



Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 7, 2015 - 7:30 p.m.
Municipal Building Room C

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Beal called the meeting to order and David Donnellan called the roll. The meeting was attended by board members Hugh Beal, Jonathan Farrell, Elaine Kramer and Megan Zadecky. The meeting was also attended by Director of Recreation David Donnellan.

Carrie Beck, Ron Block and Wayne Jones were absent.

II. Citizens Comments

There were no citizen comments.

III. Welcome New Members

Mr. Beal welcomed Ron Block and Elaine Kramer to the board. Ron Block is the current Vice President for Projects, and past President of the Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy. Elaine Kramer is a landscape designer with Pashek Associates with interests in plants, design and urban planning.

IV. Approval of March 3, 2015 Minutes

Mr. Beal quoted from the minutes, "The board discussed requesting a minimal cost option for development without trees, less top soil and no fine grading. Mr. Silverman suggested waiting for a response from ALCOSAN prior to getting a revised estimate from Gateway."

He asked Mr. Farrell if that was his recollection. Mr. Farrell responded that the discussion had gone back and forth. He indicated that he recalled questions pertaining to a schedule for a response from ALCOSAN, and that it was open ended.

Mr. Donnellan stated that he believed it was open ended and indicated that he could inquire as to when a response could be expected. Mr. Beal asked Mr. Donnellan if the Municipality had made a formal application for funds. Mr. Donnellan said that the application had been made.

The minutes were approved as submitted.

V. Municipal Planting Presentation (Beck)

Ms. Beck was unable to attend and the item was tabled.

VI. Robb Hollow Update (Beal)

Mr. Beal asked Mr. Farrell if he thought a revised plan for minimal grading would undermine our capacity to get the ALCOSAN grant. Mr. Farrell stated that he did not think grading and seeding would impact funding, but there could be duplicative work if there was

a proposed grade that was not consistent with the ALCOSAN plan. He stated that he thought a cost for the grading would be straight forward and in line with the budget.

Mr. Beal asked Mr. Donnellan if the \$40,000 for Robb Hollow was still in the budget. Mr. Donnellan replied that it was. Mr. Donnellan said he believed Commissioner Silverman's point was that it would be more efficient to wait for a response from ALCOSAN prior to asking Gateway for a revised plan, because a revised plan may be necessary at that time.

Ms. Kramer inquired if a NPDES permit would need to be applied for twice. Mr. Donnellan indicated that the current area was less than one acre and would not require an application for a permit.

Mr. Beal said he would like to ask Mr. Silverman to update at the next meeting on how long it would take ALCOSAN to review the application for funding.

Mr. Donnellan reviewed that the recommendation from the Parks Advisory Board was to develop the area along Cedar and the southern end of the public works site into a more natural state, and that the request to ALOSAN was for the installation of rain gardens along Cedar.

Ms. Zadecky inquired about the status of cleaning up this area. Mr. Beal stated that the Parks Advisory Board, the Environment Sustainability Board and the Nature Conservancy have requested that the Commission have this space cleaned up. Ms. Zadecky asked if cleanup had to be completed prior to moving on with further development.

Mr. Beal said that when funding was available from the Municipality and ALCOSAN that his hope was that the Commission would move forward with cleaning up the space. He stated that the PAB had asked for it to be cleaned up in the past, but that it was not done.

The board reviewed the drawing and plan for developing the rain gardens.

Ms. Zadecky stated that she thinks cleanup of the area must go hand in hand with the investment.

Mr. Beal expressed concern with waiting for a response from ALCOSAN, and thought it may be best to move forward with some of the improvements. Mr. Farrell said it would be positive to move forward during the growing season.

Mr. Beal said he would speak to Commissioner Silverman about a timeframe for ALCOSAN funding and whether or not we should wait before proceeding with other improvements.

Mr. Beal asked if the house had been removed from the park. Mr. Donnellan responded that he believed that it was. Mr. Beal asked about plantings planned for that area. Ms. Kramer replied that she understood that the drive-through parking area facing Painters Run would have plants.

Mr. Farrell commented that the timing of the existing recommended improvements could impact the ALCOSAN funding if this area was counted as converted from impervious to pervious for approval purposes.

VII. Public Works Director and Parks Coordinator Update (Beal)

Mr. Beal reported that the Public Works position was still vacant. Mr. Donnellan stated that the position has been posted again. Mr. Beal asked if there was a timeline for filling the position. Mr. Donnellan stated that it would be as soon as possible, but would likely take a minimum of 2 months.

Mr. Beal said that was a concern because the plan was to fill the director position before hiring the parks coordinator.

Mr. Farrell said that Rudy Sukal was very responsive to his requests and that if there was something pressing, perhaps Rudy could provide assistance.

VIII. Nomination of Representative to the Sports Advisory Board (Beal/Donnellan)

Mr. Farrell said he could do it part of the time, but may not be able to attend every meeting. The board discussed sharing the role and filling in for one another.

Mr. Donnellan stated that the position is non-voting, and it was not mandatory that a board member serve. He said the position is appointed by the Commission, and that he was not sure the Commission would approve sharing the appointment.

The board recommended the appointment of Jonathan Farrell as the Parks Advisory Board representative to the Sports Advisory Board.

IX. Smoking in Public Parks (Beal/Donnellan)

Mr. Beal asked where the idea originated. Mr. Donnellan stated that he believed it came from Commissioner Fraasch, and that he was asked by the Commission to get feedback from the Parks and Sports Advisory Boards, including where or if a program should be implemented.

Mr. Donnellan said that different communities have implemented the program to varying degrees ranging from guidelines for specific areas, through municipal ordinances covering all park areas with provisions for enforcement.

Mr. Beal asked Mr. Donnellan if he was in favor of the program. Mr. Donnellan said it made sense for various reasons such as the dangers of second hand smoke, litter in the park and modeling good behavior for youth; however, he wasn't sure it was a wide spread problem in Mt. Lebanon. He added that there were existing rules prohibiting smoking in recreation facilities, but not in parks.

Ms. Zadecky supported the program, but stated there should be a mechanism for enforcement, for example signage. Mr. Donnellan stated the signage would be provided by the program, and recommended discussing enforcement with the police department.

Mr. Beal suggested attaching the program to the municipal ordinances, and suggested the playgrounds as a first step.

The board recommended participation in the Young Lungs at Play program and consideration of extending the prohibition of smoking to include playgrounds, and including

playgrounds in the definition of recreation facilities as identified in Chapter 11 of the Municipal Code.

X. New Business

Mr. Beal invited Jonathan Farrell to discuss the plans for invasives in Bird and Twin Hills Parks. Mr. Beal asked about the involvement of the public works department in the plan. Mr. Farrell reported that he asked if public works equipment could be used for this project, but was told that the equipment was too large. He also asked about the purchase of trees. The municipality uses a bidding process for purchasing street trees and they could possibly include trees for this project in that process.

Mr. Schevuk stated that the municipality had procured Eichenlaub to develop the work plan, and then Eichenlaub worked with the Nature Conservancy on the plan.

Mr. Farrell said he wanted feedback from the board, then the plan would be submitted to Public Works and Recreation for review.

Mr. Farrell stated the focus needed to be on Bird Park for removal of bush honeysuckle, grape vine and bittersweet. He said challenges at Twin Hills included greater and noncontiguous area, difficult access and limited staging area, and would surpass the budget allocation. He said if funds are left over, they could do further assessment of Twin Hills.

The question was asked if public works could assist with the control of invasives. Mr. Farrell stated that the public works forestry crew assisted with tree removal, but it may be unrealistic to have them take on a major role in the project.

It was suggested that some employees in public works could learn the tasks involved and that equipment could be rented to allow for some in house treatment of invasives.

Mr. Farrell stated that Eichenlaub's plan could be put out for bids, but there was a limited number of contractors that perform this type of work.

The board recommended accepting Eichenlaub's Invasive Weed Control and Restoration Work Plan and to refer the plan to Public Works for review.

XI. Announcement

Mr. Farrell announced that he had worked with the municipal manager to obtain a waiver and release form for the volunteers working in the parks. He said he could make the form available for volunteers working on municipal projects.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.