

# Lower Paxton Township Community Engagement Committee

## Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2023

### Members in Attendance

Jim Seidler  
Pat Crawford  
Denise Hussar

### Members Absent

Bob MacIntyre  
Stan Smith

### Also in Attendance

Rachelle Scott, Staff Liaison  
Michelle Thompson, PES

## CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Seidler called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm on the above date in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg.

## MINUTES

The minutes of the July 19, 2023 meeting were approved with a motion by Ms. Hussar, a second from Ms. Crawford, and a unanimous vote.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

## CEC RESTRUCTURING

### Purpose

Ms. Scott the purpose of the CEC is still relevant, and she is looking to broaden the scope of their action items. She and Ms. Thompson continue to brainstorm on the best ways to rebuild the framework for the CEC. Much of the items related to the CEC will be tied directly to Ms. Thompson as the Engagement Specialist; not only will we share our information to the community, we will also be accepting information from other groups.

### Communications

Ms. Thompson has been initiating connections over the phone or email in order to build a Township network. There are some Township programs that don't get a lot of participation and they don't seem to grow. She will also be excited to find out what residents want to see, by giving a short survey at Fall Fest that they access on their phones with a QR code. The survey doesn't have volunteering on it because that is something Ms. Thompson wants to build as she builds the relationships. Volunteering isn't usually an individual activity, so by connecting with local organizations you will find the groups that are established to do service projects or are looking to participate in a volunteer activity.

Ms. Crawford shared a copy of a questionnaire that was done some years ago. The one question that she felt was very important is where people get their information about Township Activities. She speculated that they do not use the Township Website as a source for activities or events, so improving the online access needs to be better. Mr. Seidler agreed, noting that people want instant access to things, and the QR code will accomplish that. Ms. Hussar agreed that this will get the attention of most, but the older crowd may need a

different approach. Ms. Thompson agreed and shared that the newsletter will be coming back soon and that can be effective if people are signed up to receive it. Ms. Scott noted consistency of communication is important for residents to know where to find information and plan on receiving. The Township Newsletter has not been distributed in 9 months however the Recreation Guide continues to be sent quarterly. There are also text messages you can sign up for, but they come at random intervals.

Communication, consistency, styles may be things we need to expand on. All of the committees are having these types of struggles right now, so a collaborative effort will help work through that.

#### Connections within the Township

Ms. Thompson asked about inviting the Shade Tree Commission and the Historical Commission to join the CEC. Neither are specifically park related, but both have interests that relate, such as tree plantings and arbor day, and historical plaques or monuments within the parks.

In support of the Townshipwide goal of increasing event attendance, program participation, and volunteerism, it would be wise to share resources and understand what is available to support each group's individual goals and interests. Mr. Seidler made a motion to expand committee representation to include the Historical and Shade Tree Commissions.

Bob MacIntyre-Parks & Rec Board  
Pat Crawford-Arts Council  
Jim Seidler-Greenway Committee and Parks & Rec Board  
Stan Smith-Arts Council and Parks & Rec Board  
Denise Hussar-Member at Large (formerly rep'd the Friendship Center Op Board)  
One Member-Historical Commission  
One Member-Shade Tree Commission

Members discussed if the Foundation might be interested in joining as well, but they may hesitate giving up their autonomy. Whether they join the CEC or not, there are many collaborating opportunities.

Ms. Thompson spoke to John Hanks about recognizing the volunteers. The Foundation has started an award called the Polly Murphy Spirit Award but their pool of volunteers is small. The Township doesn't have a way to recognize their volunteers and it was suggested that the Township could help the Foundation by broadening their pool and the Foundation can help the Township with volunteer appreciation.

Volunteer recruitment and recognition are two activities the CEC could take the lead on for the other committees. Ms. Scott would like the CEC to organize a system for tracking volunteer hours for all of the boards, groups, individuals, or community partners.

#### Connections with other Organizations

Ms. Scott would like to invite organizations to the CEC meetings to find out what they need to be successful and what they can do to help serve the community with the services we offer. They may have an event that we could support, and while there we can talk various committee activities such as upcoming trail maintenance, local artists, or another project. By learning what other groups are doing, we may find additional opportunities to serve the Township residents.

Ms. Thompson asked that members share their contacts in the community in an effort to build the larger network.

Ms. Scott asked the CEC to think of organizations that we want to learn more about or share information about. The CEC can have a discussion about which groups they want to learn about. There may also be small businesses that are involved in community activities. Ms. Hussar noted that when they come to a CEC meeting, it will be important to have everyone present.

Mr. Seidler noted it will be important to have a clear understanding of the role the CEC will play, things such as assistance with marketing, volunteerism, and sharing of other resources.

Ms. Crawford stated that there are people who may be older and just want to be entertained, but there are groups that want to do activities like the nature trails, so the question is how to reach all of the groups. Ms. Scott stated that is why the CEC is made up of members from each committee, so you can each share the struggles or successes with your particular audience. The goal for the Township is to increase attendance at the events and let the people be aware of services and resources.

Ms. Hussar stated these connections would also help to form a group to work at Possibility Place. Janis Creason was the original, but she may have a recommendation who to ask for help there. Ms. Scott stated the CAIU was interested in supporting efforts at Possibility Place, and they learned of the need from the employee's son who did an Eagle Scout project for speech impaired children.

#### Concerts

Ms. Thompson stated she is concerned that the concerts haven't had a good crowd this summer. Ms. Hussar noted that the weather is a huge factor, and it has been very uncooperative this year. If there is good weather and a popular band, people will come out. Ms. Thompson is interested in inviting the Harrisburg Symphony to play at Heroes Grove next year.

### **SPONSORSHIP GUIDE**

Ms. Thompson shared a draft of the sponsorship guide. She will be developing separate one pagers for volunteer opportunities and an overview of the ABCs. She'd like a description of the opportunities and each group so people can see the ways to connect.

### **CEC FINANCIALS**

Mr. Seidler stated that the CEC funds were raised to support the parks related committees, so it needs to be discussed whether the funds are shared. Ms. Scott stated a further discussion needs to be had on the financials to determine if the CEC is obligated to fundraise, and how they should address their funds. This can be the agenda for the September meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting ended at 5:25 pm. The next meeting of the Community Engagement Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 4:00 pm in Room 174 of the Municipal Center.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michelle Hiner, Recording Secretary