**MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 14, 2020**

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Jay Troutman, Jim Pashek, Susan Crookston, Lois Folino, Carrie Casey Leemhuis, 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, Betsy Monroe, Steve, and Abagael Whittingham

ABSENT: Liz Nelson, Member

Mr. Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM via Zoom Webinar due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The minutes of the June 8, 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. On August 1, 2020, the Whittinghams had a productive golf outing that raised over $25,000 for Annie’s Field of Dreams Project. Mr. Whittingham shared Before and After photos to show how McCahill Park looked like versus how it looks now with all of the updates. A book drive was done in Aspinwall that had hundreds of books donated for the Lending Library. The Lending Library box is currently at an artist’s shop, getting artwork done to it, then it will be installed.

The Whittinghams are now looking towards Phase 2 of the project. There are three vacant pads located at the back of the park where playhouses and a wooden Jeep play area could be installed. Mr. Whittingham asked for the opinion of the Park Commission on whether the playhouses should be painted wood or wolmanized wood. After discussion, it was decided that Hardie Board would be the lower maintenance starting point and best for the construction of the houses.

A motion was made by Jay Troutman to have the Whittinghams move forward with Phase 2- Playhouses made of Hardie Board and a wooden Jeep. The motion was seconded by Carrie Cassie Leemhuis and passed by a unanimous vote. This motion was modified later in the meeting to have only Playhouses added to Phase 2 instead of the Jeep or train as this is what the Whittinghams truly wanted for Annie’s Field of Dreams.

A question was raised during the meeting as to who will maintain the park once it is open. It was discussed that having an agreement with the Borough of Fox Chapel, the Park Commission, and the Whittinghams is a good idea, but the form of agreement was not resolved.

A limited attendance Opening of Annie’s Field of Dreams will be held on Sunday, October 4, 2020, from 3 PM – 6 PM. This event will be via invite-only and will feature two food trucks. Due to COVID-19, the Whittinghams, their friends and family, and the Park Commission’s family and friends are invited. The public opening will be the following day, Monday, October 5, 2020, and will be announced on the Borough’s website and sent out via NIXLE.

A motion was made by Mr. Troutman that the limited attendance Opening Day is Sunday, October 4, 2020, from 3 PM – 6 PM. The motion was seconded by Jim Pashek and passed by a unanimous vote.

Further questions were asked about who would mow the newly planted grass, what type of trash cans will be placed at the park, and fencing by the ball field. Dempsey Bruce said that Public Works would mow the grass this week. Gary Koehler and Dempsey Bruce talked about having the same type of trash cans placed at the park located in other parks in Fox Chapel. The Park Commission agreed that they should be the same type. In the meantime, PWD will place temporary trash receptacles at the park. Fencing will be added to the Spring Agenda for the Park Commission. It was decided to wait and see if either the DCED or DCNR Grants are awarded, changing the need for fencing.

WELCOME GARDEN

Twenty-three of the twenty-five Sycamores that were planted are surviving. Liz Nelson and family, Jim Pashek and Lois Folino have all worked hard to keep the remaining trees healthy and thriving. Mr. Koehler informed the Commission that Eichenlaub Inc. had sprayed the area of the Welcome Garden for invasive species. Mr. Pashek spoke with Mr. Bruce about removing a dying Willow tree from the Welcome Garden area. Mr. Bruce informed the Park Commission that he had informed his department to only mow the grass closest to the trail on the opposite side of Fox Chapel Road to match one another.

HARDIE VALLEY PARK UPDATE

It was questioned how much longer A. Liberoni would be working to remove the demolition debris at Hardie Valley Park. Mr. Koehler and Mr. Bruce said that the company had been in to remove the debris. The contractor and LSSE will be contacted to see if a time limit was listed in the Contract for debris removal. PWD will be grading the site where the house once sat after the debris is removed. They will use what dirt is at the site and may need to get more to complete. Once the debris is removed, the mowing of trails will begin and should only take one day. The Opening Ceremony date was chosen as Saturday, October 17, 2020, at 11 AM. The ceremony will be a dedication to the Hardie Family and generous donors who made this park possible.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Bruce reported that the crossing improvements at Riding Meadow/Squaw Run East and Old Mill Road are in place and seem to be working. PWD also trimmed the vegetation back along Squaw Run Road East to allow more visibility, placed additional advisory signs, and had notification painted on the roadway. Signs were also placed for trail users to alert them to stop before crossing into the roadway.

There was a discussion about deciding on a type of bench for the parks around Fox Chapel. Mr. Posvar had information and pictures of nine different benches. Mr. Pashek told the Commission that the thicker recycled plastic bench with a back was the type of bench found at Pennsylvania State Parks and recommended that the Borough try to use those types of benches as they are more durable. It was suggested that the Borough try to match the color of the trail sign posts found along the trails in Fox Chapel.

PARK STEWARD REPORTS

Ms. Leemhuis alerted Mr. Posvar that the crossing improvement was a great idea and working well. She also let Mr. Posvar know that there is a lot of use for the trail at Old Mill Road to Beechwood Farms. New stone has been added to the trail from Beechwood to the first bridge. Lois Folino reported that she has handed out eighty-four letters to cars that do not have visible parking permits at Riding Meadow Park. Mr. Bruce informed the Commission signs will be placed at the lots that require parking permits that state, “permits are available at the Cooper-Siegel Community Library.” Ms. DeMoise stated that PWD had repaired the boardwalks at the Trillium. She also noted that trash is an issue at the Trillium parking lot. The receptacle located there is often overflowing with trash from passing motorists.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, December 14, 2020, at 9 AM.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Alex Scott proposed creating a 501(c)3 for the Fox Chapel Parks. This is for greater acceptance by donors. A motion was made by Lois Folino to recommend to Council that a 501(c)3 be created. Mr. Posvar expressed that the 501(c)3 formation would need to consider the issues of a board of directors, bylaws with a Mission statement, etc. The Park Commission should check with the Pittsburgh Conservancy and the County counterpart for these and other details. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pashek and passed by a unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:24 AM.

Shawn M. Peterson

BOROUGH SECRETARY