

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 22, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yon called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present: Mark Yon, Joe Jablonski, Michael Veltri, Mary Jo Bisceglia*, Mary Lasher, Mary Lee Mahon, and Shamus Petrucelli

Staff: Julie A. Jakubec, CPA, CGMA, Township Manager

Chairman Yon anticipated that Ms. Bisceglia would arrive soon, as she had contacted staff about a prior commitment

Manager Jakubec acknowledged high school students in the audience, and explained the Parks and Recreation Commission is an advisory board to Council. She further explained the Commission's role.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Dog Park

Manager Jakubec recalled a few requests for a dog park. She referenced information provided by the Township's insurance provider. The insurance provider recommended at least one acre of land with a double entry fence, separate parking and permitted use for a dog park. Possible locations for a dog park include Ruth Weir Park, Sacco Park, Upper Woodland Park, but it is not handicap accessible.

Ms. Bisceglia arrived at 7:06 p.m.

Manager Jakubec suggested the Commission consider a location for a dog park and how to implement it. Chairman Yon recalled some small dogs injured at a dog park near Highland Park. The Manager noted the insurance provider also suggested designated times for different size dogs. She also questioned how to police the dog park.

Mr. Veltri stated a dog park in Ocean City separates the dogs by weights and requires an access card from the municipality. Manager Jakubec noted the insurance provider also recommended access keys, fencing, double entry, a water source, and separate parking lot.

Chairman Yon did not favor Sacco Park as a potential dog park location due to the activity and Ruth Weir Park is too small. Manager Jakubec indicated one acre is recommended, and Ruth Weir Park could work, but it is in a flood plain. In the event of a flood, benches, trashcans and scooper stations could be lost.

Ms. Lasher suggested James O'Hara Park for the dog park location. The Manager stated James O'Hara Park is not safely accessible. The hill is too steep, a pump station is there and permitted hunters are in that park.

Ms. Bisceglia questioned if there would be a fee to use the dog park. Manager Jakubec noted there could be a deposit for the access key. Ms. Bisceglia clarified one park would be a designated dog park with a fenced in area for dogs to run off leash; and the other parks would continue to allow dogs on a leash. She questioned the options available for a dog park. Manager Jakubec stated a part of the flex field at Sacco Park; Upper Woodland Park, but there are handicap accessibility issues; and Ruth Weir Park, but the lower part is in the flood plain and in the event of a flood, insurance would not cover items lost. Chairman Yon asked if the insurance policy would cover dog bites. Manager Jakubec indicated dog owners would need to sign a waiver when they obtain a key, to hold the Township harmless in the dog park and parking lot.

Ms. Bisceglia stated she was not supportive of losing a part of the flex field at Sacco Park. She inquired about the number of requests for a dog park. The Manager indicated some of Council's constituents had requested a dog park. She requested the Commission to read the information and plan for further discussion next month.

B. Annual Parks Tour

Manager Jakubec inquired about what the Parks and Recreation Commission wanted to tour. Chairman Yon suggested visiting dog parks. Ms. Mahon noted the park in Pine-Richland Township looks interesting to tour.

C. Update on Spring/Park Projects

Manager Jakubec recalled prior discussion about installing music panels at Meadow Park. The panels have been ordered and delivered; a new drum table will be installed at Sacco Park; Rock-Paper-Scissor panels will be installed at Slim Jim Park and Ray Schafer Memorial Park; and a sensory station will be installed at Woodland Park. Analysis of the parks will continue. The deteriorated back shelter posts at Squaw Valley Park were encased with cement.

Chairman Yon commented that the trail at Squaw Valley Park is in hideous condition and suggested doing something permanent to address the problem. Manager Jakubec acknowledged that heavy rains wash out the trail dust and staff repairs the trail. Chairman Yon suggested installing some type of drainage, which the Manager stated was installed at the top of the trail. Chairman Yon noted an eight to ten-foot stretch of the trail and other areas along the trail that people have to walk around. Chairman Yon suggested paving that section of the trail. He noted the trail is heavily used, and preferred to rectify the problem before doing anything else in the parks. Mr. Petrucelli suggested trenching, which the Manager indicated has been done and gravel added. She stated staff would review options for maintaining the trail. She noted over time, paving would become wavy. Manager Jakubec stated it is a trail and not a sidewalk, just as the RIDC walking path is a pedway. Sidewalks require winter maintenance. Chairman Yon questioned the possibility of elevating the trail over a distance. The Manager noted Chairman Yon was referring to crowning the path. Mr. Jablonski noted even over time, the crown would wear down.

Manager Jakubec recalled Eric Kratsa has requested adding additional play equipment to the Kratsa playground before the end of the year. Suggestions were provided to Mr. Kratsa.

The Manager stated the adaptive playground was serviced; the Astro-turf was repaired and the vandalized equipment replaced except for the shark. The entire park will soon have surveillance cameras.

Chairman Yon suggested partnering with the Garden Club to plant a colorful flower bed at Squaw Valley Park, near the intersection where the movies are shown. Manager Jakubec noted it could be an Eagle Scout Project.

Manager Jakubec recalled a request to relocate the memorial rock at Beulah Frey Park and had suggested holding a rededication ceremony in the spring. A date has not yet been set.

The Manager stated Barb Satler, formerly from the community center, had informed her about kids playing in a fort in the woods by the old community center. To replace the fort, the Manager purchased a rock/tunnel climbing surface.

Chairman Yon informed the student audience that Ms. Mahon has been a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission for 40 years.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 26, 2016

Manager Jakubec noted a request to paint pickle ball lines instead of tennis lines on the court at the community center. Ms. Bisceglia noted pickle ball is moving into the Pittsburgh area and gaining popularity, but believed more people would prefer tennis. Mr. Petrucelli noted the

Township parks are unique, and offer many different things. He supported pickle ball lines, but would like to see the layout. He also suggested painting the pickle ball lines in a different color. The Manager noted there will be basketball, dek hockey, tennis and pickle ball lines. Mr. Petrucelli would give up the tennis lines for the pickle ball lines.

The consensus of the Commission was to research pickle ball for further discussion.

Ms. Mahon motioned to approve the subject minutes as presented and Mr. Jablonski seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Yon requested comments from the student audience. A student responded, noting he lives within walking distance to Sacco Park and there are many things to do. He has also seen people hitting golf balls, which the Manager stated is not permitted. The student also indicated he did not support a dog park at Sacco Park.

Another student indicated he noticed the wooden playground was getting old and the next he knew there was a new playground. The Manager explained the adaptive playground is designed for children with motor disabilities, autistic children and for all children to play together.

Manager Jakubec explained the process of determining what amenities to provide for the parks. She also noted the Township's ability to acquire additional parkland in the past.

Mr. Jablonski recalled several meetings with a group that wanted to enhance the baseball field at Meadow Park, and how some residents supported the idea and others strongly opposed. Mr. Jablonski also explained he voted to amend park rules to prohibit flying remote controlled planes and drones, though his hobby is flying remote controlled planes.

Ms. Bisceglia also informed the students in the audience that pigs and all small farm animals are not permitted in Township parks.

VI. COMMISSION COMMENTS OR CONCERNS

None.

VII. STAFF CONCERNS

None.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Bisceglia motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Mahon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Attachment(s): Sign-In Sheet(s)