**MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING HELD JUNE 8, 2020**

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Jay Troutman, Jim Pashek, Susan Crookston, Lois Folino, Carrie Casey Leemhuis, Liz Nelson, Michael Schiller, Jessica DeMoise Members; Gary Koehler, Borough Manager; Alex Scott, Mayor; Dempsey Bruce, PWD Superintendent; Shawn Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Mandy Steele, Fredrick Leech, Andy Bennett, Nanette Bennett, Peggy Jayme, Steve, and Abagael Whittingham

Mr. Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM via Zoom Conference call due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The minutes of April 13, 2020, meeting were unanimously approved.

ANNIE’S FIELD PROJECT- Update

Steve and Abbie Whittingham joined the Park Commission to give an update on Annie’s Field Project at McCahill Park. Erosion and sedimentation controls are installed, and grading is underway. The installers for the playground equipment will be at Annie’s Park with the next weeks to start the installation.

The Whittingham’s asked the Park Commission to give feedback on designs for the playhouses for the park. Park members will collect their ideas and present them to the Whittingham’s within the next week. The Park Commission will also need to discuss sign types and locations for the park.

WELCOME GARDEN

Wesley Posvar and Liz Nelson gave an update on the Welcome Garden Project at the entrance to the Borough along Fox Chapel Road. The Committee for the Welcome Garden planted 25 Sycamore trees that are all doing well. Jim Pashek acknowledged Liz’s efforts in organizing this garden and also wanted to acknowledge Lois Folino for her donation for the sign for the Welcome Garden.

HARDIE PROPERTY PLAN DISCUSSION

Jim Pashek gave an update on the Hardie Property Master Plan. All comments from the Hardie Property Study Committee are summarized and itemized within the Pashek +MTR report. Jay Troutman noted that the report is very detailed and well written. Carrie Casey Leemhuis had concerns with making the trails hard surfaced instead of natural surfaces to be ADA compliant. Her concern was that the vast majority of survey respondents wanted natural surface trails and she did not want the Borough to spend large amounts of money making hard surface trails that residents didn’t want. She would like to see the ADA requirements removed from the report or at least created as an attachment.

Ms. Leemhuis also expressed concern that the Park Commission should not vote to approve the budget as they still do not know what, if anything will be done to the creek. Once the water study is completed, informed decisions can be made based on the facts of the study. She also asked that the report be revised to include that dogs are permitted at the park as long as they are leashed.

Lois Folino made a motion that the Park Commission recommends to Council that the Borough should accept and adopt the report by Pashek +MTR with the revision that dogs be permitted at the park as long as they are leashed. The motion was seconded by Michael Schiller and passed by unanimous vote.

After discussion, the Park Committee narrowed down the choices for the Hardie Property Name; Hardie Park, and Hardie Meadow Park. The majority of the Study Committee and Park Commission voted on Hardie Meadow Park. It was decided that Alex Scott will present the final idea to the Hardie Family.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Dempsey Bruce reported that the boom mower will be in the Borough starting on June 15, 2020, to cut the vegetation along roadways. Gary Koehler asked Dempsey to ensure the entrances to Riding Meadow Park, and the Hardie Property are cut back for visibility. PWD has also worked on making the Old Squaw Trail better accessible. Carrie Casey Leemhuis reported that all the work Public Works has done so far on the trail has been phenomenal. It was decided that Dempsey will contact the previous landscaper for the Hardie Property so that PWD can maintain the grass at the property as it was.

TRILLIUM RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Autumn Sabo, Ph.D., submitted a research proposal to test how deer indirectly affect wildflower communities via reductions in woody competitors at the Trillium Trail. The Park Commission decided that Dr. Sabo will need to revise her proposal to limit the amount of space she can test her hypothesis so that it does not disturb those utilizing the trail, and she can resubmit.

PARK STEWARD REPORTS

Carrie Casey Leemhuis alerted the Commission to bags of concrete being used as stepping areas on the trail above Riding Meadow Park. Public Works will remove these items from the trail as they can create a tripping hazard.

Gary Koehler gave an update to the demolition of the Hardie house and shed. Construction Junction was at the property for almost three weeks removing what they could utilize from the home. The Borough is waiting on a permit from Allegheny County to allow the removal of asbestos from around windows and doorways. Once the asbestos is removed, PWD will demolish the structures. A. Liberoni, Inc. is the contractor that will be removing the debris from the demolition.

Lois Folino reported that because of the library being closed, parking permits are not being issued or enforced. It was decided that the Mayor will speak with Chief Laux to have the police officers enforce parking permits at the Borough parks.

Jessica DeMoise reported that the Trillium Trail has extensive erosion, the fencing in areas is in disrepair, and that walkways are collapsing. Dempsey Bruce will have PW go out to repair the walkways. Discussion continued on the topic of the lower trail possibly being abandoned and a new trail being created near the streambank.

The Mayor will speak with Chief Laux on behalf of the Park Commission on ways to have safe crossings at Riding Meadow Park and the Hardie Property.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Hardie Park Plan presentation to Borough Council will be on July 20, 2020, at 6 PM. The Grand Opening Event for the Hardie property will be in August or September. The next regular meeting is on September 14, 2020.

OTHER BUSINESS

Jim Pashek is currently working on a DCED grant for McCahill Park.

The Borough website is now able to take online payments and donations. This will make it easier for people to donate to the Borough Parks.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:16 AM.

Shawn M. Peterson

BOROUGH SECRETARY