

MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING HELD DECEMBER 13, 2021

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Liz Nelson, Jay Troutman, Jessie Handron, Members; Gary Koehler, Borough Manager; Alex Scott, Mayor; Larry Kurpakus, Dempsey Bruce, PWD Director; Michael Stevens, Chief of Police; Craig Sorg, Sergeant; Shawn Peterson, Borough Secretary

VIA ZOOM: Jim Pashek, Carrie Casey Leemhuis, Susan Crookston, Jessica DeMoise, Members; Mandy Steele, Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy

Wes Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

The minutes of the September 13, 2021, meeting were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC/RESIDENT QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

Sergeant Sorg was in attendance to ask the Commission for permission to use McCahill Park for the 2022 Fox Chapel Day community celebration on September 17, 2022. Jim Pashek stated that the Phase II Project would be going out for bid in the spring of 2022, with the hopes of work beginning in July continuing until October or November. The Commission recommended that Sergeant Sorg either move the date for the event up to mid-June to early July or try finding another area to hold the event.

PARK COMMISSION VACANCY

Mr. Posvar moved to recommend to Council Stephen Whittingham's appointment to the Park Commission, replacing Michael Schiller, who stepped down from his position on the Park Commission in June. The motion was seconded by Jay Troutman and passed by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Posvar stated that he would contact the other five applicants to engage them in future volunteer activities with the Park Commission.

HIDDEN FALLS PARK: FORMAL NAMING

Mr. Pashek moved to recommend to Council to formally name the plot of land from Beechwood Farms to Old Mill Road as Hidden Falls Park. The motion was seconded by Liz Nelson and passed by a unanimous vote.

A nearby developer has cleared the retention pond near the plot of land. There are overlaps between the trail, retention pond, and the two properties. Discussions between Gary Koehler and the developer have led to the Borough requesting a Landscape Plan from the developer.

McCAHILL PARK UPDATE

On behalf of the Park Commission, Mr. Posvar thanked Mr. Whittingham for all he's done for Annie's Field of Dreams.

Mr. Pashek updated the Commission on Phase II. Bid documents have been prepared, and Pashek +MTR are developing cost estimates. The challenge they are facing now is stormwater retention. By adding more stormwater retention than required, the park's cost is more than what is budgeted. Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering will be looking at the designs to see about phasing the stormwater project to not go over budget.

Mr. Koehler stated that the Stormwater Impact Fee funds could supplement some of the costs for the stormwater project.

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HARDIE VALLEY PARK STORMWATER STUDY

The Stormwater Task Force, consisting of Jim Pashek, Wesley Posvar, Jessica DeMoise, Susan Crookston, Gary Koehler, and Mandy Steele, requested proposals and information from Ethos and LSSE. The task force members received links to extensive documents, drawings, and photos from both about sites they've completed. The task force met with LSSE on December 10, 2021, at Findlay Township Industrial Park and will meet with Ethos to view their project site on December 17, 2021.

Mr. Troutman moved to allow the Stormwater Task Force to act as proxy for the Park Commission to recommend the engineer for the stormwater study for Hardie Valley Park to Borough Council. The motion was seconded by Carrie Casey Leehmuis and passed by a unanimous vote.

DOGS IN PARKS

Chief Stevens was in attendance to give an enforcement update on parking permit citations. He stated that seven citations had been issued since the September Park Commission meeting. Chief Stevens also said two vehicle break-ins in November occurred at Riding Meadow Park. Leaving purses, backpacks, and other personal belongings in plain sight within a vehicle is not recommended, even if the vehicle is locked.

Chief Stevens also recommended that the best way to handle situations at Borough parks or trails with individuals should be to call 911 for immediate assistance.

Mr. Posvar stated that the task force designed to look at dogs in the parks would be asking for public input into dog regulations during public meetings with the Joint Comprehensive Planning Committee in the spring of 2022.

FOX CHAPEL PARKS CONSERVANCY

Ms. Steele stated that the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy would have a Winter Solstice Lantern Walk event from 5 – 7 PM on December 18, 2021, from McCahill Park to Salamander Park loop. Fox Chapel Police will close McCahill Park and Salamander Park parking areas at 2 PM, and Hemlock Hollow Road will close from 4 – 8 PM for the event. Donations can be made on the Conservancy's website, and a donation box will be present at the event.

To date, an estimated \$80,000 has been donated to the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

After thirty-seven years of employment at the Borough of Fox Chapel, Dempsey Bruce will be retiring on March 31, 2022. Mr. Posvar stated that the Borough owes so much to Mr. Bruce, and would be a tough act to follow.

On behalf of the Park Commission, Mr. Pasvar welcomed Larry Kurpakus, Mr. Bruce's replacement.

Mr. Bruce updated the Commission on the bench plaques saved from benches lost in past flooding events. Two plaques will be placed on new benches at Riding Meadow Park. In the future, commemorative benches will have engraved boards versus plaques.

The Borough has received the DEP Permit for the stepping stone bridge between Hardie Valley Park and Riding Meadow Park. The Public Works Department will begin placing the concrete blocks once leaf collection has concluded.

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Mr. Troutman encouraged committee members to reach out to State Representatives, and other local politicians about the amount of work and money municipalities use to submit applications for government permits. Mr. Troutman would like to pursue a way that responsible municipalities could apply for government permits in a more time and cost-effective manner, leaving the government agencies time to work with other municipalities who need more assistance on applying for permits.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

- Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy Winter Solstice Lantern Walk Event- December 18, 2021, from 5 – 7 PM from McCahill Park to Salamander Park loop.
- Park Commission Meeting – April 11, 2022, 9:00 AM

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:31 AM.

Shawn M. Peterson
BOROUGH SECRETARY