

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 26, 2020**

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I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Yon at 7:05 p.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

Present: Mark Yon, S. Joseph Jablonski, Mary Lasher, Shamus Petrucelli, Matthew DiGirolamo, Michael Veltri

Absent: Mary Lee Mahon

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

Manager Jakubec noted procedures for participating in the virtual meeting.

III. MINUTES

A. June 24, 2020

B. July 22, 2020

Action of the subject minutes was deferred following New Business.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

The order of the agenda was changed based on visitor attendance.

C. Update on Parks Relative to COVID-19

It was noted the restrooms and shelters remain closed and all shelter rentals were canceled through year end. Depending on COVID-19 statistics the Township may have Movies in the Park with social distancing. Baseball fields are rented for fall ball. The baseball association has agreed in writing, to abide by the recommendations of the orders issued by the Secretary of Health. The rules are posted on the backstops at all the fields. Rules for the playgrounds, basketball courts, volleyball court and soccer field are also posted.

B. Discussion of Proposal for Field Maintenance at Beulah Frey Soccer Field  
Guest- Jeff Curry Fox Chapel Area Soccer

Mr. Jeff Hurley, a Board Member of Fox Chapel Area Youth Soccer, explained based on a study, the fields have an organic matter collecting on top and it needs to be addressed to keep the fields useful during heavy rain periods. The organic is decaying material that does not get absorbed into

the soil. The protocol to fix the fields is to throw a binder non, like sand, and introduce a top dressing of soil so it can integrate and become a true soil. Then they can crown the field and improve drainage so when it does rain, not only does the rain get absorbed properly without affecting playability of the field, but it also runs off to the drains that have been appropriated on the field.

Mr. Hurley stated the Fox Chapel Area Youth Soccer Association's proposition is to fix the Boyd Field because they use it extensively. He noted the approximate cost to fix the field is \$35,000 and the Association is willing to fund. The only thing the Association would want in return is assurance from the Township that they would continue to have the use of the field as they have now, spring and fall. All other times the field would be open.

Mr. Hurley also introduced a new grass cutting protocol at the recommendation of the consultant which would help minimize the potential for re-occurrence of the current problem. The Soccer Associations also offered to pay for a second cutting during the high growth period so the height of the field would be maintained properly and the clippings are minimized to ¼" and can decompose and go back into the soil.

Manager Jakubec asked if the Soccer Association would be willing to enter into an agreement for a set number of years, to which Mr. Hurley agreed.

Mr. Petrucelli questioned the extra cost for the Soccer Association to cut the field grass all year long, so they are guaranteed to get the clippings the right size. Mr. Hurley did not know, but stated the Association has been funding the escrow on a continuous basis for field maintenance. The Association's interest is to cut the field but not the peripheral field, but they could include it at no extra cost. During the high growth season the field should be cut multiple times per week.

Mr. Petrucelli stated the Township would need to discuss. Manager Jakubec explained the Township uses a third party vendor to cut the field and believed the contract has an automatic annual renewal, but she could discuss the possibility with the contractor. She did not anticipate a problem in making sure the cutting schedule is appropriate.

Mr. Hurley noted the work would be done in November, when the growing season is over. The field would need to be closed as they also intend to over-seed it. From November until the first snow will give the seed time to be absorbed and germinate.

Mr. Petrucelli recommended the Soccer Association take over cutting the field to be guaranteed they get the desired result for the longest period of time.

Manager Jakubec indicated a new agreement would be drafted for Council's consideration.

Motion by Ms. Lasher recommending the Township enter into an agreement with the Fox Chapel Area Youth Soccer Association for the maintenance of Beulah Frey Soccer Field was seconded by Chairman Yon and carried unanimously.

- A. Discussion of Historical Program for O'Hara Township Community Park  
Guest Speakers on O'Hara Township Community Park's History - Local Historian  
Tom Powers and Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center Board Member  
Miguel Sague

Chairman Yon acknowledged two people in attendance to discuss the historical program for the O'Hara Township Community Park.

Mr. Tom Powers, Powers Run Road and Township Historian, presented a 1755 map of the area. He noted artifacts which had been discovered during development which indicates Native American habitation. He also presented a map prior to the American colonization, noting areas where Iroquoian, Algonquin, and Shawnees lived and worked. Mr. Powers stated the controversy about Squaw Run is from the Algonquian group. A map of 1788 is the first to show Squaw Run, which was used as a landmark. Mr. Powers noted Massey Harbison was kidnapped by Indians, but escaped and claimed to have made her way back to the valley using Squaw Run. He stated why the creek was named 'Squaw' is lost to history.

Mr. Powers noted the Ross Mansion, where the current GetGo is located, was the summer home of Senator James Ross, a lawyer and land dealer. During construction of GetGo, artifacts of the mansion were discovered. Senator Ross owned the southern part of O'Hara Township. The park was part of Lot No. 5. A lot of the area was used for vacations spots and the Pittsburgh Newsboys Camp, which Senator Ross hosted.

Chairman Yon questioned how present this information to educate the public.

Mr. Miguel Sague noted elements of Mr. Powers' information that did not jive with his understanding of Western Pennsylvania, and requested dialogue with Mr. Powers. Mr. Sague noted one element is a denomination of no man's land that they are not sure who it belonged to. He noted a period of time when the Iroquoian Tribe of the area was surrounded by Algonquian and fought each other. Five Iroquoian Tribes, the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk, united to create a confederacy, known as the Iroquois Confederacy. When they won a war they would absorb, or adopt, the opposing tribe. The Iroquois Confederacy also helped the Americans during the French and Indian War. The Seneca Tribe controlled the Squaw Run area

Chairman Yon noted a need to develop a format of Mr. Powers' and Mr. Sague's information to create a presentation for the parks. He requested they think about the best way to present the information, with consideration of short attention spans, so that a visitor to the park can read a story board or whatever, to give a brief overview of the Native peoples and progression of development.

Mr. Sague welcomed dialogue with Mr. Powers to come to a consensus about the word 'Squaw Valley' and 'Squaw Run'. Chairman Yon suggested they have a discussion to integrate that period of time and develop a unified history.

Mr. Powers was familiar with an outdoor graphics company that has done similar informational signs.

Manager Jakubec suggested a meeting with Mr. Powers, Mr. Sague, Mr. Petrucelli and herself to discuss how to proceed, if the project should be done in phases, what key elements should be included for the park, and provide recommendations for the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Manager noted a meeting attendee has suggested a study through Pitt University of Carnegie Museum, to which Mr. Sague supported. Manager Jakubec also noted a possible artifact search, as during World War I the area was a U.S. Calvary and spent bullets can be found on the hill.

Chairman Yon stated he would like to personally have input in the format and the material. The Manager stated recommendations would be provided to the Parks and Recreation Commission for review and consideration.

Motion by Mr. Petrucelli to have a committee pursue and discuss possible formats for historical presentations in the park was seconded by Mr. DiGirolamo and carried unanimously.

Manager Jakubec indicated she would schedule a time to meet and anticipated presenting recommendations to the Commission in September or October, and include funding in the 2021 budget.

### III. MINUTES

- A. June 24, 2020
- B. July 22, 2020

Chairman Yon noted a correction in the July 22<sup>nd</sup> minutes.

Motion by Chairman Yon to approve the subject minutes as corrected was seconded by Mr. Petrucelli and carried unanimously.

### V. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

### VI. COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

### VII. COMMISSION COMMENTS OR CONCERNS

Mr. DiGirolamo inquired of a time line for the new park signs, which the Manager stated new signs were ordered the day after Council's meeting. She also noted panels for kids that were ordered before the pandemic will be installed by Public Service Department employees.

Chairman Yon referred to Council's decision to change the name of the park, to which he was opposed. He stated the Parks and Recreation Commission's role is to make recommendation to Council, which was kicked aside. He felt it was a matter that the public could have voted on, and it was not something of an urgent nature. Chairman Yon stated when you are requested to participate and make recommendations, and a recommendation is not waited for is disheartening.

The people on this Commission have volunteered a lot of years. While it is within Council's power to make these decisions, they should allow the process to unfold in the traditional fashion as outlined in the Charter. The decision has been made and the Commission is moving on and will do a nice project. When something is important and you are involved in a process, you do not want to be there as a spectator; you want to have input and your voice heard and have the opportunity to make a recommendation. In that regard, Chairman Yon believed a mistake was made.

Mr. Petrucelli stated as he learned more he supported the name change, but does not disagree in that he was disappointed that Council, though their right, did what they did and walked around the Parks and Recreation Commission, instead of allowing the Commission to provide a recommendation to Council. It's done and the Commission has to forge forward and make the parks better.

Ms. Lasher stated Council decided, since they are elected officials, that they had to take the steps to get it done instead of dragging it out for months, so the situation could be handled right away. She understood both sides. She stated they are the elected officials and the Parks and Recreation Commission are volunteers. We volunteer to meet, to provide information, but Council is elected to make the decisions. They can go ahead of Parks and Recreation Commission. They are put there to make decisions.

Mr. Jablonski stated he said what he had to in the newspapers. It is time to move on.

#### VIII. STAFF CONCERNS

Manager Jakubec summarized that a meeting would be scheduled to discuss how to proceed with the history boards and set money aside for the project in the 2021 budget.

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Chairman Yon to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Mr. Petrucelli and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

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Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Attachment: Participant List