

**LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 7, 2021**

Members in Attendance

Neal Johnson
Bob MacIntyre
Stan Smith
Kirby Lentz

Members Absent

Mayur Patel
Angela McCloskey
Jim Seidler

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, Staff Liaison
Shawn Stubbe, CDABA

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Neal Johnson called the meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board to order at 7:18 pm in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, PA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment offered.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting. Mr. Lentz seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved as submitted.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT PROPOSAL

Declan Fledderjohn

Declan Fledderjohn explained his proposal for creation and installation of 13 AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) boards at five of the playgrounds in the park. A communication board for non-verbal and limited-verbal children to use at the park. This will help those children communicate what they want to play or what they need from an adult.

The second part of his proposal is to beautify Brightbill and George Parks. At George Park, he proposes four AAC Boards, and painting equipment and cleaning up.

At Brightbill Park, he proposes one large and one smaller sign. The other parks he proposes to install signs include Koons, Lingle, and Kohl Parks.

Declan shared a copy of what his board would look like. He customized a board to playground use. He and Ms. Scott will meet to finalize the placement of the signs.

He explained that he will also conduct awareness campaigns so people are aware and how to use them.

Mr. Lentz asked if the board would be protected from graffiti. Declan stated that it will have a graffiti proof seal on it.

Declan will enlist the help of fellow scouts from his troop and volunteers. Mr. Lentz suggested performing a PA One Call to be sure that water lines are not cut at George Park.

Mr. MacIntyre stated he was impressed with the project, noting it will take a lot of work and coordination. Mr. Smith agreed, noting that the bulk of the work appears to be complete, and the fine details seem to be tended to. Mr. MacIntyre commented that the quality of young people that come up through the local scout groups is outstanding.

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to support Declan Fledderjohn and his Eagle Scout Project. Mr. Smith seconded the motion, and a unanimous vote followed.

CDABA
(Central Dauphin Area Basketball Association)

Ms. Scott introduced Shawn Stubbe who is the president of the CDABA board, and he has been on the board for 8 years. He explained that CDABA has been around for 35+ years, with over 400 kids in recent years, from K-12th grade. They use CD school gyms for games and practices. The games are officiated by PIAA referees staffed with a game manager. The season is a 10-game season and costs \$110 per child with scholarships and sibling discounts available. There used to be a lot of local business sponsors, but that has dried up in recent years. All games are played on weekends at LMS and CDMS. Wednesday nights there are games at DCTS.

Mr. Stubbe explained that the problem at hand is the effort required to staff the board with active members. It has been an increasing challenge to engage the volunteers and the bulk of the work is done by two of the board members. He noted they looked at several organizations including on the west shore, but Lower Paxton

seems to be the best option. The board also communicates with the schools and coordinates one practice per week for each team.

Mr. Lentz asked about the budget, specifically the deficit. Mr. Stubbe stated the overall budget is \$40-50,000. Last year it lost \$4,000 and the year before it lost \$2,000. There was a reserve since the school didn't charge the organization one year.

Mr. Smith asked if the main issue was financial, and Mr. Stubbe stated not really because they were going to tweak a few things, but the main issue he feels is not having people to run the organization. He added that he spent the majority of four weeks setting up at the beginning of the season. Mr. Smith stated he understands the main issue to be manpower for administration of the program. The parents get a discount if they coach, and coaches are easy enough to get. The biggest manpower issue is the board members and getting someone to step into the shoes of the board members that are aging out.

Mr. Smith asked about the number of players. Mr. Stubbe stated it is strictly for students of the CD school district, including those that have CD residency but attend private schools. The number of players remains very high as the popularity of the program continues.

Mr. MacIntyre asked if CDABA has reached out to local colleges looking for someone in the sports management field. Mr. Stubbe stated that Lower Paxton is their first choice.

Mr. Smith asked how CDABA compares to Brightbill Basketball. Mr. Stubbe noted that BB runs during the summer, while CDABA runs during the winter. BB is a more casual rec league, and the winter league is indoors and has higher standards. CDABA runs a draft for players so the teams are not stacked like in BB.

Mr. Smith stated that manpower may continue to be an issue as the LP staff is so limited, and the Parks & Recreation Department is in a transitional phase right now. Because of this he might hesitate to take over the program. He added that post-Covid circumstances are unknown. He asked what the CDABA plan B would be. Mr. Stubbe did not have an answer. He added that if there is a director of operations they can coordinate things such as the schedule of games, PIAA referees, and staffing of each game.

Mr. Smith suggested a scenario where LP and CDABA could work together for one season to learn and understand the program. Mr. Stubbe stated he would be happy to do that and he knows that Greg Cavoli will also be agreeable to that.

Mr. Lentz asked what happens to the money if LP would take over. Mr. Stubbe stated that there is a recreation program and a travel program, so a fair portion of the money would go with the rec program. Mr. Lentz asked about insurance. Mr. Stubbe stated that a portion of the \$110 registration fee is used to pay for the insurance for the players. Mr. Smith asked about sponsorships. Mr. Stubbe stated that there have been no sponsors in the most recent years, where in the past the program was heavily sponsored by local businesses.

Mr. Johnson asked about the staff situation and if the Township could operate similar to how Brightbill Basketball is staffed. Ms. Scott stated that we would need to hire additional staff. The people that work in the summer are typically college students so they would be in school, and may also be playing basketball themselves. The staffing situation is a big unknown and is a concern.

Mr. Smith stated that if the current financial plan is covering the current operations, then the staff is the main concern. He suggested working together for a season to evaluate if we can do this, and can we do it well. The staffing resources will be key. Mr. Stubbe stated that the CDABA hires a director of operations and that role will be the important factor.

There is a period of time that is heavy with registration and emails from parents with questions. The schedule and draft are done at that time as well so it is hectic. After that, game manager attendance is the focus. He stressed that the director position is key to the operation, and that person will be busy, but it can be done by one person.

Mr. MacIntyre stated that timing may be critical if we intend to get into the program this year.

Mr. Smith noted that the Parks Department is already strained, so to add another league of this magnitude is asking a lot. But he is concerned that 400+ kids won't get to play basketball. Mr. MacIntyre suggested there may be league administration companies that could be brought in to run CDABA. There is a sports management program at Central Penn College which may have students available for this. There may be programs at other colleges as well. There should be volunteers willing to do the work as well, the problem is finding them. Mr. Lentz also wanted to know how much money is earmarked for rec and how much is for travel, and then how much will the Township need to put into it.

Mr. Smith is hesitant to give an answer either way, but would be willing to consider working with them for a season to see if it will work out. Mr. MacIntyre stated that if the Township then decides it cannot do it, it will reflect negatively on the

Township. Mr. Smith suggested that if we are clear up front that they are asking us for something that we do not have the personnel to handle, so we will walk along for a season to see if we can find the people we need and make it a simpler process.

Mr. MacIntyre stated it seems like this isn't going to be a positive situation no matter what. It could be positive if we had a completely different management plan ahead of time instead of trying to match the program as they have it set up.

Mr. Johnson questioned the budget. Ms. Scott stated that the information provided shows an income of \$55,000 which is \$44,689 rec and \$9,178 travel, and \$1200 sponsorships. The expenses show \$60,000. Mr. Lentz stated that a deficit is not going to sit well with the Supervisors.

Mr. Johnson stated that with participation over 400, they should be able to come up with more sponsors. Mr. MacIntyre agreed noting that they don't have anyone but the two board members trying to get the sponsors.

Mr. Smith noted it seems like the people running it are simply burned out. And there are only two board members actively participating.

Mr. MacIntyre stated he thinks it will not work if the Township doesn't take over the whole operation, but he is not suggesting the Township does that either. Mr. Johnson agreed. Mr. Lentz doesn't think the Township should do it; it will be a lose/lose situation. All the members agreed that they do not want to see 500 kids not be able to play from a lack of support.

Mr. Smith stated that creating a management plan in 90 days when the department is in the early phase of restructuring itself is asking too much. However, he felt that if the Township could operate alongside the current management of CDABA, it would give the opportunity to get fully operational with the normal things, and a chance to see what it would take to run the league. He added that there are some costs that would go down immediately such as insurance and storage. If he had to vote now, he would have to say no, but he would be in favor of working together for a season. He speculated that if the Township said they would do it, the whole current CDABA Board would drop out.

Mr. Lentz asked what township money is available and could be spent on this league. Ms. Scott answered nothing budgeted. Mr. MacIntyre suggested the CEC could generate the funds. Ms. Scott noted that it is a break-even program. Mr. Smith stated it is an issue with staffing, not finances.

Mr. Johnson noted that they need to know before registration in September. Ms. Scott stated that the CDABA director of operations is also our Site Supervisor for Brightbill Basketball and he indicated he will not be returning this year for CDABA. Finding a person to fill that position will also be a determining factor. Mr. MacIntyre asked if Ms. Scott could contact some local colleges about having students fill the role. Mr. Johnson noted that students would not be a long-term solution. Mr. Smith stated there may be some duplication between the CDABA program and the Township program which may lessen the burden.

Ms. Scott stated that a Program Manager currently oversees the Brightbill Basketball Site Supervisor, which is equivalent to the CDABA Board overseeing the Director of Operations. This program would require a similar setup to ensure quality communication between the daytime "office hours" staff and the evening/weekend site supervisor.

She added she is torn because she wants to be able to provide recreation to those 500 kids, but the logistics of it are very complex. Ms. Scott stated that if P&R would walk along with CDABA for a year, it will need to be clear which organization is performing which tasks.

Mr. MacIntyre suggested that the Township lay out what duties it is able to do, and spell out what it will not do so that it is clear; the Township should be the one that calls the shots. If there is a cost incurred, they should pay a certain amount of money to supplement that. Ms. Scott stated that there are 200 games that will require a staff person to be in attendance, and all of the games are on the weekends.

Mr. Lentz stated he feels this is not a good thing to take on.

Mr. Johnson felt we should try to take it on so that the kids don't lose out. He also doesn't want it to be a burden to the township either. He suggested taking a week or so to think it over and correspond if we come up with additional information. He noted that there are three board members who are not present and won't be prepared to make a decision.

Mr. Lentz wondered if the season could be delayed while this is worked out. He noted then they could have a better idea about how much money it will cost the Township. Mr. Smith stated the league is self-funded, but Mr. Lentz stated the Board of Supervisors will be focused on the funds especially if this group lost money the last two years. All sports organizations have to fundraise and usually the responsibility is on the parents.

Mr. Johnson stated it is hard to hear that they can't find a couple parents, out of the huge number of kids enrolled, to be active on the board. Mr. Smith stated it is a board issue, and they can't get anyone to get involved. Mr. MacIntyre suggested a couple of the Parks & Rec Board members join the CDABA board for a year to see what's going on. Mr. Johnson agreed he would do it.

Mr. MacIntyre suggested tabling action for now, and communicating as needed. The two items they are considering providing are registration and supplying a few board members for one season. Then CDABA can respond with whether they would like to join forces for one season. Mr. MacIntyre suggested making sure that Brad Gotshall doesn't disagree before making an offer.

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to tell CDABA that Lower Paxton is not interested in doing it. Mr. Lentz seconded the motion. Mr. Johnson called for discussion on the motion. Mr. Smith stated that if he had to make a decision right now he would agree to say no. Mr. Johnson would oppose the motion because he is still in favor of trying to find a way to make it work. If there is time to explore this, he would like to explore the possibilities. Mr. Smith felt that the only scenario other than saying no, is to try some sort of joint effort where we define what we can provide. He is concerned about the staff. Mr. Lentz agreed it is too much to add to staff's plate with everything else they have to do.

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to table the decision until the PR Board can hear what Mr. Gotshall thinks about it. It can be voted upon at that time.

Ms. Scott will ask the Township Manager if he feels that running their registration and offering a board member or two to their board is appropriate. She also has to figure out what exactly we can provide, even if it is something as small as storage. Mr. Smith suggested that if we know that we cannot do this with the current staff, a cost factor should be built into the offer.

Ms. Scott stated that CD school district will give the basketball program what they have been given in the past, but with increased demand, they cannot give any more than that. If there is an issue at a location and the building principal says they do not want the program, then CDABA will not be able to be in that particular building. She doesn't see that as an issue since we already run volleyball leagues in the schools and have not had issues. Covid could change things, whereas if there is an outbreak at a particular school, and the league cannot be there, finding another location will be time consuming and may not even be possible.

Mr. Johnson called for a vote on the motion to table, since that motion trumps a motion for action. A unanimous vote to table action on taking over CDABA basketball league followed.

COMMITTEE VACANCY

Ms. Scott introduced Ken Murin who is applying to be on the Greenway Committee. Mr. Murin reviewed his experience and knowledge and how it can relate to the Greenway Committee's initiatives. Mr. Lentz made a motion to recommend Mr. Murin's appointment to the Greenway Committee. Mr. MacIntyre seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Ms. Scott stated each department is submitting the next five years' Capital Investment Plan (CIP) to a committee who will rank them prior to submitting them to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will then be able to rank the CIP and look to include the items in the budget over the next five years.

Ms. Scott added that she wants to have a Master Plan for the park system so that she can appropriately prioritize the projects since they are all basically at the end of their lifespan. She is applying for grants to cover the costs of a parks and recreation master plan. Mr. Smith asked if the Parks and Recreation Board should be helping staff with prioritizing the projects or identifying the projects. Ms. Scott stated she is working off of data they had discussed with the former P&R Manager. Ms. Scott provided a list of the submitted CIPs for over the next 5 years for the Parks & Recreation Board to review.

Mr. Smith stated that representatives from the PR Board (He and Mr. Patel) met with representatives from the Board of Supervisors recently. They discussed the Wolfersberger property. They noted the development of that parcel into usable parkland would take decades, and there has been an interest from developers in purchasing it. The approximate sale proceeds of \$1.4 million would be allocated to parks and recreation. Mr. Smith stated he always questioned if the Parks & Recreation Department is to be an income generator or if it is a service to the community with their programs. Mr. Henry stated that he saw it as a service, because that is what the tax payers get for paying taxes. That means that the Wolfersberger money can be used for things like what is on the CIP document, rather than to create activities based on whether they generate funds. Mr. Smith felt this took a lot of pressure off and allows the department to provide recreational services to the members of the community.

Mr. Smith explained that Wolfersberger was intended to be developed in conjunction with a revitalization of Koons park to alleviate the overuse of Koons Park. He also referenced the parks and recreation survey done recently, and that the predominant interest is for walking, hiking, and biking. He requested that the Board of Supervisors build into the sale the expectation that the developer include or create trails throughout the property. Mr. Henry would like members of the Parks & Recreation board to be involved in the negotiations of the sale.

PARK UPDATES

Ms. Scott provided the following updates:

1. Autumn Oaks: The pickleball court is in
2. Kohl/Lingle Park:
 - a. There is a large Bhutanese group that meets daily at 7am to play volleyball on the sand volleyball courts. The requested there be sand added, which hasn't been added since 2008. They have been very good to work with.
3. Summer Camp: Going very well. Feedback is very positive reflecting on the staff and the program itself. The kids are excited to go and they are enjoying it.
4. Heroes Grove:
 - a. There was an Independence Day celebration recently.
 - b. There have been a few instances with the flags going missing, and a police report has been filed.

ARTS COUNCIL UPDATES

Mr. Smith provided the following update:

1. The Arts Council currently has 5 members, and the Board of Supervisors is considering raising it to seven.
2. There is an author event on July 29 where a local author will speak.

GREENWAY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES REPORT

No meeting was held in June.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Ms. Scott provided the following update:

1. The 5K is scheduled for July 17th.
2. Mr. Seidler is finalizing the volunteers and last minute details.

OTHER BUSINESS

Summer Meeting Locations

Members discussed meeting at the park pavilions during the warmer months. Ms. Scott will decide which parks to meet at and let the members know.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary