Sciocchetti**

Commented that the phrasing of “return on environment”, with its intended relation to the standard business term “return on investment” was an important element if the event and the effort was going to engage the business community.

**Molly Morrison**

Agreed that engaging the business community was important but questioned how they would respond.

**Gary Smith**

Stated that he believed they would embrace it and added that agricultural land preservation was already part of the process and should be part of any event.

**Regina Horton-Lewis**

Commented that the original sessions on Landscapes 2 were great. Suggested that they missed an opportunity by not videotaping them. Questioned whether the event could be taped and possibly live streamed to a larger audience.

**Dave Ward**

Suggested a possible TED talk approach could be considered.

**Bill Stedman**

Commented that multiple venues for the event might be needed because of the different needs and issues in different parts of the county.

**Roger Huggins**

Offered that the business community would be receptive if the event speaks to them in language they understand such as the impact of open space on attracting and retaining their workforce.

**Michelle Kichline**

Commented that a format similar to that used by CCATO for their large events might be appropriate, with a main speaker then breakout sessions.

**Mike Grigalonis**

Suggested that there would need to be an element of educating and marketing to the event.

**Michael Cotter**

Offered the concept of a traveling open house.

**Pat Bokovitz**

Described the urban centers forum process with a fall and spring event targeted at a specific audience of officials in the county's 16 urban centers.

**Don Hannum**

Noted that he had pushed for townships to be included in the urban centers events.

**Pat Bokovitz**

Responded that the urban centers forum was connected to the County's Community Revitalization Program which was targeted at the urban centers.

**Blair Fleischmann**

Asked if the urban centers forums could be open to the public.

**Pat Bokovitz**

Responded that they could be but that the focus was on the urban centers and their elected and administrative officials.

## **Dave Ward**

Commented on how VISTA 2025 had expanded the scope of the County's Vision Partnership Planning (VPP) program. Described how it was being used by Kennett Square Borough and Kennett Township to jointly look at an economic development strategy for the two communities.

## **Pat Bokovitz**

Noted a similar joint planning effort between Honey Brook Borough and Honey Brook Township

## **David Sciocchetti**

Pointed out how that effort resulted in agreement on the role of the downtown area in Honey Brook Borough.

## **Michelle Kichline**

Commented on the event the previous evening to introduce Sonia Huntsinger as the new Economic Development Program Administrator for the City of Coatesville.

## **Regina Horton-Lewis**

Described the partnership between the County and the Coatesville Area Partners (CAPP) for Progress that allowed for Ms. Huntsinger to be brought onboard. She added that Ms. Huntsinger would be focused full time on the City of Coatesville and would have an office in the downtown. She added that a new initiative called the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Alliance had been formed to support Ms. Huntsinger and to broaden the base of support for the revitalization of the City of Coatesville.

She also described a not yet announced \$100,000 grant from the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation for a resident driven planning process to engage the residents of a targeted portion of the City in the revitalization process.

## **Mike Grigalonis**

Described the recently approved application for tax credits submitted by CCEDC and Kutztown University for a program to train entrepreneurs in the City of Coatesville. The tax credits are available through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and

Economic Development's Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP). These tax credits enabled CCEDC and Kutztown to raise \$90,000 from area banks to support the effort.

**Molly Morrison**

Noted that the Natural lands trust had received funding from the William Penn Foundation to look at greenspace issues in certain urban areas including Coatesville. She briefly described a very successful event in the City that attracted 150 people to learn more about this effort. She added that the project was in the needs assessment stage and would soon be looking for early implementation projects to initiate the effort.

**Pat Bokovitz**

Commented on the large number of young people at the event.

**Beth Harper-Briglia**

Noted how different groups at different tables came to similar ideas

**Michelle Kichline**

Indicated that we would update the group at the next meeting.

**Blair Fleischmann**

Commented that the Chester County Planning Commission should be included in the planning process for the event.

**Don Hannum**

Asked for Bill Gladden's thoughts.

**Bill Gladden**

Stated that positive things were happening. Added that there was no right or wrong way to proceed. Noted that he felt the discussion was wonderful and hoped it would continue.

**Michelle Kichline**

Described recent event where the issue of possible non-funding of the Penn State agricultural extension program was discussed. Noted the possible impact on rural and agricultural areas. Commented on the limited understanding of the role of agricultural lands as a part of open space.

**Molly Morrison**

Commented how this lack of understanding was the result of inadequate communication. Added that we needed to “up our game” in this area.

**Michelle Kichline**

Thanked all for attending and adjourned the meeting.