

**LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 3, 2023**

Members in Attendance

Stan Smith
Jim Seidler
Bob MacIntyre
Neal Johnson
Sandy
Wendy
Mayur Patel
Kirby Lentz
Alan Gallagher

Members Absent

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, Staff Liaison
Kevin Grant, Jr, Life Scout
Kevin Grant, Sr.

CALL TO ORDER

The Lower Paxton Township Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by Chairman Neal Johnson at 7:15 p.m. on the above date, in Meeting Room 174, at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, PA.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the October 5, 2022 and the February 1, 2023 meetings. Mr. Lentz seconded the motion, and it was followed by a unanimous vote of approval.

EAGLE SCOUT PROPOSAL
KEVIN GRANT, JR.

Kevin Grant Jr was present from Troop 368 to propose installing a flagpole at George Park. He explained he has installed flag poles with his dad, a veteran, in the past, and he feels it is important to display the American Flag. Having a flag at the park would allow for the playing of the national anthem at events. He will involve volunteers from his troop for most of the work and an electrician will do the electrical work associated with the lighting. He showed a photo of an example of the style he would like to install.

Mr. Grant proposes to install the pole just west of the pavilion near the electrical junction box. The 30-foot flagpole needs to be rated for 90-mph winds based on the geographical location. The lighting needs to be a minimum 300 lumen, which will cost about \$20 per year to operate two spotlights. The halyard type depends on the funds available; an internal halyard is about \$850 more than an external halyard. The flag size would be 5'x8' and they run about \$40. Mr. Grant will donate 10 extra flags on top of the one presented at the dedication.

Mr. Grant would like to complete the project in a short period of time so that he can dedicate it on National Night Out in August.

Mr. Grant requested the Township to pay for the flagpole with the internal halyard (\$2700), the flagpole with the internal halyard (\$1850), or to pay for the difference between the basic and the internal halyard (\$850).

Mr. MacIntyre noted that an internal halyard would reduce vandalism and keep the flag secure. Mr. Grant agreed, noting that it also prevents tangling. Mr. Lentz was concerned about someone pushing the pole over, but the diameter and material is such that it would not really be possible. The lights would be flush with the ground.

Ms. Scott stated the location is good, and better than the alternate location by Tom George's plaque. The details would be discussed with Public Works but the goal tonight is to obtain support from the Parks and Recreation Board.

Mr. Seidler suggested that the scout do the fundraising first, and then if he is unable to raise enough, he could come back and ask for financial help.

Mr. Gallagher suggested another dedication date of Veterans Day.

Mr. Seidler made a motion to support the idea and allow him to pursue the project. Mr. Gallagher seconded the motion and the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

AUTUMN OAKS **ALTERATIONS TO THE DEVELOPER AGREEMENT**

Joel McNaughton was present to discuss options for the park at Autumn Oaks. Ms. Scott stated that the park was offered for dedication but there were outstanding items from the developers agreement, including parking lot lights and electricity to the pavilion, and the paved parking lot. Since that time, the developer has suggested some alternatives to the required amenities.

Mr. McNaughton explained that there were comments generated after the construction of the park, but weren't specified in the agreement but are more of a preference of the Township at

this point. The developer agreement called for a lighted parking lot and electricity in the pavilion. The application had been submitted to PPL prior to the beginning of the park construction. There are extreme wait times for permits. There is also a push from the neighbors to not install lights. They argue that the park is closed at dusk and that lighting will invite people to hang out there after dark.

Typical parks have lighting in the parking lots for safety.

Taking into consideration the delay for the electrical permits, and the feedback from the neighbors, the developers have looked at other ways to satisfy the agreement for amenities, and they are offering to instead install a walking path along Patton Road. People already walk the portion being discussed, and they walk in the street. There is a portion of sidewalk from the intersection headed south, but it stops, and then you have to cross the road to get to the park. The proposal allows crossing the street at the controlled intersection and then walking down the paved path to the park. A general permit is required for the stream crossing, but they can avoid the complexity of the joint permit from DEP. The background work is already done for the DEP permit, so it could be submitted asap.

There are walking paths from Patton Road into the park and also connects to the path that comes off of the cul-de-sac.

Mr. McNaughton stated they have completed the neighborhood, the homes are sold and they have been maintaining the park for 2-3 years, so at this point they are ready to wrap things up. The cost for the alternative plan is about the same or a little bit more. People already use the park, they already walk in the location where the path is proposed, and the neighbors are saying they do not want the lights. The main difference is the time to completion. The DEP permit and the installation can take place relatively quickly.

Mr. Seidler stated that this is a documented missing link for walking paths. There is sidewalk in the development to the south, but no sidewalk along the sharp bend in Patton Road.

Ms. Scott asked the Board to consider what Mr. McNaughton has presented and be prepared to make a recommendation at the next meeting. The first choice is strict compliance to the agreement, which are two street lights and electricity in the pavilion. The second option is to install the walkway, and include moving the pickleball fence so that the grass is outside of the fence and removal of the river rocks surrounding the pavilion and grading.

The benefit to McNaughton is that the neighbors do not want lights, the lights are delayed indefinitely meaning that they must continue to maintain the park, and people already walk where they propose to install the walkway. Ms. Scott noted that the Autumn Oaks Nature Trail has been there for about ten years. The loop is about half macadam trail, and half sidewalks

through the neighborhood. The piece proposed is a missing link, and once the park is dedicated the trail will also be dedicated to the Township.

The financial cost to do either option is essentially equal.

Additional Discussion regarding Autumn Oaks

Mr. MacIntyre stated that the origin of the problem is that the developer didn't want to put in the full trail, and that by cutting the cost of the trail out, he agreed to put other stuff in there. Ms. Scott clarified that there is a culvert that would have cost an exorbitant amount of money, and the developer proposed to do a simplified culvert and give the 29 acres to parks. The developer agreement to reflect this was very broad, and simply listed a pavilion, pickleball court, and a playground.

Mr. Patel took an informal poll of the people that play on the court there, and they would like windscreens installed in the fencing. They do not feel the lights are important. Ms. Scott agreed, but noted that there is a security issue to have no lighting, however, the park technically closes at dark. The walking path is invaluable because people in this area walk more than expected and more than other areas.

Mr. Seidler agreed with what has been said, and is of the opinion that the sidewalk is more important at this time, and added that this sidewalk section is one big step closer to completing the link between this neighborhood and the neighborhood to the south. It is a significant challenge because of the bend in the road and the narrowness of the road at the bend.

Mr. Lentz asked who is responsible for the clearing of the sidewalks after installation. The adjacent property owner is responsible for sidewalk maintenance in Lower Paxton, so the open space/detention pond is what is adjacent, not a homeowner, so it is assumingly the HOA that will need to cover the maintenance. It will be important to mention when discussing the matter with Mr. McNaughton.

Ms. Scott asked for a decision between lights, and the sidewalk. The small alterations can be negotiated into the sidewalk if possible, but if not, Public Works will likely be able to accomplish those items.

A motion is expected to be made to forego the lights and electric work, in exchange for the sidewalk and additional small items. The draft punchlist includes two dead trees, replace river rocks with paving around the pavilion, relocate the court fencing with the pole on the outside of the chainlink,

HODGES HEIGHTS **GEOLOGICAL STUDY REPORT**

Ms. Scott stated that the study performed has found that the ground is very soft. She presented images that show the depth of the soft material. The location that was potentially to be made into parking also has garbage beneath. The area where the play equipment was proposed in the master plan is also significantly soft. Both of those areas were thought to be beyond the limit of the trash cells, but they are not. The garbage starts at about 4 feet deep, and goes as deep as thirty feet in many areas that were studied. The Township has asked for an engineer's estimate on building the park as called for in the master plan, although it is expected to be quite high.

Mr. Seidler reported that Albert Banks, who is a long-time resident of Hodges Heights, has joined the Greenway Committee recently and offered suggestions on alternatives such as a walkway connection from the park, behind the homes on Lyters Lane, and then connects to the road further down. He has been very helpful. Mr. MacIntyre stated this has been a long time coming, and he would like to make use of the park in some way. He suggested other uses of the rest of the landfill like a driving range or bx bikes. Ms. Scott noted the 2 acre park parcel is the only part that is being looked at, because when the master plan was being developed the question was asked about expanding the park and the answer was no.

Mr. Smith stated that this study supports the idea to explore passive options such as pathways and benches. Ms. Scott came across a document that the Parks and Recreation Board took action to take Hodges Heights out of the park system in 2017.

Mr. Gallagher suggested community gardens or solar gardens. Mr. Lentz stated that the community gardens have been tried and always failed.

VANDALISM AND OTHER POLICE REPORTS

Proposed Camera System

Ms. Scott is preparing a bid spec packet. There is \$80,000 in grant money to use, but the project must be bid out. She is hopeful that the system can be installed this year.

SPORTS FIELD POLICY AND **ORGANIZATION CONTRACTS**

Ms. Scott is applying for a grant for peer-to-peer consultants to help with the sports organizations that reserve and maintain field space in the park system. There are conflicting feelings of entitlement and responsibility for the buildings and fields. Written agreements are going to be imperative to have a clear plan for each of them as well as the Parks Department/Township.

The sports leagues are growing so they are trying to find more space. They also have groups that branch off, and other changes that need to be directed or coordinated for the best possible outcome. With the peer grant, there is up to \$18,000 to bring on a consultant to help draft those agreements with each organization. They will also help with a process by which the organizations can make improvements to the grounds or buildings. This grant is a 90/10 matching grant.

With regard to field usage, returners are given rights-of-first-refusal for the fields they used the previous year, then the top priority is given to LP youth organizations. The issue that has been created is they blanket the park for every day, leaving no availability for other groups whether they are actually using the field space or not. This year, they are required to submit a game/practice schedule so that the fields can be better allocated. Youth Football did this, but then also brought in an adult football organization to use the space. However, the adult league is ruining the field so youth football wants the Department to remove them. Responsibilities are vague, such as field lining and other pre-game preparations. Locks on the concession stands have been changed by organizations, without notifying Lower Paxton.

Another example of conflict is when a youth organization reserved space this year, but their registrations went so well that they needed more space so they just showed up and occupied the outfields of the baseball fields, which were not permitted to them.

The Master Plan also recommends the Township should create these agreements. Getting a certified consultant's help will be a major help to staff.

Mr. Patel made a motion to recommend the selection of Sue Landis of Recreation and Park Solutions, via the peer-to-peer grant. Mr. MacIntyre seconded the motion and a unanimous vote followed.

PARK UPDATES **and 2023 PLANS**

General

There is no one on staff who is certified in playground safety, so Ms. Scott has taken the course to get certified.

Brightbill Park

Ms. Scott stated that the Township was awarded a grant for \$1,040,000 to use for the playground (initially was for the playground and the trail system). The playground will be for children of all abilities. She met with a playground consultant, an ADA Compliance Consultant, and a Parks & Rec Board member, Wendy Steinbrunner. She shared a draft layout and diagram,

including the sound garden, sensory plant garden, age-segregated playgrounds with seating between. The construction would likely take place from August 15 to November 30 this year.

Lamplight

There is a paved path now that goes from the southern parking lot of George Park over to Lamplight Park. There is a horse-shoe path shown in the Master Plan. The path within Lamplight is ADA compliant from the HC parking space to the pavilion, portable restroom, and the playground. The route of the 5K will be completely paved.

Koons

Public water line has been installed, with some small issues that were resolved.

Lingle

Ms. Scott explained that rather than applying for a grant for Hodges Heights at this time, she is applying for a grant for Lingle Park to install the six pickleball courts. It is \$550,000 as a 50/50 matching grant. Included in the proposed grant project is covered seating at the pickleball courts, ADA accessibility to the playground, and ADA accessible charcoal grills. The grant was submitted, and will be awarded in the fall 2023. The proposal received good feedback on social media.

Through a collaboration with Dauphin County Technical School, the pavilion roof has been repaired and upgraded. The Township provided the materials and DCTS provided the manpower and knowledge.

The cricket pitch will be installed by the end of the year at Lingle Park (and removed from Kohl Park).

ARTS COUNCIL REPORT

Mr. Smith reported that they have formed a nice partnership with the DC Library whereas they will host display space for local artists. There is a wall to be used for display and a display case. Pat Crawford has been working to establish this connection so the Council is excited for the opportunity.

June 3rd will be the first meet-and-greet, and the featured artists are two members of the Arts Council.

GREENWAY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Seidler shared the working budget for the Oak Park Nature Trail. The bridge is complete and will be set in place by Public Works. The next stage is to install the boardwalks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Seidler shared updated maps of the Arts and Parks 5k route, utilizing the newly paved path in George Park and Lamplight Park. This course is entirely paved, and relatively flat, which the previous location was not. Mr. Patel suggested putting the date and time on the top of the map.

The 5k is scheduled for July 22, 2023 at 8:00 am.

Ms. Scott announced that the Township hired a new Public Engagement Specialist who will oversee the special events and will be the community-connection to various groups, Township-wide. She has already been a great asset and is working to accomplish many tasks.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2023 at 7:15 pm. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary