



**Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, February 7, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.**  
**Municipal Building: Meeting Room C**  
APPROVED 3/7/23

**Members**

Richard Heyse  
Peter Argentine  
Tom Starzynski

Dhanya Elias  
Kelly Ogrodnik

Rob Mackey  
Bennett Aikin

Commission Liaison  
Andrew Flynn

Staff Liaison  
Rudy Sukal

Staff Liaison  
Phillip Avolio

1. Roll Call & Declaration of Quorum  
Mr. Heyse called the roll. Present were Richard Heyse, Peter Argentine, Bennett Aikin, Rob Mackey, Kelly Ogrodnik, and Commissioner Flynn
2. Citizens Comments  
There were no citizen comments.
3. Approval of January minutes  
Mr. Argentine moved and Mr. Heyse seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
4. Grounds and Facilities Maintenance Updates  
Mr. Avolio said the last of the stumps have been removed in Williamsburg Park and the areas leveled, and trees for spring planting have been ordered from Schichtel's Nursery. He and Ms Ogrodnik have a plan for planting the trees when they arrive. The Bird Park riparian zone has been completed. He has been in contact with Habitat Solutions to address one bank of the stream in the spring. The Thornwood project is also complete. The same contractor from Bird Park donated numerous plantings and went above and beyond to address the pedestrian path leading to Shop 'n Save and public transportation. There is a site meeting scheduled at Brafferton for the next day to review the general scope, as well as the pickleball project at North Meadowcroft. The Dixon lighting project is finished. The grant for the fencing project was put before the Commission and approved. The project should be completed before spring sports begin. The public works department assisted the baseball and softball associations as they worked on the Seymore batting cages. The Main Park fall zone was approved by the Commission to proceed. Pinecone Park project is complete. Highland Terrace, Rockwood, Country Club, and Iroquois all had fencing completed in 2022. He said that while the weather remains fair, they are doing preemptive work at various parks.

Mr. Argentine asked for clarification regarding the fencing at Brafferton Field and the design going forward.

Mr. Avolio said Municipal Planner Ian McMeans would be looking for people from the parks board to come along side as the design for Brafferton Field and the Main Park Master Plan go forward. It was suggested that Ms Elias would be the representative for Brafferton.

Mr. Argentine asked if the funds for the paddle hut were raised privately.

Mr. Sukal said the municipality provided the sanitary and storm sewer connections, as well as the utility connections, but the majority of funds were privately raised.

Ms Ogradnik asked about notifying the neighbors around Williamsburg Park regarding when trees are ordered.

Mr. Mackey said he feels it is appropriate to give an update on what's been ordered.

Mr. Sukal said the municipality can put stakes in the ground so residents can see where trees are going to be planted.

Ms Ogradnik said she would handle notifying the residents. She asked about the riparian project the Nature Conservancy is working on in Bird Park.

Mr. Heyse said the Nature Conservancy's project is further upstream, on the far side of the culvert from Youngwood. It picks up where the municipal project ended.

Mr. Mackey said the Nature Conservancy will provide an update at the next parks board meeting in March.

Ms Ogradnik asked about the process for replacing playground structures.

Mr. Sukal said this is part of the Main Park Master Plan that is being developed.

Ms Ogradnik asked if it would be possible to replace the fall zone material completely and asked about the warranty of new materials.

Mr. Avolio said the warranty for a complete redo of the rubber would be approximately 10-15 years. However, the depth of the rubber is correct for the equipment that is currently installed.

Mr. Sukal said the deterioration of the rubber requires a solution now to keep the playground safe; it is only a temporary patch, but it allows the municipality time to redesign the playground.

There was discussion regarding materials to keep the playground ADA compliant, and cost for new fall zone materials and equipment.

Ms Ogradnik asked if the playground structure needed to be replaced soon.

Mr. Avolio said replacements items are still being manufactured and he is still able to order them.

5. Status of projects underway in parks

Mr. Heyse said this was covered in the previous agenda item.

6. Commission Update

Was delayed until later in the meeting.

7. Seasonal/calendar item placeholder

January	Discuss this item	July	No meeting
February	Bird Park Field	August	Deer Management
March	Nature Conservancy	September	Street trees
April	tbd	October	PW Budget/CIP?
May	Park assessments	November	PW Budget/CIP?
June	PCP/Williamsburg/Rockwood	December	Board transition

There was discussion regarding what items should be discussed in the months where nothing is assigned.

Mr. Argentine suggested the timing for the PW Budget/CIP is too late in the year since the budget is already set by that time.

Mr. Sukal suggested discussion for the budget and CIP take place in April or May.

Mr. Argentine said he had a resolution for the Commission regarding turfing in Bird Park and detailing issues related to that. He voiced concerns that turfing was put into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) without any input by the community.

Mr. Heyse said there was a joint meeting between the parks advisory board, the sports advisory board, and the consultant regarding the Parks Master Plan. However, there were many challenges, and the cost was prohibitive, so it did not make the master plan. He said there could be limitations as to what can be put in Bird Park based on the Act 70 acquisition.

Mr. Flynn said he feels there are other fields in Mt. Lebanon that should be turfed instead of Bird Park. He feels Bird Park should be an open space without a field. He explained the function of the CIP, indicating many projects may be put into the CIP but there is a long process before a project is instituted.

There was discussion regarding the benefits and drawbacks of both natural and turf fields.

Mr. Mackey said he supports recommending to the Commission to remove from the CIP putting turf in Bird Park. He supports the idea of improving other municipal or school fields.

Ms Ogradnik also supports the recommendation to the Commission, and she supports the idea of using Bird Park in a more natural way.

Mr. Aikin also supports the recommendation to the Commission.

Mr. Heyse moved and Ms Ogradnik seconded to approve the resolution subject to changes to either delete or change the turf item in the Capital Improvement Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Old Business / Update

2023 PAB Priorities: PAB discussed folding Trails into Park Design Guidelines. Can we handle five?

- Main Park Master Plan  
Municipal Planner McMeans has invited PAB input on Brafferton and Main Park Master Plan, so the members will wait to decide who will volunteer for that until there is more information.
- Park Design Guidelines
- Brafferton restoration and playground
- Trail restoration & guidelines
- Communications & Signage
- Forestry & Invasives Plan

Mr. Mackey said they should prioritize these ideas.

Mr. Heyse said with the reconfiguring of the boards in 2024 they should concentrate on items they can get done by the end of 2023. He would like to see the signage item finished this year.

Ms Ogradnik said a spreadsheet with recommendations had been sent to Commissioner Ranney with all the locations for the parks where signage is most needed, as well as areas for way finding.

Mr. Heyse asked if the two guideline items would be able to be completed this year.

Mr. Argentine said he has found many resources regarding trail restoration and guidelines, and asked if anyone would be willing to help him with the project.

Ms Ogrodnik said she would be willing to help.

Mr. Heyse said Ron Block has worked on trail restoration and he is trained as a landscape architect, so he may be willing to help as well.

Mr. Flynn said there is a difference between a back-packing trail, and a trail for meandering in the park. He said most of the trails in Bird Park are not wheelchair accessible.

Mr. Heyse said part of the 2003 parks master plan indicated there are too many trails, so some should be closed and the others widened.

Mr. Argentine said he talked with Mr. Block who indicated there is a trail from the upper parking lot to Washington Road that could be made wheelchair accessible since it is relatively level.

Ms Ogrodnik said there are so many different materials being used, and various volunteer groups use all types of materials, it makes maintenance of those trails difficult. She said having guidelines would be helpful and provide for better maintenance.

Mr. Mackey said he attended a complete streets and mobility meeting and sees an opportunity towards the greater transportation network by having several better built trails.

Ms Ogrodnik said the trail at the Robb Hollow Parklet is well built and ADA accessible and it would be beneficial to have similar trails in other locations offering the same type of connectivity.

Mr. Flynn said in the next few years money will be coming from the federal and state governments providing for alternative methods of transportation. He feels the parks should be part of the plan to have less vehicular traffic and make things easier for a transportation network. He said coming up with trail guidelines and policy would help to put that transportation network into place.

There was discussion regarding whether to further cull the list of priorities, or to reprioritize them.

Ms Ogrodnik suggested dividing the list up between board members.

Mr. Heyse divided the list as follows:

- Communications and signage – Mr. Aiken and Ms Ogrodnik;
- Brafferton Park is complete;
- Main Park Master Plan – Mr. Heyse;
- Park Design Guidelines -- Ms Ogrodnik said these guidelines would be similar to the trail guidelines, and would apply to all of the parks in the municipality

providing for continuity between the parks. It would also make maintenance easier, and provide guidance for volunteers. She said she could pull ideas from other communities then build an outline that could be added to.

10. Communications and signage: status, discussion, next steps.

Mr. Aikin said he and Ms Ogrodnik sent a summary of all the parks they visited identifying places for park signage and wayfinding to Commissioner Ranney who then passed it along to the Commission for the next step. No timeline has yet been established.

Mr. Sukal added Mr. Langston from the sports advisory board made suggestions regarding sizing and placing of signs to identify athletic fields. He said at a presentation he did for the Residents' Academy someone suggested putting the address of the park on signs, so in case of an emergency a visitor to the park could give an address to 9-1-1.

11. Forestry and invasives: status, discussion, next steps

Mr. Avolio said Tim Nuttle, the consultant regarding the invasives, and the municipal GIS employee, have been working to add layers to the GIS mapping system identifying trees in parks, terrain, invasives, etc. Mr. Nuttle hopes to be in the parks by mid-March to see where honeysuckle invasives are leafing. Once that is completed, he will go on site-specific visits.

12. Commission Meeting message and volunteer for February

Mr. Mackey asked if anyone would be willing to attend Commission meetings, and if there is anything to present to the Commission at this time.

Mr. Flynn suggested presenting progress on signage and mobility to the Commission.

Mr. Argentine said he would go to the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Flynn gave updates regarding mobility and transportation issues across the South Hills. Mt. Lebanon Partnership is looking for a part-time executive director, and they are working on design guidelines for business facades, placing public art in the business district, and planned celebrations for the completion of the Vibrant Uptown project. He said he is doing research on ways for the municipality to better manage and maintain both park and municipal trees.

Mr. Heyse said there is software available to help manage trees and he will investigate it further.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.