

**Lower Paxton Township
Community Engagement Committee**

**Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024**

Members in Attendance

Jim Seidler
Stan Smith
Pat Crawford
Denise Hussar
Bob MacIntyre
Bill Minsker

Members Absent

Also in Attendance

Michelle Thompson, Staff Liaison
Rachelle Scott, PR Director

ANNUAL REORGANIZATION

Michelle Thompson, Staff Liaison, opened the Lower Paxton Township CEC meeting at 4:00 p.m. on the above date, in Meeting Room 174, at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, PA.

Ms. Thompson asked for nominations for the positions of chair and vice chair for 2024. Jim Seidler was nominated by Ms. Crawford as the 2024 chair. Ms. Crawford was nominated by Mr. Seidler as the 2024 vice chair. Hearing no other nominations, the members voted unanimously to approve the nominations.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Seidler called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm on the above date in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg.

MINUTES

The minutes of the November 15, 2023 meeting were approved, with a motion by Mr. Smith, a second from Mr. MacIntyre, and a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

**NIGHT TO SHINE
DONATION REQUEST**

Ms. Thompson explained that Christi Miller, from the Devonshire Church reached out to ask if we would sponsor the event by supplying a small snack bag for 100 participants.

Mr. MacIntyre stated that Night to Shine is an annual national event started by Tim Tebow, and it is a formal prom for adults with disabilities. It will be held February 9th, and it is run by volunteers and funded largely by fundraisers and donations. Mr. Smith noted that there is only one prom in any general area, so there shouldn't be any other requests for the same event.

Ms. Thompson would like to get mini candies to put in gift bags, and a small note or tag wishing the participants a great evening. The note could say have a wonderful evening, or courtesy of the LPT CEC. If approved here, she would be asking the Arts Council to assemble the snack bags. She would also like to donate the Arts Council's leftover ornament kits from the Holiday Jam since there are 100 left. She has also secured a \$25 gift card for Community Aid so that a prom-goer can use it to purchase some of their formalwear at Community Aid.

Ms. Crawford made a motion to approve the donation of 100 snack bags. Mr. MacIntyre seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Seidler asked if there is a need for volunteers and Ms. Thompson will find out and follow up with members.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT/APPRECIATION

Interviews

Ms. Thompson would like to include a volunteer spotlight in the newsletters. There is a seasonal parks publication, the Recreation Guide, which goes out 3 times a year; there is going to be a monthly Township email newsletter; and there will be a more formalized newsletter done every other month. Mr. Seidler asked if there is an existing email list. Ms. Thompson stated there is, and there are about 4,000 contacts through recreation, and about 2,600 from Township contacts.

Ms. Thompson requested the interviews be done in person so that the interviewees can elaborate and tell their story. They aren't as inclined to do so if they answer in writing on the question form.

Ms. Thompson would like the first series of spotlights to be on persons that volunteer in a capacity that impacts the Township, whether or not they live in LP or are on a committee. For example, there is a volunteer senior van driver who also volunteers in other capacities. Mr. MacIntyre suggested spotlights introducing the members of the various committees. It could show the variety of people that contribute to the efforts of the Township.

Each CEC member agreed to do an interview and turn in a month prior to the newsletter issue: Mr. Smith-March, Mr. Minsker-April, Mr. MacIntyre-May, Ms. Hussar-July, Mr. Seidler-June, Ms. Crawford-August.

Volunteer Recognition

Ms. Thompson asked the members for ideas or suggestions for an event or a way to recognize the volunteers.

Ms. Crawford suggested an open house at the Township Building to share the recent renovations to the building. That could be done during National Volunteer Appreciation Week, and anyone interested in volunteering could be invited to find out what is available to do in the community.

Mr. Smith agreed that the volunteer event should piggy-back on another event. Mr. MacIntyre noted that Shade tree will host Arbor Day/Earth Day at the end of April. Kite Festival is in April too.

Mr. Smith noted that other groups such as the library host an event for those that volunteer for them, and recognize things like who has the most hours or things of special significance. That sort of event is not meant to recruit volunteers, it is to appreciate the volunteers.

Ms. Scott asked about hosting a reception for the volunteers that are on committees for LP, and people that are interested in starting to volunteer could also come. Mr. Seidler suggested doing it in conjunction with the Supervisors meeting night. Ms. Hussar suggested the people that might not be on a committee but help with them a lot could also be included. Parking is an issue at the Municipal Center. Using a park in the summer could be an option. The culinary school at DCTS could also be an option for catering. Open-house style was suggested to ease the strain on parking.

April 24th was suggested, and participation would be by invitation. Ms. Thompson suggested gathering photos to share during the event.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Kite Fest 12-2pm, 4/20/24

Ms. Thompson will be looking for volunteers for Kite Fest on April 20th and a rain date of April 27th. Volunteers will be needed to monitor the parachute games, help manage the planting tables along with the Master Gardeners. The Keystone Kitters will do a demonstration. Mr. Seidler will volunteer, and Mr. Minsker stated he will be there with the Kiwanis Club.

National Night Out, August 6, 5-8pm

Mr. Minsker asked if the committees should help with National Night Out. Ms. Thompson stated that the Township has a general booth, but not one for each committee separately. Mr. Minsker noted that in that case, each committee would only have contact with people during the shift they work. Ms. Thompson agreed that more committee volunteers could be present at the table, but last year it was difficult to get anyone to help. Ms. Hussar asked about what would be shared with the visitors, and Mr. Thompson would like to reach out for volunteerism and maybe information for things like the updates to the dog park. Ms. Scott stated that Parks and Rec has a booth each year and staffs

it with camp counselors who host a kids game or activity. If each committee wants to have a booth or activity, they can, but there has to be enough volunteers to man the table or activity.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES UPDATES

Parks & Rec Board:

Mr. Seidler stated that there is an ongoing discussion regarding the park in Blue ridge Village with Triple Crown and the neighbors that live there. The developer wants the Township to give back a portion of the land to be dedicated for parks, in exchange for park amenities, but the neighbors are in opposition.

Conway Tract:

Mr. MacIntyre stated that they are exploring the opportunities to build a new park on Conway Road. Mr. Seidler added that the consultant is drafting plans, and the subcommittee has been sharing ideas and feedback on the proposal.

Arts Council:

Ms. Crawford stated that they continue to partner with the library for the display of local artists' work. She would like to invite members of other LP committees to the Meet-and-Greet in April. Mr. Smith added that the art will remain on display for about 3 months.

Greenway Committee:

Mr. Seidler stated the effort to create a pedestrian underpass has stalled. The committee plans to review and update the missing connections for sidewalks and pedestrian access. This should aid the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors as they review land development plans, so they do not miss an opportunity to improve connectivity within the Township.

Historical Commission:

Mr. Minsker stated they met and drafted their 2024 plans for historical presentations. They learned how Pennsylvania was pieced together, and they would like to explore how Lower Paxton was developed. He shared that the larger ongoing project is the slave cemetery behind the cemetery at the St Thomas UCC.

Mr. Minsker shared that the amphitheater is complete, and Heroes Grove is an ideal location for events and ceremonies.

LP Foundation:

Ms. Hussar stated that Heroes Grove is the location for the Independence Day Weekend with many activities for the residents. There will be awards for volunteers and recognition of military service members.

She added that Christkindlmarkt was very successful and had about 8,000 visitors. One nice addition was the shuttle service for off-site parking. Mr. Minsker suggested adding parking at the middle school. The event is held annually on the second Saturday of December.

Mr. Minsker stated that Weir Events renovated the social hall of the firehouse and some of the Christkindlmarkt activities took place there.

Mr. Smith shared feedback from vendors from outside the area that were very happy with the management of and the quality of the event. He was also pleased to see food options for those with allergies or sensitivities.

Ms. Thompson asked about the logistics of the bussing for the shuttle service. Ms. Hussar stated there was a sponsor that paid for the shuttle service. The busses were the local ones for the schools, and the drivers were the school bus drivers, and they were fantastic.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Thompson stated that the staff will be participating in a lunch at the DCTS restaurant. They have been a good partner with the Township and this is a nice way to support them in return. Any members that are interested should reply to the email for an accurate count.

Mr. Seidler asked about access to the meetings within the building; he is concerned that members or visitors can't get to a meeting room, and also that someone that isn't part of the meeting could get access when they shouldn't.

February 17th the Taste of Linglestown will take place hosted by LACA. The tasting will feature Penn State Creamery. Sampling and voting is included with the purchase of an event ticket.

Mr. Minsker shared information on a proposal for a welcome-wagon type of outreach. He suggested this project fits the CEC activities.

He also shared information on a proposal for welcome signs at the entrance to the Township along Allentown Blvd, and six other locations. This would be sponsored by the local service organizations. The idea could be developed through the CEC with a goal to erect one sign each year.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 5:40 pm. The next meeting of the Community Engagement Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 4:00 pm in Room 174 of the Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Hiner, Recording Secretary