

**LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 4, 2023**

Members in Attendance

Stan Smith
Jim Seidler
Bob MacIntyre
Kirby Lentz
Neal Johnson
Sandy Steinbrunner
Wendy Mort-Backuskas
Alan Gallagher

Members Absent

Mayur Patel

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, Staff Liaison

ANNUAL REORGANIZATION

Chairman: Mr. Johnson was nominated by Mr. Seidler, seconded by Mr. MacIntyre, and unanimously approved.

Vice Chairman: Mr. Seidler was nominated by Mr. MacIntyre, seconded by Mr. Lentz, and unanimously approved.

Secretary: Mr. Patel was nominated by Mr. Lentz, seconded by Mr. Seidler, and unanimously approved.

CALL TO ORDER

The Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by Chairman Neal Johnson at 7:10 p.m. on the above date, in Meeting Room 174, at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, PA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Smith seconded the motion, and it was followed by a unanimous vote of approval.

PARKS MASTER PLAN PRESENTATION FOR ADOPTION

The consultants presented the final version of the Parks Master Plan to the Board of Supervisors on December 20, 2022. There were many residents in attendance, mainly from Forest Hills. The Forest Hills neighbors spoke out against a trail head in the park located at the corner of Wimbledon and Forest Hills Drives. They do not want the basketball court, tennis court, or playground to be removed or relocated.

Mr. Lentz asked if the Supervisors said the plan has to be redesigned. Ms. Scott answered no, noting that they did explain to the audience that the plan is a recommendation and they hear the consensus for the park to remain as is, and that will be taken into consideration at such time as that park is ready for upgrades. That park is not on the list of parks to be upgraded in 2023.

MASTER PLAN – PR BOARD REVIEW

Ms. Scott noted that there was concern about making Hodges Heights a priority. She has requested a geographical study for the land where this park is located. The Township Manager is supportive of the request, so Ms. Scott has been reviewing quotes from engineers, HRG has quoted between \$7,500 and \$9,000. She will look for two more quotes and anticipates the work to be done by March so that in April it is ready for the DCNR grant application.

Mr. Seidler explained that the park is built on a closed municipal landfill, so there continues to be subsidence of the land as the material decomposes. Over the years amenities have been installed, replaced, and continue to fail. At one time the Supervisors asked the Park and Rec Board to find nearby vacant land where a park could be installed instead of at the current location. There was no other land to be found, and the residents of Hodges Heights do not want it moved. Before anything else gets built or installed, the ground study has to take place as well as some significant engineering in order for the park to be done well. The residents there use the park frequently and are eager to be a part of the upgrade process.

PARK ENTRANCE SIGNS

Upgraded Signs Installed

Ms. Scott stated new and redesigned entrance signs have been installed at all of the parks. There are a few that need adjustments: Centennial is not straight; Ranger is in front of the fence and too close to the parking, it will be moved behind the stone wall recently installed by CASA; Oak Park Nature Trail was delayed waiting on the One-Call, but will be installed shortly. The sign at the entrance to George Park needs to be adjusted as well but Ms. Scott wanted the Board's opinion before assigning changes. The sign was to be double sided, but it is not. The signs are about \$3,000 each and include installation and materials. Mr. Lentz suggested adding a sign on the back, which may cost less. The other members agreed. Ms. Wendy noted

the sign should be easy to see from both directions since there are so many community events held there. Mr. noted that the top edge of the sign is curvy and not symmetrical, so the white back will be visible. Ms. Scott will look into making it visible from both directions.

Park Names

Mr. MacIntyre questioned the shortening of the park names from a full name to just the last name of the person it is named for. (ex: Richard Kohl Memorial Park has a sign that says Kohl Park.) Mr. Johnson added that the park is named for someone who had a significant impact on the community and it seems to lose some of the respect.

CAMERAS IN THE PARKS

Ms. Scott explained there is a grant of about \$100,000 for installation of cameras in the park system the Township is seeking. The proposal includes cameras at the following locations: Brightbill Park, Heroes Grove, George Park, Ranger Field, Lamplight, Kohl, Lingle, Koons, Centennial, Oak Park, and one additional. The Community Parks will have 16 views from one camera, and she showed a demonstration of the views and the ability to pan/tilt/zoom. The decision on funding will be made in the next few days, so they may be able to start installation right away. The staff and the police will be able to view the cameras. The cameras will have to be installed pretty high up to protect them. It was noted that the cost of the cameras is well worth it compared to the cost of repairs to vandalism and damage.

Mr. Lentz asked about blending them in so they aren't so obvious, but that isn't in the proposal. There will need to be signage indicating that visitors to the park may be recorded, that way if there is any illegal behavior, the police are permitted to use the camera footage.

The camera company is not local, they are based in Chicago, but they are recommended by our police department.

VANDALISM AND OTHER POLICE REPORTS

The police department sends weekly police reports of any issues, and Ms. Scott can incorporate those into a GIS map to track incidents.

PARK ATTENDANTS

Mr. MacIntyre asked if there was a significant increase in park attendant hours in 2022 and Ms. Scott explained that for most of the season, there was a cleaning service that took care of the restroom cleaning and locking up at the end of the night, so the PA time was lower. The cleaning service did not work out well in the end, so additional PAs were brought on for cleaning-only shifts. The latter is what is planned for the 2023 season.

The budget for PAs is \$23,000 for the year. Mr. Lentz questioned the use of Public Works, but Ms. Scott explained that the PW staff is paid a much higher rate and it is a struggle to get the employees to volunteer for overtime weekend work. Public Works does continue to open the parks every day in the morning.

ARC GIS MAPPING

Ms. Scott shared a demo of the mapping system where all assets and all criminal activity can be stored in layers on a map. The assets will include the purchase or repair dates and costs. This will allow for sorting, filtering, and reporting so that long term planning can take place. Proactive planning is a much better practice than reactive unplanned work or purchases.

SPORTS FIELD POLICY AND ORGANIZATION CONTRACTS

Ms. Scott stated that the sports organizations do work or maintenance at the parks without much interaction with the Township, so there is an exaggerated feeling of ownership, which gets off-balance quickly when the organization doesn't follow through, when the repairs or installation are greater than expected, or when a conflict arises with the Township's or another organization's use of the fields. The intent is to imp[lement contracts so it is clear as to what the Township's expectations and responsibilities are, and the same for the organizations.

PARK UPDATES and 2023 PLANS

General

There is no one on staff who is certified in playground safety, so Ms. Scott will be taking the course to get certified.

Communication boards will be installed in the parks in May where we can hang flyers and information for the public.

Brightbill Park

Restrooms will be installed within 2-3 weeks. It is a modular building with plumbing connections.

The trail and playground are getting designed through grant money.

Centennial Acres

Quotes for the basketball courts will be needed soon. A concrete edging around the playground area is recommended in the Master Plan to maintain the depth and area of the safety material. The edging is level with the ground but is much more functional than the plastic

barriers used now. The plastic edging chips and breaks, and the wooden railroad ties deteriorate so quickly, so they are a safety hazard to the kids and they are ineffective.

Forest Hills

The demolition was planned for this year.

George Park

In-line hockey rink racer boards need to be refurbished. Plywood is being put up to cover the holes but that is a temporary fix. There was a person that inquired about using it for futsal has not returned since his initial contact early in 2022. Futsal would be a good use of the rink as long as it remains a multi-use rink. Lacrosse uses it heavily.

Hodges Heights

The process to get a geological survey is being investigated.

Kings Crossing

The pavilion roof needs to be replaced. There is rot in the back corner. Mr. Lentz suggested DCTS for this project.

Lingle

Cricket is excited to move their pitch from Kohl to Lingle. It will have to wait till after spring since there are sports organizations already scheduled for the spring season. the cricket organization is meeting with the Board of Supervisors to explain the game and needs for their game. She expects that they will also meet with the Parks and Recreation Board to do the same.

The pavilion roof is leaking pretty bad and will need attention.

Kohl

Mr. Seidler asked if the fields will return to soccer usage, and Ms. Scott explained the dog park will actually be extended into the unused softball field and the area currently used for cricket.

The dumpster does not have an enclosure, so that is also expected to be built this year.

Koons

Public water was not installed last year so it is planned for this year.

Lamplight

The path connection between Lamplight and George is proposed to be paved by July in time for the 5k.

Oak Park Nature Trail

The trail should be done by August.

ARTS COUNCIL REPORT

Ms. Scott stated the Arts Council will have the Book Discussion next Thursday. They are thinking about hosting a Friday night film, possibly with the “Sound of Soul” with discussion before and after.

The Arts Council has 4 members, with a prospective fifth. The Council should have seven members.

GREENWAY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Seidler stated that there is a work day scheduled for Friday Jan 13th from 2-4pm to work on clearing for the Oak Park Trail. He will also be marking the unfinished portions of the trail.

The Committee received a \$2,000 grant which will cover materials for the boardwalks and the bridges. Mr. Seidler is working on the plans for the structures.

With the newest member Bill Landefeld there are four members. There is an interview scheduled with Albert Banks and two additional spots to fill.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Seidler stated the 2023 Arts and Parks 5K is scheduled for July 22, and it has been moved from the Friendship Y to George Park. It will start at the pavilion and go around the park, over to Lamplight Park, through the neighborhood and back to the George Park pavilion. He noted the course is much friendlier than the one at Friendship which was quite a challenging course. Most of this course is flat and smooth, there are a couple small grades at the transitions but it will be generally more appealing to runners. The neighbors will be informed and invited to participate.

The money is raised for music in the parks, and the first goal is a musical structure at Brightbill with the new playground equipment which should be installed this or next year. Ms. Wendy asked about the design, and Ms. Scott noted it will be designed by an engineer guided by the consultant who has already gathered input from the community and Parks staff through the Master Plan process.

There are openings for members on the CEC, however this committee is comprised of members from the parent committees: two from each the Parks and Recreation Board, Arts Council, Greenway Committee, because they make funding decisions for those groups. They meet the third Wednesday of each month at 4pm.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Scott stated that the Township has contracted with a local company to employ a communications staff person. They will work part time hours for the Township. In addition, there potentially will be a full time special events staff person.

The front desk and related area will be renovated starting in February.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2023 at 7:15 pm. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary