



MT. LEBANON
PENNSYLVANIA

**Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 4th, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.
Virtual- Microsoft Teams**

I. Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum:

Ms. Kramer called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM, and proceeded with the roll call. Elaine Kramer, Bennett Aikin, Albert Presto, Greg Newman, Richard Heyse, and Pam Burrett attended the meeting.

The meeting was also attended Commissioner Ranney, the Facilities & Parks Coordinator, Phillip Avolio, and the Director of Public Works, Rudy Sukal.

Ron Block was absent.

II. Citizen Comments:

No citizen comments to report.

III. Approval of June 2020, Meeting Minutes:

Ms. Kramer asked the group to review the June draft minutes and provide comment.

Ms. Kramer submitted a copy with several minor corrections in grammar and spelling

A motion was made by Ms. Burrett and seconded by Mr. Presto to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed and the amended minutes were accepted.

IV. Life Cycle Costs-Trees:

Commissioner Ranney began the discussion on the true cost of a tree and how can we proactively protect our urban tree canopy. In general, the thought is that the Municipality may not be providing enough funding regarding the different aspects of all Municipal trees. She noted that this main idea is broken into four different aspects that she would like to review with the group.

Mr. Sukal noted that there was roughly a \$19 - \$20 per capita (based on 33,017 residents) cost associated with the forestry program, which is roughly \$500,000 per year. He also noted that this funding allows the Municipality to participate in a Tree City USA program, identifying their level of involvement and commitment to trees. Mr. Sukal also noted that a member of the forestry team who is on light duty, has been logging

street trees, and has knocked out around 2,500 trees out of 10,000 street trees. He also noted that Ms. Kramer is also capturing information in parks and open spaces in order to gain the information needed to better manage each program.

Mr. Heyse noted that a lot of the trees in the community may have been planted in the 50's, and we are approaching a wave of mature trees that are approaching a greater cost associated with their maintenance, and ultimately their removal and replacement.

Commissioner Ranney inquired about the costs associated with Planting projects. She noted that Commissioner Grella is requesting some form of planting in the golf course area where a recent project was just wrapped up. Ms. Ranney inquired about the possibility of gathering volunteers or even neighbors who have offered to help in an effort to provide additional plantings in the area.

Mr. Sukal reminded the group that the actual use of the property is for golf, and overplanting the space will intrude on the alley way needed for the hole. He also noted that the swale is an area where plantings should not be installed as well.

Ms. Kramer offered to meet Mr. Sukal on-site to review the potential project at the golf-course swale

Commissioner Ranney reviewed her third item with the group. She asked for their thoughts on the creation of a tax that would be placed on new development or removal of existing trees. The possible thoughts might be a one for one for replacements, or funds used towards maintenance.

Ms. Kramer noted that there are best practices for tree removal processes available out there, and noted that Ian McMeans might be a good place to start with looking for a model ordinance to review.

Commissioner Ranney reviewed her fourth and final item with the group regarding resident education on private property tree selection. She wanted to gather information and thoughts from the group on creating an organized platform that is available for residents.

Mr. Heyse noted that he has seen a lot of plantings that were placed too close to properties and are now removal issues. He also noted that part of the suggested tree list should be a piece regarding placement, as this is just as important as selecting the correct tree. He noted that he would gladly help with an effort to formalize a suggested listing and tips for planting

Mr. Heyse noted that a thought that should be considered regarding the street tree program is the true sustainability of a tree program. He noted that mature large removals may be an attractive sale to some lumber companies and furniture makers. He explained that this would be a true carbon capture of a tree as well as a sustainable

way to use the street tree program, not to mention a possible cost off-set for the program.

V. Park Assessments:

The group discussed the upcoming Park Assessment visits. The following listing for tours was created:

- August (to discuss in Sept): Twin Hills, Church Place, North Meadowcroft.
- Sept (to discuss in Oct): Main Park, Brafferton, Country Club, Williamsburg
- Oct (to discuss in Nov): Rockwood, Iroquois, Hoodridge, Highland Terrace
 - Nov (to discuss in Dec): Robb Hollow, Bird
 - Dec: (to discuss in Jan): McNeilly

VI. New Business:

Mr. Sukal reported that Ian McMeans has submitted a grant for the Parks Master Plan, and is hoping to hear back in September. He also noted that he was hoping to work on the RFP and have the proposal for services ready to advertise in September.

Mr. Sukal also thanked the group for the work they completed in Rockwood and Williamsburg Parks regarding the budget request for removal and re-planting contracted efforts. He noted that he will be placing the groups efforts into budget form, and will have it available for the Commission to review during the budget process.

Ms. Kramer discussed the restoration efforts following the hillside slide repair. She noted that she is strongly disappointed with the condition of the site and the project management. She inquired about who may be responsible for ensuring a restoration effort in a park is completed in accordance to restore the area to a park-like setting, as there are now tree of heaven growing a few feet high, and there have not been any plantings installed. Ms. Kramer expressed that she views this entire process as unacceptable.

Mr. Sukal noted that the contractor has not fully completed this project restoration. He noted that the primary focus of the repair was to repair the slide, stabilize the hillside, and extend the storm system further to avoid the same result in years to come. He noted that the contractor is waiting on the availability of the specified plants.

Ms. Kramer noted that when a site is disturbed in areas for more than a week, the soil needs to be protected. She explained that the stripped soil was never protected and now has trees growing out of it.

Mr. Heyse noted that he believes the company has not been in there for 2 months. He noted that the equipment and fuel is still on site and is getting covered with overgrown weeds and brush. He also noted that fuel drums are on site as well and should be secured.

Mr. Sukal noted that he will get an update from Gateway on the status and what remains on the project. He also noted that the hillside contains some private and some public property.

Mr. Heyse asked why the Municipality was on the hook to repair private property.

Mr. Sukal explained that easements through private property were needed to extend a storm line all the way to the stream to avoid continue erosion of the hillside. In order to do that, a keyway needed to be cut into the hill.

Ms. Kramer expressed that the Parks Board should be brought in on restoration efforts or any project that touches Parks Land. She expressed that all temporary erosion plans and restoration plans should be reviewed through the group. She noted that she feels as if Gateway is not putting enough concern into this aspect of the project, and the current condition of the site is something that she would most certainly hear about from the owner if this were her project. She also noted that on there was a project in Bird Park many years ago where the restoration was completed beautifully, and should be a model to base future efforts on.

Mr. Sukal noted that he will talk with the Municipal Engineers on how to improve on this. He thinks the creation of a standard review process, or boiler plate, might be a good way to ensure everyone has the ability to provide input. He also noted that he would travel to the site tomorrow.

Commissioner Ranney inquired if the Golf Course Swale Project would have been a project for review by the Parks Advisory Board.

Mr. Sukal replied that this project made a landscaped improvement to the site and provided storm water relief as well. He noted that he views these as two different types of projects.

VII. Old Business

No Old Business was covered.

VIII. Announcements:

Ms. Kramer noted that she would like to review dumping in the parks in the next meeting.

IX. Commission Update:

Commissioner Ranney referenced Mr. Sukal's earlier new business regarding the Parks Master Plan. She asked the group who was slated to be involved in efforts for the creation of the RFP process.

It was noted that Jonathan Farrell and Richard Heyse had offered their time and expertise to aid in this process.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Burrett and seconded by Mr. Newman to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.