



WILLISTOWN TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 24, 2009

This regularly scheduled meeting of the P&R Board was called to order by K. Lehr at 7:20pm. No members of the public were present.

Present

K. Lehr – V. Chair
B. Kacergis – Secretary
G. McHugh
J. Young
T. Ramando
M. McLoughlin – P&R Director

Absent

D. McDonnell – Chair
C. Walsh

Minutes

Minutes for prior meeting were not yet completed. M. McLoughlin to complete using G. McHugh's notes, if needed.

Board Membership and Governance

Tracy Ramando was appointed to the board by the Supervisors upon the recommendation of the board. ***Motion/Unanimous "Yes" vote to appoint B. Kacergis as the Secretary of the P&R Board.*** Bob Kacergis accepted and immediately began the role of Secretary of the P&R board to fill the vacancy in that role.

Financial Reporting

Several members of the board requested that the board periodically review actual vs. budgeted expenditures in P&R related accounts. M. McLoughlin will provide a summary beginning at the next P&R Board meeting. We will also discuss whether this should be a monthly or a quarterly report at the next meeting.

Coordination/Communications with other Boards and the Supervisors

Prior to the meeting, several members of the P&R Board developed a proposal that was discussed with the board to enhance the effectiveness of our communications and cooperation with other boards and the Township Supervisors. The following individuals have agreed to play a liaison role and have agreed to regularly attend the public sessions of other boards and report back to the P&R Board:

- a. Planning Commission (1st & 3rd Weds, 7:30pm – J. Young/B. Kacergis)
- b. Environmental Advisory Council (first Thursday, 7:30, ?)
- c. Open Space Review Board (C. Walsh – member)
- d. Board of Supervisor (2nd & 4th Mondays, 6:30pm work session – D. McDonnell, K. Lehr)

In addition, we discussed making a request of other boards and the Township Supervisors, to assign a liaison to our board to clarify who we should communicate with on a regular basis. We also discussed inviting members of the other boards to our sessions to give updates and address issues crossing boards' areas of scope

Vote/Unanimous “For” to make recommendation to Supervisors to have designated liaisons to Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and to request regular attendance at our sessions. R. Kacergis to proactively distribute our minutes and request electronic copy of minutes from each of the other board and when received distribute to the P&R Board and provide a copy to M. McLoughlin

Public Communications

The board discussed several opportunities to enhance public communication based on input received over the past several months. Going forward, we agreed to post the time, location and agenda for P&R Board meetings and minutes to the P&R website. M. McLoughlin will explore adding a new item under the “About Us” tab on the website to house this information.

The board also discussed posting an update on the Abbey project on the website to address confusion among the public regarding this project. See – Daylesford Abbey Trail item below for additional information.

Park Maintenance

M. McLoughlin provided a brief upon maintenance issues at Garrett Mill Park. The baseball fence repair item was cut from the P&R budget, but reinstated per a conversation with H. Murray. M. McLoughlin was asked to confirm with H. Murray prior to authorizing the repairs. Multiple bids were received and the total expenditure is expected to be around \$4000.

Garrett Mill Park’s baseball fields have been prepared for the season and will be in use beginning this week. We are asking the using teams to rake the field after each use. The board briefly discussed the usage fees and expressed the opinion that we may be subsidizing teams/players from outside the township because of our low fee structure. The fees have been increased, but still do not fully cover field maintenance. K. Lehr is requesting info from East Goshen Township which just completed a survey to assess their fee structure and report back at the April meeting. M. McLoughlin is going to send an informational copy of the Willistown Township Field Use Agreement to the P&R Board.

Programming Update

Summer Camps - Township summer camps have been advertised via the sign boards and the Township Newsletter which hit mailboxes over the past several days.

Greener Partners @ Sugartown Preserve – M. McLoughlin communicated to the P&R Board that the supervisors want to “put the well on hold” and want additional information about Greener Partners’ source of matching funds. Mare is summarizing sources/uses of Greener Partners’ matching contributions and providing to H. Murray to share with the Supervisors. The P&R Board directed M. McLoughlin to explore whether there are any other issues or questions that need to be addressed with respect to this project. This is urgent because the fence is about to be installed and the custom gates have already been built by the vendor. In addition, approximately 30 families are already registered (about 50% of total capacity). Several alternatives to drilling a well on the property were discussed: 1- pump from the township well into a portable tank and deliver via truck to the site, 2 – purchase water from a commercial vendor (need an onsite tank), 3 – tap into the Historic Sugartown water supply, or 4 – cancel the camps for summer 2009.

Questions - The P&R Board has several questions regarding this project:

- ***Is the Supervisors' view of "putting the well on hold" due to general budget constraints, concerns about the property, concerns about the camp/project, or concerns about the partner in the project?***
- ***Since the total amount of the well is below the public bid amount, we can just go ahead and spend the already budgeted funds on drilling the well?***
- ***Can the township install the fence (which has a known fixed cost) and have Greener Partners install the well (which has an uncertain cost)?***
- ***Might there be opportunities to purchase water or jointly drill a well with Historic Sugartown?***

The P&R Board recommended to M. McLoughlin that she follow up with Historic Sugartown to discuss potential cooperation regarding water (water purchase or shared new well).

This needs to be resolved quickly because of the need to communicate with the Greener Partners group as well as the registered families.

Ongoing Projects Update

Daylesford Abbey Trail

Several P&R Board members have been contacted by residents with rumors about the potential Abbey trail. In addition, public comments at the recent Conditional Use Hearing indicate a general lack of information about the proposed trail.

Motion/Unanimous "Yes" Recommendation to Supervisors - Recommend putting a description of the project and conditional use agreement on the township website or as a "Coming Feature" on the P&R Website.

The P&B Board expressed concern over not having visibility into the timing or process for the proposed trail. If the trail is to be a Willistown P&R asset, how do we ensure that we are involved in the design? D. McDonnell is going to write a letter to Planning Commission requesting direct P&R Board participation in the design of the trail.

Okehocking Design Grant

The funding from the Senator Dinniman sponsored grant that is being used for access, parking, and pavilion design is expected to be received shortly. The Okehocking Nature Center Board has a scheduled meeting in April to see final drawings for improved access, parking, and pavilion (including restrooms). M. McLoughlin will share this proposal with the P&R Board at our next meeting.

Open Space Review Board

McLoughlin presented an overview of a potential property for acquisition in the northeast corner of the township that is under consideration by the Open Space Review Board. The property offers Willistown residents access to an open space preserve located in Malvern Borough and walking linkage to downtown Malvern.

Motion/Unanimous "Yes" to support acquisition of property to provide a recreational trail linkage.

Trails/Other

Mill Road Park - During “field cleanup day” this past Saturday, some of the heavy brush behind the National League field backstop was cleared to reduce tick exposure risk to players retrieving foul ball. B. Kacergis is following up with the maintenance vendor to determine whether there will be an additional cost to continually mow this incremental space.

Integrated Trail Planning

On Thursday morning, March 26th at 10:30am there will be a cross-organizational meeting (local trail associations) to discuss Chester County trail planning and how our local efforts will integrate with the broader plans. M. McLoughlin and B. Kacergis will represent P&R.

Strategic Planning

M. McLoughlin provided a brief update on the Comprehensive Plan process. M. McLoughlin is sending the current text to the P&R Board for review and comment.

Resident P&R Survey – B. Kacergis provided an overview of survey progress. 151 surveys have been completed to date. Approximately 15% are from non-residents, mostly who use the Okehocking preserve. Okehocking is the most used resource among respondents.

One resident wrote a letter objecting to the inclusion of the Abbey property as a resource on the current P&R survey. The P&R Board believes that we have the right, and need, to ask this question because of the conditional use agreement that is currently in place between the Abbey and the Township. The survey does not make any claim of property ownership. Dick will respond to the author of the letter to share this perspective.

Updated Official Map – In the course of the Comprehensive Plan development an updated planning map of the township has been prepared highlighting all parcels, all township lands, and potential properties for future acquisition and/or preservation. M. McLoughlin will email the PDF file of the map to the P&R Board members for review and comment.

Park Management

Okehocking – MHM has received multiple complaints from dog owners and some horse riders about a limited number of dog owners who are abusing their privileges at OKE and allowing dogs to run free in the park. Signage and memo posted on the sign board. Board discussed using open parcel across Delchester Road as a potential future fenced-in dog park. B. Kacergis walked the parcel last week and reported that it would work well provided access and parking could be established. The Board suggested utilizing a portion of the abandoned Nike Missile for this access/parking.

The Growing Greener Grant Final Report has been submitted requesting reimbursement for the dam removal and the tree planning at Okehocking preserve.

Upcoming Events

M. McLoughlin will email the 2009 proposed/planned events to the Board for review and comment.

P&R Board Park Visits.

The P&B Board will do a site visit to each of the township P&R resources over the next several months. On April 23rd the P&R Board will visit Greentree and Mill Road Parks. We will meet at Mill Road Park. M. McLoughlin will pick tentative dates/times for future visits.

New Business

No new business was discussed.

Next Meeting

Meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the Township Building. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28th, starting 6:30 pm (we will do a walk-through of Sugartown Preserve from 6:30-7:00pm).

The P&B Board meeting adjourned at 10:02pm