



**MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING
HELD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022, AT 9 AM**

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Jay Troutman, Member; Alex Scott, Mayor; Gary Koehler, Manager; Larry Kurpakus, PWD Director; Michael Stevens, Chief of Police; Shawn Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Melinda Guinn, resident; Elizabeth Burnett

VIA ZOOM: Carrie Casey Leemhuis, Jessica DeMoise, Susan Crookston, Members; Mandy Steele, Borough Council Liaison; Jim Pashek, Pashek +MTR; Sanford Leuba, Tree Planting Coordinator of the Allegheny County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America

ABSENT: Jessie Handron, Liz Nelson, Steve Whittingham; Members

Wes Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

The minutes of the June 13, 2022, meeting were unanimously approved.

Mr. Posvar stated that he received the resignation of Jessie Handron due to other commitments with her career. He said that Ms. Handron would remain a park steward for the Borough and thanked her for all her work with the Park Commission.

TRILLIUM TRAIL PLANTING PROPOSAL

Sanford Leuba, the Tree Planting Coordinator of the Allegheny County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, was in attendance to discuss the Ten Million Tree Initiative with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and his proposal to donate fifty to one-hundred button bush seedlings to the Borough to be planted along the stream at the Trillium Trail. Buttonbush is a tough shrub that is moderately deer-resistant and does not require watering. Mr. Leuba would provide the stakes, seedlings, and planting tubes sometime in October 2022.

Mr. Leuba said the tubes could remain on the bushes for up to ten years before falling off. The tubes would be approximately 2.5 feet in height. Netting can be used to protect the bushes after three years, and the tubes could be removed.

Ms. Casey suggested that she and Public Works could coordinate the plantings at Scott Park with planting the seedlings at the Trillium Trail and complete the work in a day or two.

There was a consensus to move forward, but the Commission wanted to learn a bit more before granting final approval. Members from the Commission will visit Mr. Leuba's home to see the buttonbush on his property.

McCAHILL PARK UPDATE

Mr. Pashek updated the Commission on the stormwater retention project for McCahill Park. As LSSE is waiting for the stormwater information from FEMA, Pashek +MTR cannot proceed with the construction documents for bids. LSSE needs the information from FEMA on stream modeling to complete their calculations, which will assist them in their permit application process.

Ms. Steele agreed to contact Representative Conor Lamb to update him on the Borough's wait on FEMA information requested in February 2022 and again in September 2022.

Mr. Pashek said that the project cost estimate is coming in over budget.

PARK COMMISSION MINUTES

September 12, 2022

DCRN Grant	\$128,900
Borough Match	\$128,900
DCED Greenways, Trails & Recreation Grant	\$175,000
TOTAL:	\$432,800

Due to the unbelievably high cost of supplies, Pashek +MTR estimates the project is \$75,000 overbudget for the construction of courts, fields, and ice rink and \$230-240,000 overbudget on additional stormwater costs that weren't originally anticipated when completing the grant application.

Mr. Pashek told the Park Commission that eliminating the T-Ball Field and building a stormwater detention basin could help reduce the cost of stormwater (-\$165,000) and park improvements (-\$75,000). Mr. Pashek stated he had met with a representative from the Fox Chapel Area Baseball/Softball Organization and had the impression the T-Ball Field was not utilized.

Mr. Pashek asked Mr. Koehler if the parking lot improvement budget for McCahill could be shifted to the paving program for 2023. Mr. Koehler explained that the park budget would need to be increased as part of the Borough's contribution to the park improvements from \$128,900 to \$230,900.

The DCNR Grant for habitat creations ends at the end of October. Ms. Crookston stated she would assist with the grant writing.

It was agreed that the elimination of the T-Ball Field to install an above-ground stormwater detention basin would be beneficial.

HARDIE VALLEY PARK – STORMWATER

The Borough is waiting on data from FEMA to help LSSE and Ethos design Hardie Valley Park to include stormwater detention.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Melinda Guinn from 107 Haverford Road, a Conservation and Native Plant volunteer with the Audobon Society at Beechwood Farms, discussed the Japanese barberry in Borough parks. Japanese barberry is an invasive species related to the black-legged tick infestation, a significant Lyme disease source. She asked the Park Commission to raise awareness among the residents encouraging landowners to remove barberry and other invasive species from their land.

Ms. Guinn submitted her resume to the Park Commission to be considered for a position on the Park Commission and to volunteer her time as a resident to be a part of a task force to address non-native invasive species management.

Mr. Koehler stated the Borough included information in the spring 2022 newsletter about Japanese barberry being added to the Pennsylvania noxious weed list. Mr. Posvar said the Borough could place information about the Japanese barberry on the website with links to the Audobon Society and the Penn State Extension.

DOGS IN PARKS

Chief Stevens recommended that the best way to handle situations at Borough parks or trails with individuals and their dogs should be to call 911 for immediate assistance. Reports on unruly dogs in the parks need to be made as they happen, not after the fact.

Mr. Troutman suggested that if a resident has a guest with them and they are using the resident's permit, the permit wording should be changed to include, "Any dog that you sponsor or bring to the park is the person's responsibility with who the permit belongs." He also suggested that if someone has an unruly dog or is unmanageable, the Police Department can revoke the individual's permit.

Mayor Scott asked where a parking sticker should be placed on a vehicle with a plastic bumper as the sticker will not adhere to the plastic. The matter will be reviewed.

PARK COMMISSION MINUTES

September 12, 2022

Ms. Crookston asked if the Borough could provide biodegradable bags for dog waste. Mr. Kurpakus will look into other product options.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Posvar stated that the Public Works Department did a super job installing the stepping stone bridge between Hardie Valley Park and Riding Meadow Park, creating an amazing natural and manmade crossing.

Mr. Kurpakus said the Public Works Department would begin working in Riding Meadow Park at the entrance, removing flood debris and stabilizing stream banks. The work area will be marked with barricades and signage.

FOX CHAPEL PARKS CONSERVANCY

Mr. Posvar said the Conservancy will sponsor two trail signs at the Trillium Trail Park.

Mayor Scott said there would be an update from their insurance agent within the next week, and the cost of the insurance should be less than originally expected.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Casey requested that Public Works prune branches in Hardie Valley Park near the waterfall that have large webworm nests. The nests could then be burned.

Mr. Posvar asked Mr. Kurpakus about the Salamander Park cave-in. Mr. Kurpakus said the Borough had received the DEP permit to remove the gabion baskets and grade the area where the cave-in occurred.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:40 AM, the Park Commission adjourned into Executive Session to discuss the selection of two Commission candidates for recommendation to Borough Council. At 11:25 AM, the meeting was reconvened.

The Park Commission will conduct interviews with the candidates to determine their recommendations.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

- The next Park Commission Meeting – Monday, December 12, 2022, at 9 AM

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM.

Shawn M. Peterson
Borough Secretary