**MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING HELD MAY 10, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Jay Troutman, Jim Pashek, Susan Crookston, Liz Nelson, Carrie Casey Leemhuis, Michael Schiller, Jessica DeMoise, Jessie Handron, Members; Gary Koehler, Borough Manager; Alex Scott, Mayor; David Laux, Police Chief; Shawn Peterson, Borough Secretary

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mandy Steele, Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy; Kelley Beeson, Jill McConnell, Cooper-Siegel Library; Tara Balonick, Suzanne Cawley, Richard Wendell, Lee Davis, Jim Herald, Betsy Monroe, Ann Sheedy, Residents

**ABSENT:** Dempsey Bruce, PWD Superintendent

Mr. Posvar called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM via Zoom Webinar due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The minutes of the April 12, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved.

**VISITORS**

Mr. Herald, a resident of Fox Chapel, was in attendance to discuss the entrance to Hardie Valley Park. He stated that it is not inviting to those visiting the park due to the number of signs posted, the chain located at the entrance, and not enough parking. It was discussed that the Hardie Valley Master Plan has not yet been implemented.

Richard Wendell, a resident of Fox Chapel, was in attendance to discuss loose dogs on the trails of Fox Chapel. He stated that Boulder, CO parks utilize a Voice and Sight Dog Tag Program. He said that he would provide the Park Commission with the details of this program for the Commission to consider.

Tara Balonick, a resident of Fox Chapel, was in attendance to discuss the citation she received from the Fox Chapel Police Department. The police department was instructed, by the Mayor and the Park Commission, at the April 12, 2021, meeting to begin citing individuals who park in the permit parking lots who do not have a visible permit on their vehicles.

For the past twelve (12) months, the Fox Chapel PD has issued over 400 warnings to residents and non-residents who did not have a parking permit. Since April 13, 2021, the police department has given over 100 citations.

**DOGS – WHAT TO DO?**

The question was posed, do citations improve dog control inside the parks? Chief Laux was in attendance and stated that the parking permits are in place to regulate parking at the Borough parks, not to regulate dog control.

Ms. Crookston and Ms. Handron proposed that the Park Commission find out the purpose of each area in the Borough. Ms. Handron also asked the Park Commission to consider how big of an issue off-leashed dogs are in the spaces where parking permits are required. Creating a task force to develop concrete solutions to dogs being on the trails and in the parks, whether on-leash or off-leash and to look at the purpose and mission of the parkland was an idea that Ms. DeMoise presented. The task force will be made up of residents and Park Commission members; Mr. Posvar, Ms. DeMoise, Ms. Handron, Mr. Wendell, and Ms. Balonick all volunteered to be on the task force.

**FOX CHAPEL PARKS CONSERVANCY**

Ms. Steele was in attendance to discuss the summer lantern event’s preliminary plans. The free event will be held at Hardie Valley Park and will begin at 8:30 PM. A shuttle service will be available from Fairview Elementary School to Hardie Valley Park. Old Mill Road will be closed from Millview Drive to Millstone Lane. The Pittsburgh Opera will perform for the event with singers located throughout the trail. Ms. Steele will update the Park Commission at the June 14, 2021, meeting.

Mr. Troutman made a motion to recommend to Council to approve the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy Summer Lantern Walk at Hardie Valley Park. Mr. Pashek seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Posvar abstaining due to a possible conflict of interest.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Mr. Troutman made a motion to recommend that Mr. Koehler ask the Borough engineer to apply for a DEP permit to cross the stream at the end of Hardie Valley Park to Riding Meadow Park with manmade steps, per engineer specifications. The motion was seconded by Ms. Casey-Leemhuis and passed by a unanimous vote.

**PARK STEWARD REPORTS**

Ms. Handron stated that the Eliza Fox Trail to Scott Park was one of the nicest trails she has ever hiked.

Ms. Casey reported that with the Seeders & Weeders authorization of the purchase of fifty (50) trees up to $5,000, she and Luke, Dan, and Roger of the Public Works Department were able to plant twenty-three (23) large trees at the entrance of Hardie Valley Park on Thursday, May 6, 2021. She said that on Friday, May 7, 2021, volunteers helped plant an additional thirty-two (32) smaller trees at the entrance.

The Garden Club of Allegheny County will send volunteers on Friday, May 14, 2021, to help plant trees and shrubs near the retaining wall at Hardie Valley Park and the bench area. The GCAC volunteers will help plant an additional forty to fifty trees on the hillside and around the waterfall.

Ms. Casey stated that Missy Marshall, from Pashek +MTR, has been a mentor to her during this process, volunteering 50-75 hours of her time. She wanted to recognize Ms. Marshall as an amazing woman and designer and for all of her hard work.

Mr. Koehler stated that the Borough had received confirmation that the DCED and DCNR grants were awarded for the McCahill Park improvements. With the additional funding, the Borough will need to expend funds to match both grants for stormwater surface design and acquisition.

Mr. Troutman moved to recommend to Council to authorize Pashek +MTR to expand the scope of work on the McCahill Park improvement design by $20,000 for additional stormwater surface design expansion. He amended the motion to take into consideration the Army Corps of Engineer study. The motion was seconded by Ms. Casey and passed by a unanimous vote.

Ms. DeMoise stated that a few boards on the boardwalk along the Trillium Trail need to be replaced. She will speak with Mr. Bruce about this.

Mr. Pashek commented that the surviving twenty-three (23) Sycamore trees located at the Welcome Garden along Fox Chapel Road are thriving.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

* Garlic Mustard Pull – May 15, 2021, 10 AM, Trillium Trail
* Park Commission Meeting – June 14, 2021, 9:00 AM

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:04 PM.

Shawn M. Peterson

BOROUGH SECRETARY