



MT. LEBANON
PENNSYLVANIA

Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 1, 2015 - 7:30 p.m.
Municipal Building Room C

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Beal called the meeting to order and called the roll. The meeting was attended by board members Hugh Beal, Carrie Beck, Ron Block, Jonathan Farrell and Elaine Kramer.

The meeting was also attended by Commissioner Kelly Fraasch, Director of Recreation David Donnellan, and Director of Public Works Rudy Sukal.

Wayne Jones and Megan Zadecky were absent.

Mr. Beal inquired as to who the staff liaison to the board was. Mr. Donnellan clarified that he was the interim liaison, but that the responsibility would be shifting to Mr. Sukal in the future.

II. Citizens Comments

Kimberly Schevtchuk spoke about her concerns regarding the archery deer culling program being considered by the Commission. She asked if the Parks Advisory Board was asked for input. Mr. Beal said they were not.

Ms. Fraasch said on September 8 the Commission would be discussing this program as well as other methods of deer management. She said she would be interested in hearing from the board on the archery program. She recommended that someone from the board attend the September 8 meeting.

Ms. Schevtchuk also said she was disturbed by the lack of funding for parks, and that it was not in balance with resources dedicated to sports.

III. Approval of June 2, 2015 Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

IV. Bird Park Issues

Mr. Beal stated that there was a collapsed sanitary sewer pipe in Bird Park and that repairs had been made in that area. He distributed photos of the area that was disturbed. Tom Schevtchuk shared his concerns about the size of the disturbance, and wondered if there were alternatives.

Mr. Sukal said the municipality prefers to line pipes rather than excavate and replace them because it is less costly and more efficient. He said that this was not possible in this case.

Ms. Fraasch inquired if this sewer line was impacting Cedar Boulevard residents. Mr. Sukal stated that that was due to a failure of another pipe.

Mr. Schevtchuk said he would be willing to work with the municipality and the board on best practices for work in passive parks, so there are set standards for restoration, alternatives are considered and the Nature Conservancy and the Parks Advisory Board would be consulted when possible.

Mr. Beal asked Mr. Sukal if he would contact the Conservancy or the board if a similar situation arose. Mr. Sukal said he would.

Mr. Beal asked Mr. Sukal for an update on remediation in this area at the October meeting.

Ms. Kramer asked if the stream bed was affected. Mr. Sukal said it was not.

Noah Luzader and Harrison Klehm, of Troop 28, shared their plans for an Eagle Scout project in Bird Park. The project includes trail improvements, steps and construction of a footbridge along the path above the stream on the Mayfair Drive side of the park. They said that the trail was slippery at times and these improvements would enhance the safety and walkability of the trail. They shared that Mr. Block helped them identify the location for the project. They will be assisted by other members of their troop as well as family and friends, and expect to complete the project over two weekends (September 13, 19 and 20). Mr. Sukal stated that public works would provide the materials for the project.

Ms. Fraasch suggested publicizing the improvements once they are complete. Mr. Block offered to work with the Public Information Office to accomplish this.

Sam Trozenski, from Troop 284, reported his planned Eagle Scout project for Bird Park consisting of improvements to a 200 ft. section of trail, removal of honeysuckle and grapevine in the area and construction of a 12 foot wooden footbridge below the soccer field.

V. Municipal Liaison

Mr. Beal stated that the board appreciated Mr. Sukal attending the meeting. Ms. Fraasch asked Mr. Sukal when he would be attending the meetings. Mr. Sukal said initially he wanted to fill the superintendent and the facilities and parks coordinator positions first. He said he hoped to have the positions filled by the October meeting, and have someone attending regularly by October or November.

VI. Building and Parks Coordinator

Mr. Beal read the following from the November 2014 meeting minutes regarding the facilities and parks coordinator position:

“Chairman Beal asked Mr. Kelley to discuss the Parks and Sustainability Position included in the Manager’s 2015 Recommended Budget. Mr. Kelley provided an overall description of the duties of the position. The position will advocate the needs of the parks and facilities but will be singularly focused on parks issues. A lengthy discussion followed. The group stressed the need for communication and leadership skills. Mr. Beal read the following job description “The individual would oversee and participate in all parks maintenance, passive park forestry and plantings. The individual would oversee and participate in all capital projects relating to the parks system. The individual must possess a college degree in environmental science or a related field and have a background in environmental work and contract administration. The person should be a dedicated leader who advocates for our parks and Mt. Lebanon’s environment”. Mr. Beal made a motion to approve the job description, seconded by Mr. Perry and unanimously approved by the Board.”

Mr. Beal distributed copies of the job description which was posted for the position. Mr. Beal said he was concerned that the job description required knowledge, skills abilities, education, training, experience did not relate to conservancy, ecology and sustainability. He stressed the need for an advocate for the parks.

Ron Block pointed out that the top section of the job description reflected park related responsibilities.

Ms. Kramer asked Mr. Sukal how he would assess candidates’ interests in the park related aspects of the job. Mr. Sukal said he based the job description on the description of the position in the approved budget, and would try to select the person that most closely matches the broad range of job requirements.

Mr. Farrell suggested an emphasis on municipal experience, and that applicants understand the role of the board and the renewed interest in the maintenance of the parks.

Ms. Beck agreed with Mr. Block’s and Mr. Farrell’s comments.

Ms. Fraasch commented that areas such as tennis and golf have managers, but the parks do not. She said she believes the parks need an advocate, especially during budget time, when money is allocated.

Ms. Fraasch asked where the high visibility planting bed responsibilities would fall. Mr. Sukal said it is not yet determined. He said this was a smaller responsibility and would be assigned later.

Mr. Beal asked if Mr. Sukal would be able to update on the position in October. Mr. Sukal said he would, and that he hoped the individual would attend all or most of the meetings in the future.

VII. Robb Hollow

Mr. Beal reported that he attended a Commission Discussion Session in July where he told the Commission that Robb Hollow was the number one priority of the Parks Advisory Board. He said all 5 commissioners expressed support for greening the space south of the 1283 Cedar Boulevard line.

Mr. Beal asked Ms. Fraasch to comment on the status of the request for funding this project. She stated that 2014 Unassigned Funds had not yet been designated, and the Commission may consider not spending them to hold more funds in reserve.

Mr. Beal said he also met with Commissioner Steve Silverman, Manager Steve Feller and Mr. Sukal in June or July, where Mr. Sukal agreed to clear the space south of the line, but it didn't occur because there was a misunderstanding of where the line was. Mr. Beal asked Mr. Sukal to move the public works equipment north of the line.

Ms. Fraasch inquired about the 2013 Unassigned Funds that were allocated to Robb Hollow. Mr. Donnellan stated that as of July 14, \$41,600 dollars remained from what was designated for Robb Hollow.

Mr. Beal asked that Ms. Fraasch and Mr. Sukal advocate for this project.

Ms. Fraasch inquired about the funds that were initially planned for Robb Hollow from the recreation bond which included the swimming pool. It was agreed that Mr. Sukal and Mr. Donnellan would try to provide the initial allocation, and what was ultimately expended from this bond.

Ms. Fraasch stated that Robb Hollow was an important park and should be treated as such. She said she hoped that the board would continue to advocate for this park, which is a gateway to the community, and in need of attention. She also said the Commission continues to get requests for a dog park, and asked the board to consider this.

VIII. High Visibility Plantings

Mr. Beal reported that the planting beds at Beverly and Newburn and at the entrance to Mission Hills were planted as specified on the drawings; however, a third to one half of the plants were dead or dying. He said it appeared that the contractor was not watering the beds.

Ron Block said he had seen contractors watering the beds at Longview and Woodhaven, and were doing a fabulous job. He thought that problems with junipers

occurred when they were planted in the shade. He said some of the plant choices could have been better. The viburnums were eaten by the deer and viburnum leaf beetles.

Ms. Kramer said the plantings at the entrance to Main Park looked sparse. The bed near the Martha's Playground had roses that were doing well, but that the plan called for Russian Sage. Ms. Kramer also said the Cedarhurst bed appeared sparse.

Mr. Sukal said the current beds will be maintained in the 2016 budget, and there was an expanded service level to fund the planting of 15 additional beds. He also said the hot and dry weather caused some loss of plants and the contractor will replace those plants this fall. He also said the plants need room to grow, and prevent crowding.

Mr. Block said that the loss of the viburnum contributed to the sparse appearance in the bed at Greenhurst.

Ms. Kramer suggested water bags for the trees.

IX. Budget Issues

Mr. Beal will send Mr. Sukal an email regarding budget questions he has.

X. Invasives

Mr. Farrell reported on the work to remove invasives in Bird Park. He shared photos of the site. He said that volunteers removed 95% of the honeysuckle in the eastern part of the park. The machine used in the process created mulch for the new seed to grow. He said they would seed again in the fall and a third time in the spring. The contractor, Eichenlaub, was awarded a \$30,000, two-year contract. The contractor is to return in the spring to do additional work. Tree planting will also occur in the area.

Mr. McGill reported that Unassigned Funds for 2014 are \$440,000. He said there was a public hearing process with the Commission to review the use of the funds and agreed to inform the board on when those hearings would take place.

XI. New Business

Mr. Block inquired about the status of recommended improvements to Rockwood Park. Mr. Donnellan reported that the project was included in the Capital Improvement Program. He also said the list of projects prioritized by the board was shared with the manager to forward to the Commission.

Mr. Block also asked if the Kelso Robb Hollow Park entrance could have the chain removed for park access. Mr. Sukal said residents complained about vehicle traffic in the area, and they had to close it. Mr. Block suggested cleaning up the area and adding a park sign to prevent dumping and other unwanted use.

Mr. Schevtchuk suggested bollards at the entrance. Mr. Block suggested moving the existing mulch pile at the entrance, and locating bollards further back to allow 3-4 cars to park. Currently you can't get a vehicle off the road.

Ms. Kramer asked about the status of the goats in Bird Park. Mr. Schevtchuk reported that the goats from Steel City Grazers were expected to begin their work in the middle of September.

Mr. Block asked if the garbage can could be returned to the Beadling parking lot. Mr. Sukal said the can was filling too quickly and was difficult to maintain. He said he would return it on a trial basis.

XII. Announcements

Mr. McGill, the municipal planner, announced that as of October 16 he will assume the role of interim municipal manager. He said he wanted to introduce himself and be informed on the issues facing the board, and to offer his assistance with any issues that may arise.

Mr. McGill suggested sending a letter to residents along Vallevista and Rockwood to inform them that removal of the parking lot is under consideration, as many homes in the neighborhood lacked off-street parking and the land was acquired in part to create parking for the neighborhood.

Mr. Beal stated that he has worked with Mr. McGill in a previous board position and he was very helpful and a valuable resource.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.