

**LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 2, 2022**

Members in Attendance

Neal Johnson
Jim Seidler
Stan Smith
Bob MacIntyre
Kirby Lentz

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, P/R Manager
Nichole Mendinsky, HRG
Shelly Echeverria, LPT Resident
Chris DiSanto, Triple Crown Corp

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Jim Seidler called the March 2, 2022 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board to order at 7:14 pm in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, PA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2022

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the February 2, 2022 Parks and Recreation Board minutes. Mr. MacIntyre seconded the motion, and it was followed by a unanimous vote of approval.

ARTS COUNCIL INTERVIEW – SHELLY ECHEVERRIA

The Board interviewed Shelly Echeverria for the Arts Council position. Mr. Smith stated Ms. Echeverria has attended two Arts Council meetings. It was noted Ms. Echeverria is an artist and has a marketing background. Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to recommend Ms. Echeverria to the Board of Supervisors as an Arts Council member. Mr. Smith seconded the motion, and it was followed by a unanimous vote of approval.

BLUE RIDGE PARK UPDATE – CHRIS DISANTO

Ms. Scott stated Mark DiSanto of Triple Crown Corporation had reached out to her regarding the Master Plan and Blue Ridge Park. She invited him to attend the Parks and Recreation Board meeting to provide an update on Blue Ridge. Mr. Chris DiSanto

attended the meeting. He stated they wanted to get an update on the Master Plan as it relates to the Blue Ridge tract since it is scheduled to be dedicated. He noted residents are beginning to ask what is happening with the park land. Ms. Scott asked Mr. DiSanto when the park is going to be dedicated. Mr. DiSanto replied since site work is not yet completed, they are not able to dedicate it at this time. Once site work is completed for Phase III, they will have a better idea on an appropriate timeline. Mr. DiSanto noted they also wanted to see what type of partnership might be possible with the Township. Mr. Lentz asked what they would like from the Township. Mr. DiSanto replied they are trying to figure it out so they can talk to residents and appropriately answer their questions. Mr. MacIntyre stated the Board would be looking for two primary ideas. The first one is, to the extent that there will still be some cart paths, making a fairly big walking area and trails. The second idea would be a disc golf course. Mr. Seidler also noted the idea of a dog park. Mr. Lentz asked what residents were asking for such as play equipment, walking trails, or other amenities. Mr. DiSanto noted residents were asking when it is going to the Township and what the Township's plans are for the park. He also noted they also left as much of the cart path for the walking path purpose. There is approximately 30 acres to be dedicated.

Mr. Seidler stated he was concerned about the access. He asked Mr. DiSanto to provide an update with the map with potential places for access would be and also for parking. Mr. DiSanto reviewed a map showing parking lot and road into the park off of Alexandra Lane. Mr. Lentz asked if the dedication would include the ponds. Mr. MacIntyre asked if he had any idea of what the cost would be to put a boardwalk around the ponds. Mr. DiSanto replied he did not at this time. Mr. DiSanto stated a boardwalk would be a good idea to consider in the Master Plan. Mr. DiSanto stated their requirement is to dedicate the land and are not obligated to provide improvements, but there could be dialogue to determine if there is a way to help.

Mr. Smith stated the Master Plan is still being developed. Part of the purpose of it, particularly in the context of the Blue Ridge property, is that the Township has approximately 17 parks and has not had significant funds to do much needed repairs. Part of the hope out of the sale of Wolfersberger is that it will give some resources, apart from anything new, to address some desperate needs in existing parks. Although there is a lot of money from the sale of Wolfersberger, there are a lot of things in line. Mr. Smith noted part of the purpose of the Master Plan is to look at the Township as a whole, which will play into the kinds of things we would like to see at Blue Ridge. Mr. DiSanto responded that they decided to give more than the required acreage because the comp plan notes this portion of the Township is in dire need of parks. Mr. DiSanto stated they would like to see drafts as the Master Plan gets developed and be involved so they can talk with the residents and see if there is something they can help with. He noted he does not know what the Federal government is providing from the American Rescue Plan, but it is not cheap to build or maintain parks. Mr. MacIntyre stated he appreciated Mr. DiSanto coming to the meeting. Mr. DiSanto asked if playground equipment would be an idea. Mr. MacIntyre responded it depends on the type of home

purchasers. A lot of residents in that area are senior citizens. It might be appropriate to put in some playground equipment that would be used by their grandchildren when visiting, but it would not be used regularly. Ms. Scott stated she received a request for a senior outdoor fitness area. Mr. DiSanto stated the 128 townhomes are a “55 plus” community. The apartments have some children. The detached single family would have the most children. Mr. Johnson asked if there would any room for an all-purpose field not designated for a specific sport. Mr. DiSanto replied there were full size soccer fields on the original plan, so there is space for that. There is a lot of flexibility. He noted it would be a great spot for a nice large fenced in dog park. Mr. DiSanto stated they would be interested in continuing dialogue as the Master Plan is developed. Ms. Scott stated the Parks and Recreation Board will be provided information on the Master Plan, but there is a steering committee being formed specific to the plan that will involve the community residents. They will meet monthly. Public meetings will be held. Ms. Scott stated the process is taking place from now until November to determine what facilities should go at which locations. Mr. DiSanto stated they will be willing to send someone to meetings with future updates.

HODGES HEIGHTS PARK CONCEPT – HRG

Ms. Scott stated, with the Parks Revitalization Projects, we are looking to make improvements to Hodges Heights Park. Ms. Scott noted the history of Hodges History was discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Scott welcomed Ms. Mendinsky, a landscape architect with HRG to present a preliminary park concept.

Ms. Mendinsky referenced a power point showing various slides of the current park. She provided a draft sketch of a proposal. She noted the following:

There is potential for adjacent land uses to be in minor conflict. There are little utilities, such as vents, on the property. Geo-technical testing is going to be needed. She presented the following ideas staff discussed during a brainstorming session.

1. Big central green gathering zone. Fit other zones on the side. Two playground zones. Maybe a pavilion that separate the zones.
2. Low impact, basically utilizing space for trails. Space in between the trails could be modified over time. If you don't want to do meadows and a lot plantings, you could do a playground.
3. Third of space dedicated to garden zones, some joint gathering are in the middle, with playground area to the right.

Ms. Mendinsky discussed potential ways to phase it. The parking and entire trail system, entire playground surfacing and playground equipment, as well as some plantings to give some shade. Cost is \$240,000. \$150,000 is the allowance for play equipment. A piece could be added as an operational budget every year also. Trails are crushed decomposed granite and qualifies as ADA.

Phase II has an allotment for plantings, pavilion. Phase II is approximately \$50,000. Ms. Scott stated she thought they discussed it being more of a courtyard with shade trees as opposed to a pavilion. Ms. Mendinsky replied it can be changed to reflect a courtyard. Mr. Smith stated residents had a high degree of interest in a pavilion, but it has not been sustainable. Mr. MacIntyre asked if there is any possibility that the area could be expanded to the left and a little to the south. Ms. Scott asked for the reason. Mr. MacIntyre stated more land is the big reason, but the residents have been wanting something ASAP. If we are spending a half million dollars, we should give them as much as we can safely. The community gardens are a wonderful idea, but not at that part of the township until we know it is safe there. He suggested cutting down the proposed parallel parking on both ends and use the other side of the roadway if it can be used. Mr. Smith stated to the left of the road, the road bed is on a ridge that is not undermined by the land fill and that is probably some of the most stable area so structures would do much better. Mr. MacIntyre stated the Board had previously discussed putting in a driving range or BMX course, but no one could give an answer as to what the landfill area can be used for. Ms. Mendinsky stated a lot of places put a cap on landfills and they become kite hills, walking paths, passive areas. Mr. Seidler asked if the access road is still necessary to get into the landfill because it would be nice to move the pavilion to the more stable area. Ms. Mendinsky stated if there is other land to use, it could be amazing to have that space for a nice trail network and have little themed pods. There could be raised community gardens. A disc golf course or dog park could be located on the back acres.

Mr. Smith stated part of what the Board is asking for is the ability to expand, not necessarily just the park, but the use of that area with the trails, as well as re-aligning the road. Mr. Lentz stated there are areas, if we decide to do a trail, that the State Police and DEP have used to bury various items. Leeching of rust colored water has occurred. Ms. Mendinsky stated she needs to ask someone in her office what the monitoring obligation and liability was for on another piece of land that was a landfill. She stated there was a DCNR program they were trying to pilot called Brown Fields to Playgrounds. She noted she will check into this program.

Mr. MacIntyre suggested obtaining the monitoring records (wells and methane) kept by the Township in the past. Mr. Lentz stated they would have to ask for access to the records kept by Ken Shoaff.

Ms. Scott stated \$6,500 is budgeted for geo-testing that would need to be done prior to adding any landscaping changes. Mr. Seidler asked if it is possible to walk the compost area. Ms. Scott replied she would contact Public Works and set up a tour in May. Ms. Scott asked if Ms. Mendinsky could provide her with an update by the April 6 meeting. Mr. MacIntyre suggested meeting with residents if

we are not able to expand the area being used to present proposed ideas for the park and what can be done. Ms. Scott agreed. Ms. Mendinsky stated it is always possible to make a trail which would provide a framework.

Mr. Lentz stated he would like the Board to meet with Ms. Mendinsky at the site. Mr. Smith suggested waiting until we know what the options are before meeting at the site.

STATUS OF MASTER PLAN

Ms. Scott stated she took the engineers working on the plan, along with the Township Manager and Assistant Manager on a tour of every park in the Township. A steering committee is being formed that will meet on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:30 pm. There were twelve public applicants that will be narrowed down to six. Three Parks and Recreation Board members will attend. Board of Supervisor Loman Henry will attend. Discussion followed regarding volunteers from the P & R Board. After discussion it was decided Mr. Seidler, Mr. Smith, and Mr. MacIntyre would volunteer from the P & R Board. Mr. Johnson will serve as an alternate. Mr. Seidler will not be able to attend the June meeting.

PARKS REVITALIZATION PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Scott stated that as part of the Parks Revitalization Plan, she has ordered three new playgrounds from Burkes Playgrounds that will be installed at the end of April.

1. Existing playgrounds at Kings Crossing, Centennial Acres, and Lamplight will be torn down as of March 21. The Township is excavating and removing the existing equipment, and Burkes will install the new equipment. Ms. Scott stated the gaga ball pit with a concrete pad being installed as part of an Eagle Scout project at Centennial Acres Park will take place about the same time. A grand opening will take place. Centennial Acres playground cost is \$133,000. Kings Crossing Park playground cost is \$120,000, and Lamplight Park playground cost is \$76,000.
2. Koons Park Gary Lowe Baseball Field will receive a new fence installed by Paramount Fencing.
3. Brightbill basketball courts will be renovated by May 20.
4. HRG has been retained to start the bidding process for a new Brightbill Park restroom and storage unit to be completed this fall.

Ms. Scott stated she is in the process of determining the next step for Possibility Place. She noted that \$25,000 has been allocated, but she is concerned that since a lot of the composite wood located underneath is rotted, no one will see the \$25,000 worth of work being done. She also noted she is looking into a phasing plan to convert it to a non-composite inclusive playground.

Ms. Scott stated she is starting to work on adding amenities to Happy Tails Dog Park located at Kohl Park.

Ms. Scott stated Wolfersberger Tract was recently sold.

Local share grant funding in the amount of \$150,000 has been received. This amount covers \$80,000 for the Master Plan cost and \$70,000 will be spent toward the Brightbill basketball court renovation cost total of \$159,000.

PARK UPDATES

Ms. Scott provided the following park updates:

1. Kohl Park ACA boards were vandalized.
2. Memorial garden and sign at the center of Hocker Park was removed.
3. Talking with the school district regarding lease at Paxtonia Athletic Fields. School district requested 50/50 share with Township.
4. Heroes Grove is generating more interest. The library has reserved it for a program. Keystone Concert Band is interested in holding a concert. Pennsylvania Womyns Chorus is also interested.
5. George Park cleanup will be held on Sunday at 9 am. (Ms. Scott will provide Board with volunteer opportunity dates)
6. Kite Festival will take place on April 24 at Lingle Park.
7. Make A Wish Foundation is interested in hosting their food truck event at George Park on September 10.
8. CASA wants to host a 5K at George Park on June 25.
9. New pavilion rental time opportunities are available this year. (11 am-3 pm, 4-8 pm, and 11 am-8 pm).

ARTS COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Mr. Smith provided the following update:

1. Working on a contest for a new mural for Possibility Place.
2. Finalizing agreement with Jim Milbrand for the variety band.
3. Township staff is no longer able to do design for flyers for Arts Council events and is looking for someone to assist with this.

GREENWAY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Mr. Seidler provided the following update:

1. Residents were invited by letter to attend the next meeting regarding Oak Park Trail.
2. Possible name change to "Oak Park Nature Trail".
3. Trail maintenance days have been established on the fourth Saturday of each month. Next maintenance day is April 23, 9 – 11 am.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Ms. Scott stated letters have been sent to sponsors for donations for the race. An emphasis has been put on the sound garden musical instruments at Brightbill Park. Race name has been changed to Arts and Parks 5K. The tagline is Music in the Parks.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. MacIntyre stated he has received comments that people cannot find a good place to play pickleball. Ms. Scott stated we are working to host pickup pickleball games at Koons Park and Brightbill Park on three days. A volunteer will run the two-hour session. We are planning to host a pickleball league at the Autumn Oaks pickleball courts once the park has been dedicated to the Township.

Mr. MacIntyre suggested, on a temporary basis, hosting a pickleball tournament indoors. Ms. Scott stated Devonshire Church has three courts. She noted the Master Plan will address the need.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn A. Sawyer
Recording Secretary

