

Lower Paxton Township Community Engagement Committee

Meeting Minutes January 20, 2021

Members in Attendance

Jim Seidler, GC & PRB
Pat Crawford, AC
Denise Hussar

Members Absent

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, Staff Liaison
Stan Smith, AC

REORGANIZATION

Ms. Scott called the reorganizational portion of the meeting to order at 4:30 pm on the above date in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg.

Mr. Seidler was nominated for chairman by Ms. Crawford, seconded by Ms. Hussar and unanimously approved.

Ms. Crawford was nominated for vice chairman by Mr. Seidler, seconded by Ms. Hussar, and unanimously approved.

Members discussed the time for meetings this year and agreed on 4:00 pm, and meetings will continue on the third Wednesday of each month.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Seidler called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm on the above date in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg.

MINUTES

Ms. Crawford made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2020 meeting. Ms. Hussar seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment offered.

CEC PURPOSE

CEC Committee members reviewed documents from the formation of the CEC. Ms. Crawford noted that the original committee members were all from other committees, but as things evolved, we started to get others like Carl DeFebo and Sherry Davis and others with

expertise in certain areas. Mr. Seidler added that the BOS took action to allow others to join and not limit the committee to a certain number of members.

Mr. Seidler noted the purpose doesn't say anything about organizing events, which is what we have been doing the last few years. Ms. Crawford agreed noting it was supposed to be supporting the other committees with their projects.

Ms. Hussar noted that the committee has evolved quite a bit, and Ms. Crawford agreed stating they have done very little outreach.

Mr. Seidler noted he has been a worker on the committee putting a good bit of time into the race each year.

Ms. Hussar asked if the Historical Committee has been accepted by the Township, and if they should be included in the groups that the CEC supports. Mr. Smith stated that the committees supported are those under the Parks & Recreation Board, but the Historical group is not under the Parks and Recreation Board. Ms. Hussar stated the LP Community Foundation should be talked about as well, since they are working on things similar to the things the CEC are doing. Ms. Scott stated that the LPCF is not a Township Committee. Ms. Hussar encouraged Ms. Scott to reach out and connect since she has taken over with Ms. Bauknight's retirement. The Foundation seems to want to do things within the parks and there are partnerships they want to create.

Ms. Scott has been directed by Brad Gotshall to fill vacancies on other committees and see who may fit well into this committee before going to the community to fill vacancies on the CEC. She also noted that the purpose will need to be figured out before seeking members.

Ms. Crawford noted that the CEC did also deviate from their directives by giving money to the fire companies.

Ms. Hussar asked about how requests for funding are generated. The most recent request was for a disc golf basket, and that was something a resident brought to the Parks & Rec Board, who then brought the request to the CEC.

Mr. Smith stated that the four groups saw a need for funds for things the Township budget does not provide, so the focus was set on arts and parks and the initiatives for projects would flow through this as well so things can be prioritized. The FC needs were so great, that the BOS peeled them out from under the Parks and Rec Board. The folks with the Foundation have people with special skills for raising money. Ms. Hussar asked about how someone in the community would make a request for something recreational which may or may not be in a park. Mr. Smith suggested that person would take their idea to the Parks & Recreation Board who would evaluate it and decide whether to bring it to the CEC for funding or not. Ms. Hussar asked if the requestor was ever asked to contribute or match the money given. Ms. Crawford stated there were very few requests so each one had its own scenario. Giving money to the fire companies was supposed to help increase participation, but in terms of their budgets it was not an impactful donation.

Ms. Crawford suggested going back to where we started and focus on needs of local recreation and arts. Mr. Smith noted that the Parks and Rec Board discussed the status of Lower Paxton Township as one of the top municipalities in Pennsylvania in the number of parks. Raising money for things like replacing tennis courts is not terribly attractive, so maybe that is the kind of thing the CEC could help fund.

Ms. Hussar asked if the Township BOS or Manager has given any guidance or direction. Ms. Scott stated she will request their direction. Ms. Hussar suggested finding out what they might have in mind for the committee since the purpose is being reconsidered, so that the CEC is meeting the needs of the Township as a whole.

Ms. Hussar asked if each member is supposed to take information back to their committee and let them know of volunteer needs. Mr. Smith stated that the communication is meant to go the other way where the committees bring to the CEC their needs, so the committees want to be involved. She asked if each committee is represented when volunteers are needed, and members agreed that they all contribute time.

Mr. Seidler noted that he was anticipating the CEC might not continue since several members did not return, and the duplication and overlap of the Foundations efforts. Ms. Crawford noted the world in general is in a transitional state and it is hard to predict where things are going in the future, so she suggested that if there is still a viable need for the CEC, then we should continue to operate.

Ms. Crawford would like to see a musical piece of play equipment installed at a park, possibly at Brightbill Park. This is something the Arts Council will be requesting funds for. The Arts Council has been wanting to do something related to public art, and this piece she and Ms. Bauknight found would be an appropriate project. Mr. Seidler noted that the resolution doesn't address the distribution of funds, and that is an important task of the CEC.

Mr. Seidler suggested keeping the fund for projects or requests made by the Parks and Recreation Board, Greenway Committee, Arts Council. He asked if the Shade Tree Commission should be included, since they may have been related to Parks and Recreation in the past.

Mr. Seidler noted that the wording changed a little bit from the resolution to the line typed on the agenda, adding an element of soliciting funds.

When drafting a memo to the BOS, it was suggested to have it be a bit broader, and not limit it to certain projects like the first one did.

Mr. Seidler asked about the funding for the disk golf basket, and Ms. Scott explained that the request was from a resident, to the Parks & Recreation Board, who then requested funds from the CEC.

With regard to soliciting funds, Ms. Crawford noted that she is uncomfortable asking businesses for financial donations, and Ms. Hussar added that one of the problems is that the same donors are being asked for money for different projects.

Ms. Crawford noted that Sherrie Davis was on the Committee at one time and was very successful at requisitioning money. Ms. Hussar asked about adding the Shade Tree to the document, and Ms. Crawford suggested leaving it open for now, and revisit that after some time.

Structure: The CEC is comprised of representation from the auspice of the committees under the Parks and Recreation Board. They would like it to continue to be made up of members from the three volunteer bodies that have a direct connection to the parks and recreation department activities, and recommended using wording that leave it open to other committees, community members, community organizations that align with the purpose of the CEC. That leaves room for Shade Tree Commission, Historical Commission, and others. The purpose pretty much stays the same.

Mr. Seidler made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to change the wording of the structure of the CEC as discussed. Ms. Hussar seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed.

Mr. Smith would like to see some kind of initiative to talk with the Foundation so communications can be open, in case it could offer any bearing that the CEC could have. Ms. Hussar suggested Ms. Scott reach out to the Foundation.

ARTS & PARKS 5K

2021 Race

Mr. Seidler stated that most races were cancelled this year, but some invitationals were held, and they were able to adhere to distancing standards with staggered starts. The Arts & Parks is so small, that there could be a competitive and a recreation division. As long as the maximum gathering limits are respected, the race should be fine to operate. He thinks it is also possible to do a conventional race.

The Y would be willing to work with the CEC in the race, and the race can take place at the Y. They might not offer free day passes since they aren't allowing day passes at this time, but they may support it in some way. The Senior Center is available for the Township's use. Mr. Seidler noted that Mr. Krebs is a former race director so he would probably be pretty interested in this.

Ms. Hussar suggested asking the Y if they would join the CEC in the race; it may be a good kickoff for them too.

Ms. Crawford noted the point in including the fire companies was that they could promote it and they could have a presence there and participate but that didn't happen. The Y could really publicize the race pretty well. The benefit to them will be the exposure more so than the money. The race will be called the Arts and Parks 5k, without the red hot.

This is the time of year to start soliciting sponsors and editing the brochure to reflect sponsors and details.

OTHER BUSINESS

Volunteers

Ms. Scott noted that there is an e-news sign-up on the website and people are selecting topics they are interested in, and that includes volunteer opportunities. She is hopeful that some of those will actually become volunteer helpers for these kinds of events.

Vacancies

Mr. Smith is interested in being on the CEC.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting ended at 5:54 pm. The next meeting February 17, 2021, at 4:00 pm in Room 174 of the Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary