



MT. LEBANON
PENNSYLVANIA

**Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 6, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.
Municipal Building: Meeting Room C**

Members:

Richard Heyse
Peter Argentine
Tom Starzynski

Dhanya Elias
Albert Presto
Kelly Ogrodnik

Rob Mackey
Bennett Aikin

Mindy Ranney, Commission Liaison
Rudy Sukal, Staff Liaison
Phillip Avolio, Staff Liaison

1. Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum

Mr. Heyse called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and proceeded with the roll call. Bennett Aikin, Dhanaya Elias, Richard Heyse, Albert Presto, Rob Mackey, and Kelly Ogrodnik attended the meeting.

2. Citizens Comments

No Citizen comments.

3. Approval of June minutes:

Mr. Heyse asked that the group review the June minutes in consideration for approval. A motion was made by Mr. Presto and a second by Mr. Aikin to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed and the June minutes were accepted.

Mr. Heyse then asked the group to review the August minutes for approval. A motion was made by Mr. Aikin and a second by Mr. Presto to approve the August minutes as presented. The motion passed, and the August minutes were accepted.

4. Deer Management:

Mr. Mackey began the discussion with a presentation that he prepared on his findings of the deer management program. Assistant Municipal Manager and

Planner, Ian McMeans presented information to the group on the Deer Management Plan as well. This presentation was presented to the Commission earlier in the year. He noted the different data points and metrics that have played a large part in measuring the success of the program as well as the various methods the Municipality has used aid in the program. Mr. McMeans noted that in the last 6 years, 10,000 deer have been removed from the herd when looking at reproductive numbers and metrics. He also noted that 14,000 lbs of venison have been provided to food banks and house holds in need.

Mr. Heyse asked Mr. McMeans what he feels would be helpful to take this program to the next level, further reducing the key metric of vehicle and deer collisions. Possible suggestions included selective hunting dates in currently un-hunted parks, or entire closures while hunting is taking place.

Mr. McMeans replied that the safety of all involved is always the #1 priority. He mentioned that hunters have reported multiple times that they have simply had to wait as numbers of walkers, joggers, dogs on leash, and kids passed through park areas. He noted that taking any park out of service for hunting would most likely be met with some level of resistance from residents and users.

Mr. Mackey commented that also believed opening the program to other parks in some capacity would be beneficial and should be considered. He noted that Twin Hills is a prime example of an area to be considered.

Mr. McMeans replied back that Twin Hills is used in Archery, but not in sharpshooting. He added that this park is managed under a court order when it comes to the deer program, as Scott Twp. Took Mt. Lebanon to court over the issue.

Mr. Heyse asked if Mr. McMeans felt the number of archers in the program was sufficient. Along the same lines, Mr. Mackey asked Mr. McMeans what he thought was the biggest constraint that he deals with regarding the program.

Mr. McMeans replied that archers have actually been added each year, and he feels that the number of hunters is sufficient. He noted that the largest hurdle to overcome is the success of the archery program. He noted that hunters may spend 20+ hours a week in a tree stand and never see a deer. With plenty of food around properties and landscaping, sometimes the deer are not focused on traveling through the parks. Another constraint is the need for more private property owners participation in the program.

Mr. Heyse inquired about the possibility of coordinating with other local and neighboring communities.

Mr. McMeans replied that communities like Upper St. Clair, Peters Twp, and possibly even Baldwin Twp already have an active program. He noted that the largest and most beneficial partner would be Scott Twp.

Mr. Heyse noted that the Parks Board will plan on having a further discussion once more members are present on the support of adding additional park locations to the removal effort.

5. Commission Update:

Commissioner Ranney shared the results of the previous week's resident meeting at Brafferton Park. She noted that 20+ residents, Municipal Staff, and representatives of Gateway Engineers met to review some very high-level ideas and suggestions that came from the master plan process. Residents also participated in voicing their suggestions on items such as safety, field improvements, parking, playgrounds, and even potential use as a dog park. The only clear next step is that there has been \$80,000 earmarked in next year's budget for improvements at this park.

Commissioner Ranney updated the group on the possible addition of a Fire Training Facility being constructed in the Public Works Complex Site. After looking at possible locations for such a facility across the Municipality, the Public Works Complex seems to be the right fit.

The last item Commissioner Ranney updated the group on was the resignation of Commissioner Foster. She was representing Ward III. There has been a job opening posted for her replacement.

6. New Business

- a. Richard Heyse – Noted that he would like Mr. Avolio to work through a response and follow up on how the Municipality will be addressing the spotted lantern fly. He noted that Bird Park has already seen this insect move in and he is sure they will only spread from there to other park locations.
- b. Kelly Ogrodnik- Announced the joint educational event that will be held by the Conservancy and Parks Advisory Board. This event will be on October 16th in Bird Park from 1pm – 4pm. Events will include discussions on native trees, kids' activities, and tours of the park. The event will satisfy the continued Level I Arboretum accreditation.

7. Old Business / Updates

a. Member Site Visits

Mr. Heyse asked the group to go around the room to discuss each member's visits to their assigned park locations.

i. Twin Hills

Kelly Ogradnik- Noted she was very impressed with the development of the park over the last 4 years or so. The trail maps, and overall feel of the park are similar to Bird and very helpful. Some of the noticeable issues to work through exist at the Oak Forest entrance. The number of various invasive plants are present and strong. One of the bridge railings is currently down on Hill Hollow Trail and leaning against the hillside. Ms. Ogradnik recommended coming together to formalize a standard trail material, as she noticed sections of different materials and blends of mulch and gravel.

Bennett Aikin- Also noticed the downed railing and other observations that Ms. Ogradnik mentioned. He did note that he saw a hang out spot that had a couch, mattress, and other random fort materials deep in the park. He was happy to see all of the joggers, dog walkers, and users throughout.

ii. Sunset Hills / Brafferton

Kelly Ogradnik- Mentioned the split rail fence is in poor condition and missing several slats, the path leading down to the park is most likely not accessible at the moment, so the thought of adding play equipment in the future should be tied to creating an accessible path down to the different use areas. She noted the poor condition of the fence and 2 pieces of metal rebar that were being used to keep the fence from curling, mentioning that this hazard should be removed.

Dhanya Elias- Noted that she has seen a lot of dumping along the edge of the park perimeter. She also noted that during rain events, the field gets very soft. The fencing is in bad condition the entire way around. She also noted that the parking along the neighborhood leading up to the park is always packed in the evenings and weekends.

b. Parks Master Plan Prioritization

Mr. Heyse inquired about the format for presentation on the Master Plan findings from each member.

Commissioner Ranney noted that the first quarter of 2023 will be the target for public discussion on the item.

Mr. Heyse noted that a similar effort and layout that the group uses for Capital and Operating.

Mr. Sukal noted that breaking them down by cost and phases would be an ideal setup to begin sorting out all of the recommendations.

c. Pinecone Park

Mr. Mackey updated the group on the condition of the plantings and health of the meadow. He noted that they are starting to coordinate for the fall plantings and spot seeding of the meadow. Volunteers have been keeping up on watering as well as hand pulling of weeds from the meadow.

d. Capital Improvement Plan

The group reviewed the 2023 CIP budget which had been recently released. Mr. Heyse inquired about the Bird Park parking lot improvements.

Mr. Sukal noted that this project had been in the budget for 15-20 years and has never had much attraction or push to complete. The overall project was intended to capture and manage stormwater and enable crews to use appropriate de-icing materials on the surface in the winter, creating a safer parking lot.

Ms. Ogrodnik asked the group for their thoughts on implementing some sort of design process standard for all Municipal projects to require looking into incorporating stormwater management practices into their design.

Mr. Sukal replied that this process is already incorporated into major infrastructure projects as well as normal mill and pave programs. This process is reviewed each and every year during the creation of all street reconstruction projects. Additional BMP's have been incorporated into projects such as Clint Seymour Field, Parking Area, and even Tennis Center parking along Cedar.

e. Communications and Signage

Mr. Heyse asked Mr. Presto and Aikin for an update on milestones and progress on the Signage.

The group noted that no communications or update has been made at this time.

The group discussed installing temporary signage to indicate the location of the soccer field and its designated parking area off Beadling Road.

Mr. Sukal replied that he would work on this item.

f. Stormwater Zone Designation Program

No Comments.

g. Maintenance Updates

Mr. Avolio updates the group on upcoming turf maintenance programs, Invasive removal programs, and other activities that took place in the last month. He also noted that he has met with a tree service for the removal of the hazardous trees in Williamsburg Park after numerous failed attempts to seek interest from logging companies.

C. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Mackey and a second by Mr. Aikin to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 PM.