

**LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 7, 2023**

Members in Attendance

Stan Smith
Jim Seidler
Bob MacIntyre
Neal Johnson
Kirby Lentz
Alan Gallagher

Members Absent

Sandy Mort-Backus
Wendy Steinbrunner
Mayur Patel

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, Staff Liaison
Michelle Thompson, PES
Cherise Burris, Resident

CALL TO ORDER

The Lower Paxton Township Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by Chairman Neal Johnson at 7:17 p.m. on the above date, in Meeting Room 174, at the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, PA.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the May 3, 2023 meeting. Mr. Seidler seconded the motion, and it was followed by a unanimous vote of approval.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

**AUTUMN OAKS
ALTERATIONS TO THE DEVELOPER AGREEMENT**

Ms. Scott stated that Joel McNaughton attended last month's meeting to request installation of a sidewalk along Patton Road along with other upgrades instead of electricity to the pavilion and two parking lot lights as the Developer Agreement stated. The Board was asked to consider the request prior to a vote today. The other upgrades in addition to the sidewalk included a paved parking lot with 45 parking spaces, replacement of the river rocks with pavement around the pavilion to address runoff, the pickleball court fencing relocated to the perimeter of the court and address the tension corrections and include a windscreen along the fence, are the items suggested for consideration.

Mr. Gallagher asked if ownership of the detention basins was determined. Ms. Scott stated that Mr. McNaughton owns both lots, not the HOA. He stated that if Mr. McNaughton owns it, he can build the sidewalks, but if the HOA owns the land they have to give permission and they will have to maintain the sidewalks after they are installed.

Ms. Scott verified ownership as Joel McNaughton as the owner he would be responsible to maintain them.

Mr. Seidler stated one of the major objectives of the Greenway Committee is to complete missing links in sidewalks within Lower Paxton Township, so the issue was discussed at their recent meeting and they are in favor of the installation of the sidewalk. The proposal doesn't complete a missing link but it reduces the gap significantly in an area that needs a safer place to walk.

Mr. Seidler made a motion to recommend an approval to the amendment of the developer agreement for Autumn Oaks as follows: installation of the sidewalk along Patton Road as proposed and maintenance to be performed by the owner of the adjacent property (currently McNaughton), a paved parking lot with 45 parking spaces, replacement of the river rocks with pavement around the pavilion, and the pickleball court fencing location and tension corrections with a windscreen. Mr. MacIntyre seconded the motion.

Discussion on the motion. Mr. Seidler and Mr. MacIntyre both said they first were opposed to the idea but appreciate the benefit gained through the change, and the need for lights should be minimal since the parks close at dusk. Mr. MacIntyre noted that there are alternatives for lighting that can be explored that do not involve PPL so this is a beneficial exchange in his opinion.

The Parks and Recreation Board voted unanimously on the motion.

HODGES HEIGHTS **GEOLOGICAL STUDY REPORT**

Ms. Scott stated the study was done and showed soft material to a significant depth. An engineer was asked to price the improvements as shown in the Master Plan with measures to alleviate damages caused by the subsidence. The cost estimate for the first option is a minimum of \$1.25 million and the procedure would involve drilling holes every two feet to install low mobility grouting to stabilize the parkland. The second option is to have the trash cells removed and would cost \$14.28 million. These figures are in addition to the \$850,000 for the amenities. Neither option is realistically viable for a two-acre park. A natural setting was proposed by HRG a year or so ago, and may need to be reconsidered.

Mr. Smith asked if a recommendation needs to be communicated to the Board of Supervisors or some other action. Ms. Scott stated that this information negates the possibility of traditional park amenities-pavilion/playground/ballcourt, a more natural setting would need to be designed. She added if the Board prefers to press for the \$2 million alternative, then that can be discussed and communicated to the BOS. Mr. Smith stated that this park was marked as a high priority. Ms. Scott added that the Master Plan identified a few amenities that were lacking in this area, so the natural park is different, and communication to the Hodges Heights community is very important. Ms. Scott stated the BOS would look to the PRB for direction that this is still a priority even though it is not what is shown in the Master Plan.

Mr. MacIntyre stated this still needs to be a top priority unless, after spending time with the neighbors, they ask for something different. He suggested meeting there to discuss it. It would be important to discuss the cost, the impact, time to implement something, what can actually be done. The counterproposal of pathways and natural features can also be shown. An open dialog with the neighborhood is important.

Mr. Smith agreed that meeting at Hodges Heights park is important. The residents have been patient and they should continue to be involved. In the past we met with them with ideas/speculation/conjecture, but now that there is data it helps direct real action. Mr. Seidler noted that the BOS was already supportive of ideas that ranged from \$400,000 to \$850,000, so this could be a target budget for whatever plan comes forth through the next few steps. Members agreed the neighbors in the area deserve to finally be able to work out a solution.

Mr. Lentz asked if the Parks and Rec Board looked for land in the southeast quadrant where a neighborhood park could be located. Mr. Smith stated the only land found was on the downward slope along Conway Road. Ms. Scott stated that the Authority owns that, and it is about 7 acres. It was purchased in 2017 from Ken and Dale Mengel (owned what became Kendale Oaks). Mr. Seidler noted that using land along Fairfax Drive was suggested by Mr. Banks

Ms. Cherrise Burris stated she would like to see the park remain a high priority since there is so much growth in the immediate area and no other park area close by. She asked about the \$400,000 option. Ms. Scott stated it was grant money, but it was something the BOS was supportive of. Prior to doing the Master Plan, the Township had an engineer do a study to put walking paths in the park space in a figure-8 design. That plan wouldn't have the amenities like the Master Plan says are lacking in this area. It also included shrubbery and greenery that may not grow there. Mr. Smith added that there was a sketch at one point that showed canopies with benches, and a community garden space and a perimeter walking path. Ms. Scott stated a natural setting was a general concept, and the costs were estimates based on several sketches. Each time there was a plan offered, grant funding was explored to make the most of any money. There will be new grant opportunities in 2024, so Ms. Scott will watch for grants that become available.

Mr. MacIntyre made a motion to arrange a meeting with the residents of Hodges Heights to lay out the intentions, explain why some things can't be done or why they are cost-prohibitive, and try to find out what the community wants and if they have other ideas because we still consider this one of the highest priorities. The Parks and Recreation Board wants community input to determine if we may need to move ahead somewhere else. Mr. Smith seconded the motion.

Discussion on the motion. Mr. Smith would prefer to share the natural setting plans to spark conversation and asking for feedback, rather than giving a blank sheet and 'what do you want', since that has been asked many times already, and there are so many things that cannot be built. Ms. Burris suggested inviting residents of Maiden Creek, Kendale Oaks, and the other neighborhoods surrounding Hodges Heights. Mr. MacIntyre agreed it should be open to anyone who uses the park.

With the motion including the details offered in the discussion, the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

BRIGHTBILL PARK
SOUNDGARDEN, PLAYGROUND

Ms. Scott stated bids will be put out for equipment installation. The equipment is ordered and will be delivered mid-August. Construction should run from the end of August to end of November. The bid includes pour in place rubber flooring.

PARK UPDATES
and 2023 PLANS

General

The Parks and Recreation Board congratulated Rachelle Scott on passing the Playground Safety Inspector Certification on the first try.

Stray Winds Park

Ms. Scott stated she was able to change the grant application to request funding for \$250,000 for installation of a perimeter path that is ADA compliant and includes benches along the path, and installation of accessible grill/grill access, and a few new features to the current 5-8 year-old playground and a new tot lot for 2-5 year-olds, and benches/seating between the two playgrounds.

Forest Hills

Ms. Scott stated that construction/renovation is scheduled to start August 30. Basketball and tennis courts will be completely renovated.

Brightbill Basketball

Basketball season is underway, and the Brightbill Basketball League has over 800 players on 73 teams. League play takes place four days a week on courts at Brightbill and Koons Parks.

Summer Camp

Ms. Scott stated that Summer Camp starts on Monday. A fourth location was added at Centennial Acres Park to meet the demand.

Lingle Park

Ms. Scott stated that there was a problem with a rental at Lingle this past weekend. A large festival was set up to be held at the park with many prohibited items including bounce houses, commercial grill pits, and over 400 people. The application was for the pavilion only and for up to 150 people. Communication took place during the reservation process between staff and the renters drawing attention to the things they can and cannot do, and that the fields would be busy that day with other activities. The renters insisted they would just need the pavilion for that number of guests, but the misrepresentation on the application and in discussions caused conflict which caused police involvement so the festival was shut down. All of the fields were reserved and in use.

Ms. Scott expressed the desire to work with groups to hold events and celebrations, and if this group had been honest, insurance could have been secured, extra portojohns could have been in place, as well as traffic control.

Mr. Smith asked if follow-up was had afterwards, and Ms. Scott answered yes, and noted that this happened with the same group last year, but it was reserved under a different name. The timing prompted the additional questions, but the answers were unfortunately not truthful.

The special event process is being worked on to help provide for larger events.

ARTS COUNCIL REPORT

Mr. Smith reported that the Arts Council had the opening of its first arts exhibit at the East Shore Library. The two artists featured are also members of the Arts Council. There was a meet-and-greet to introduce them to the community. The Library has been an extraordinary partner. This was the first opportunity the Council has had to have an event like this. At the meeting today, the Library representative and the Arts Council talked about an annual plan to allow this to continue. The events will feature local artists, with priority given to those within LP. The process is still new so they are working on details.

GREENWAY COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Seidler reported that the bridge is in place at Oak Park Trail. The rock crew from the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club placed large rocks (several hundred pounds each) in the

creek to create a crossing. They also built a set of steps with stones to create a second access to the trail. There will be boardwalks installed soon too. He invited members to come to the next work day Friday 9-11 am. October 6th is the targeted opening date.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Seidler stated the CEC continues to work on the 5K preparations. Mr. Lentz suggested asking the PD to run a police motorcycle if the pace car doesn't work out. The vehicle has to be able to be fast enough to stay ahead of the runners while navigating the course. Mr. Seidler is working on the volunteer list to make sure there are enough.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Scott introduced Michelle Thompson, the Public Engagement Specialist for the Township. She handles all of the Parks and Rec special events, township event coordination and other duties related to building relationships with businesses and residents.

VANDALISM AND OTHER POLICE REPORTS

Camera System

The camera system was put out to bid but received no bids. It will be rebid and we are hopeful to see cameras installed this year.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is scheduled for July 5, 2023 at 7:15 pm. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hiner
Recording Secretary
(KATH attendance)
trx time: 6:30-7:30, 1-230