



MT. LEBANON
PENNSYLVANIA

**Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 6, 2019 - 6:30 p.m.
Municipal Building Room C**

I. Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum:

Ms. Kramer called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, and proceeded with the roll call. Elaine Kramer, Richard Heyse, Pam Burrett, and Gregory Newman attended the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by Facilities & Parks Coordinator, Phillip Avolio, the Director of Public Works, Rudy Sukal, and Commissioner Kelly Fraasch.

Ron Block, Albert Presto, and Jonathan Farrell were absent.

II. Citizen Comments:

No Citizens Comments to Report.

III. Approval of May 2019, Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Kramer asked the group to review the May draft minutes and provide comment.

Ms. Kramer also submitted a copy of the draft minutes to Mr. Avolio with minor grammar and spelling corrections.

A motion was made by Mr. Newman and seconded by Ms. Burrett to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed and the revised minutes were accepted.

IV. Review of Parks Master Plan:

Ms. Kramer asked the group to review the provided parks master plan summary and provide comment.

Mr. Heyse asked if there was a list of items that would be more regulatory or compliance-like in nature.

Mr. Sukal replied that one item that stands out for him is a comment from the Municipalities Insurance and Risk Management Company regarding the athletic field bleachers. He noted that all bleachers are required to have fall protection around the sides and back of them, and right now, none of the Municipalities' bleachers are equipped with this safety feature.

Mr. Sukal also updated the group on compliance issues that exist at the concession/restroom facility in-between Middle and Dixon Fields. He shared with the group how the Commission has directed staff to develop a plan to bring the restrooms and entire facility up to code, as well as providing storage to eliminate the contractor lock boxes that line the parking lot.

Mr. Avolio noted that recently there has been a change in playground design layout, which would involve the replacement of the swings by the Commissioners Lot. He reviewed how these swings have initially been removed due to a lack of fall zone space. He explained that there have been deaths related to play equipment and seating being too close to parking areas, and for this reason, swings will not be replaced in that area.

Mr. Newman noted that most parks are listed for “Improve Park Entry”, and he is wondering exactly what that is referring to. He noted that it could mean visibility, accessibility, esthetics, or a combination.

Ms. Kramer noted that the item listed as “develop a pallet of consistent details”, was a consideration for all parks.

Mr. Avolio replied that he has a collection of all fixtures and amenities throughout the parks, and agrees that there is a lack of consistency among parks.

Mr. Heyse commented that this would be a good place to incorporate public involvement.

Commissioner Fraasch replied that the Municipality is currently working towards conducting an internal and external communication study, where a vendor would evaluate how well the Municipality is communicating internally and with residents. She noted that this could be incorporated in to the study to help aid in finding the best way to obtain feedback on the parks.

Mr. Newman asked what was holding back the Parks Advisory Board from completing a Master Plan on their own. He suggested that visiting the parks and creating a high-level plan for review by the Commission seems reasonable for them to accomplish.

Ms. Kramer noted that the public input would be missing from the process, and she believes that this is vital for a good master plan. She also noted that grants are more likely to be awarded when a plan is in place for a concept or project.

Mr. Sukal noted that in speaking with the manager, a community comprehensive plan is going to be completed, which would include the parks.

Ms. Fraasch suggested that the Board work with Mr. Sukal to get the Parks Master Plan in front of the Commission, and into the 2020 budget. Commissioner Fraasch also noted that there is the ability to speak at budget meetings, and that she rarely hears from residents on what they would like to see.

Ms. Kramer expressed her concern with pushing this item for the 202 budget. She stated how this would undermine the group process that everyone works through each year.

Mr. Sukal noted that he could at least introduce it into the text for a future year so the Commission can see that this item is of great importance to the group in the near future.

Mr. Heyse commented on the blurred line that he feels exists between true recreation facilities and active and passive parks. He noted that he does not understand how plans can be developed for an entire area without working together on what the big picture is.

Ms. Kramer asked the group if there are any other items from the parks, that need reviewed.

Mr. Avolio reminded the group that while repairs were made to the rubber safety surface at Main Park this year, the surface as a whole is past its useful life and in need of replacement in the next 2 years. He explained that with the type of safety surface, it is replaced right up to and around the equipment, so it may be time to consider the equipment at Main Park, and if it needs, updated before the surface replacement is completed.

Mr. Avolio also let the group know that there will be an expanded service level in the operating budget to replace all basketball court fencing across all of the parks.

Mr. Heyse spoke about taking a step back and looking at all park areas before the study. He commented that it might make sense to designate some current parks just as green space, and maintain them at different levels. He noted that areas like Robb Hollow and Twin Hills which have little access, are just patches of woods in-between houses with paths through them, and might be better served as “green spaces” with minimal maintenance.

V. Arboretum Community Engagement Programming (Discussion #2):

Ms. Kramer reminded the group that one educational outreach event is needed each year to keep the arboretum level 1 accreditation. She also noted that there are a few tree related programs planned through the conservancy that the Parks Advisory Board is able to collaborate with. Ms. Kramer noted that one event is the Annual Meeting on November 2nd, and the second event is a Tree ID Walk with Joe Stavish.

Commissioner Fraasch noted that it might be useful to schedule the large Commission Chambers for the kick-off of the tree ID walk. She also noted that the group’s involvement in the programs could be utilizing the Public Information Office and IT Dept. for marketing.

Ms. Burrett noted that she would like to see the Parks Advisory Board involved in both events.

A motion was made by Ms. Burrett and a second by Mr. Heyse to aid in creating programming efforts to accompany the Conservancy with their Fall Events. The motion was passed and the programs were endorsed.

Mr. Sukal let the group know that any communication efforts and or Public Information Office needs can be communicated through himself.

Ms. Kramer asked that the group consider reviewing this item earlier next year to not be pressed for time. She also noted that the Library would be interested in collaborating on a child related program next year that could involve crafting and projects that care takers can perform with children (leaf press, leaf tracing). She also noted that the Library would like to partner in a program to teach residents how to help diversify the canopy across the community through planting different species of trees and woody shrubs on their property.

VI. New Business

Mr. Heyse inquired about the planting beds along the front of the Hotel in the main business district on Washington Road. He noted that he had received many comments on how terrible the landscape beds looked, but recently saw the hotel hire out a contractor to clean up all of the weeds and excessive vegetation. He specifically was interested in finding out who if anyone, has jurisdiction on issues like this.

Mr. Sukal replied that if he were to receive a call on this item, he would normally transfer them to Code Enforcement. He also noted that reaching out to Eric Milliron might help, as he has a great working relationship with the businesses along Washington Road.

VII. Old Business

Mr. Sukal reminded the group about the health of the pine trees in Pine Cone Park. He explained how the bark on most of the trees has started peeling off and are filled with pine bark beetles. He explained that crews have started the removal process in the park and will be finishing up shortly. He noted that he would like input from the group as to the future and re-planting plan for this park. He stated that the crews will still need to grind the stumps out, but he would like to gather the groups input to get a plan together.

Ms. Kramer stated that she would send a memo out to the group to start asking for suggestions.

Mr. Sukal reminded them not to over plant, and to be cautious of planting underneath the big sycamore trees and other species that are still in the park as they formulate suggestions and plans.

Mr. Sukal also updated the group on a storm line project that is slated to take place off Moreland Drive. He noted that the only way to obtain access to the site is to create a temporary construction entrance through Robb Hollow Park. He reviewed the provided map to show the group exactly where the access is planned to be created to allow crews to make the needed repairs.

Mr. Sukal also let the group know that the sycamore located by the upper playground is scheduled to be removed as soon as school starts. He explained that as long as the weather cooperates, crews will be moving in to complete that removal.

Mr. Sukal also reviewed the provided estimates for the stream restoration that is scheduled to be included in the Bond Issue. He noted that the group had asked for more detail on the project, and the provided documents should include more information on the project.

Ms. Kramer asked Mr. Avolio if he had heard anything back from the Recreation Director on how to best stay in contact with the Sports Advisory Board regarding impacts that would touch upon the parks and the status of their grant application for the feasibility study.

Mr. Avolio noted that he did reach out to David Donnellan after the last meeting regarding this issue. He explained that Mr. Donnellan replied that he is always available through email and phone for any updates, but is not sure exactly what vehicle the Parks Board is looking for to achieve this desired level of information.

Mr. Sukal asked Ms. Kramer if she would like him to ask Mr. Donnellan to place the board on the mailing list for when agendas are sent out.

Mr. Heyse suggested a liaison from the Parks Advisory Board attend all Sports Advisory Board meetings.

Ms. Kramer made a motion and a second by Ms. Burrett to request that Richard Heyse act as the liaison to the Sports Advisory Board. The motion passed, and Mr. Heyse was appointed the Parks Advisory Board's Liaison to the Sports Advisory Board

VIII. Announcements

Mr. Avolio updated the group on the CIP Twin Hills Invasive Removal. He noted that Eichenlaub was the lowest responsible bidder, and will be providing chemical treatment for 8 acres of honeysuckle regrowth in the next 3-4 weeks.

Mr. Avolio also updated the group on other invasive removal efforts in Bird Park and Iroquois Park.

IX. Commission Update:

Commissioner Fraasch spoke to the group about the recent Bond Issue that will include a large amount of funding to refresh the main commercial district along Washington Road including the path down to the LRT. She also informed the group that regularly scheduled Commission Meeting for August 13th has been cancelled.

Ms. Fraasch also spoke to the group about a goal to help keep meetings about 1 hour in duration. She explained that it has always been a goal of the Commission, but recently has been brought up. She noted that some boards may have larger agendas and need to cover more items as their primary function, but staff will be working on ways to reduce the overall meeting time.

Mr. Heyse replied that he would like a better understanding of what the board can and cannot take part in outside the scheduled meetings.

Mr. Sukal replied that he would look into a better understanding on this to relay to the group.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Heyse and seconded by Mr. Newman to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.