
Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

March 3, 2008

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** 7:00 pm

2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Dave Spirk, Chairman; Tom Butera, Vice Chair; William Ross, Members, Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison. Dean Evans, Eric Schneider: Guests

Absent: Scott Schanzenbach

3. **Approval of Minutes:** Will approve the minutes at the next meeting.

4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items:**

- **Geocaching** - Tom McPeck. Jack explained what geocaching was and said that Mr. McPeck was supposed to come to the meeting to request permission to do geocaching in the Township parks
- **Skate Parks** - Bill Ross said that here are a bunch of kids and parents that want to set up a skate park and they would like to build one in Polk Valley Park. Jane Finger is not here to talk about it. There is a definite need in the community. If we sent out a survey, he knows a skate park would be right up there.

5. **Projects:**

- **Town Hall Park** - no update
- **Southeastern Park** - no update
- **Steel City** - no update
- **Heller Homestead** - no update
- **Polk Valley Park - Update on Meeting with Youth Sports Groups & Use of Polk Valley Park fields for practice or games** - Jack said Carol is getting a new software program which will allow the youth sports groups who have been registered to go onto the website and view the entire field schedule for youth sports. The public will not be able to see this information; they will be able to view a schedule on the Township website showing each of the fields will be utilized. We'll have a bulletin board at each of the parks with schedules on them. Regarding the scheduling issue, we discussed this with lacrosse and football organizations. Baseball is not an issue as they have the two (2) baseball fields to themselves. When we met with the sports groups last spring out at the park, we walked the area and established that the 3 multipurpose fields would only be used for games, and not for practice. We also wanted to see if we could keep one of the fields dormant through the season. That information was put out to the various sports groups. Soccer is okay with this as they have the Grist Mill fields to use for practice and they will only use Polk Valley Park for games. Football needs lights, so they'll use the Dimmick Park and Town Hall Park for practices and games. Dean and Eric are here tonight representing the lacrosse organization and want to discuss using the Polk Valley Park fields. Jack asked if he could run through how many different teams they have. Dean said this year they have new girl's teams. They are 3rd to 8th graders. Last spring, they had one girl's team and had a JV and Varsity, one U-9, one U-11, one U-13 and one U-15 boy's team. This year they have one U-9, two U-11s, two U-13s, one U-15, and JV and Varsity, three girls, and youth. Their primary season is in spring. The girls and boys are the same season. They have a club lacrosse team formed at the high school level this year made up of mostly freshmen and sophomores and most

of them are girls. So far in the Colonial League, it's only Southern Lehigh and Saucon Valley who are playing club lacrosse. The high school teams will not be using Polk Valley Park; they will be practicing and playing at the high school. The high school club teams are not necessarily our concern as they have a paid coach and they are under the jurisdiction of the school board. The 8th grade and under players will be using at Polk Valley Park. Last year their practices were at the high school and at the beach above the football field. There were a lot of games played on the beach. There's not enough room up there this year because girl's soccer is plays in the spring and that takes up the space. The youth teams are community teams just like the park is a community park. We have added four more teams since last year, two boys and two girl teams. They want to use the park for games. They use cleats and that can tear up the field during practice games. It's fast action around the goal area. The beach field is really getting a lot of use. They have about one team a night that would need to practice at Polk Valley Park. They need to work something out. Soccer and lacrosse are going to want the fields at the same time. Lacrosse has very little space in the fall, but there is no problem with soccer. Soccer is played year round. If you have three fields up there and one field is used as a game field, and one as a practice/game field, and keep the other one sitting, you can just rotate. Soccer doesn't really do much abuse to a field like lacrosse does. The lacrosse goals will probably be within the soccer box for the goals. The lacrosse fields are a little bit narrower than the soccer fields. We may be able to shift it around so the goalies for soccer and lacrosse aren't using the same spot. We could set up two different fields, one for lacrosse and one for soccer. Soccer usually doesn't have more than one team and they can get by on one big field in the spring. They don't have the high school girls playing either. Down at the Grist Mill, the fields are being used all the time. Scott was saying they are going to play all their games at the Grist Mill, now it's only practice. Jack said in the spring time soccer said they have four teams that play six home games, so 24 games each spring, that's it. Can you get away with using one practice field at the park? Dean said that if we have to, that's what we'll do. Jack said that at some point in the future, what may happen is if lacrosse is allowed to practice up there, soccer will say why can't we play up there. What if instead of four teams they have ten teams. If we're going to have practice up there as well as games, everyone will want their fair share of practice. Jack said he doesn't think we can keep one field dormant. Dave said you should be able to practice on them, but we need to maintain them. The fields are not going to get torn up like football Dave said instead of trying to keep one field dormant, we probably have to play on all the fields. They don't know how they are going to be able to do that. Dean said that they would like to be sure that soccer does not feel they were slighted since they are not here tonight and they were told they could not practice up there. He understands that soccer's position is they do not want anyone practicing up there. They feel the field will just get torn up. In reality, we're going to have to practice up there. They just want what's best for the kids. The little kids practice three times a week and a day on the weekend. There are no games on Sundays. Dave said they will have to work out some deal that soccer would be able to get all their games in and lacrosse gets their games in and also work in a practice. Bill said that travel season is year round for soccer. Soccer is not just a fall sport anymore. We want to work it out that everybody is happy and as many kids as possible can come out and enjoy themselves and learn. Soccer has grown and they play all year long now. The P & R members said okay for lacrosse to practice at Polk Valley Park, but asked that in the future they try to find alternate sites. The P & R members said they want the PVP fields to look like the fields at Southern Lehigh. If you use the same fields for the same sports, one area is going to get burned out. If you rotate them, the area that gets burned out will be okay then. It looks like we will not be able to keep one field dormant. Someone asked about Southeastern Park? Jack said Southeastern has a large outfield which is bigger than the baseball outfields at Polk Valley Park. Dave said that the problem with soccer is getting the nets from place to place. Right now they are picking them up with trailers. There was a discussion about how the lacrosse fields are lined differently for girls and boys games. If there are more lines on a girl's field, they could differentiate them by color and we could then end up having one (1) field used for soccer, one (1) field used for lacrosse and one (1) multi-use field. It was agreed that the western most

field adjacent to the main park road would be designated for soccer and the middle of the three fields would be designated for lacrosse. It was agreed that the eastern most field would be utilized for both lacrosse and for the young kids playing small sided soccer as that field is better for them as the parking lot is adjacent to it and the hills aren't that steep. On the other fields, you will roll down the hills and there isn't much room.

Jack showed the recommended shed locations on the plans which will allow the sports organizations to drive into the park and unload and have access to the fields and that works for soccer, lacrosse and football, and then for baseball, they can use storage boxes behind the backstops. Jack asked how many sheds there would be? Someone said one for soccer, one for football, one for lacrosse, and for baseball they can use locked storage boxes up at the fields. Jack said if you are talking 10x20 sheds, he has to bring this up to the Planner. The location that the soccer league requested for their shed was not good as they asked that the driveway be extended to reach the shed. The shed would be too visible and would be too close to where they want to put the pavilion and tot lot in the future. On Wednesday night, he'll let Council know there will be one for soccer, one for lacrosse, and one if football needs it, they'll be a spot for a 10x20 shed reserved for them. He'll let everyone know on Thursday.

Someone said they have a common concern about the need for fencing to stop balls from leaving the fields. Jack said that the soccer league reviewed a copy of the park plans and made a recommendation to the Township Planner for additional fencing along the north side of all of the soccer fields which according to the planner would amount to about 1000 linear feet of fencing that was not in the in the Phase I bid award and anymore fencing looks doubtful for this year. A concern was expressed for balls leaving the field and going down the hill. Jack said there will be some low plantings that will stop balls rolling on the ground. There was a discussion about putting up netting to stop balls. It could be a wire mesh and be at a certain height. Easton High School has them. Jack said he doesn't have any information about netting. Jack said this is something we will have to get together and talk about. Dean said that lacrosse balls don't travel that high, but they go far, not like a soccer ball. Jack said that council members have seen the netting used at Upper Saucon's Community Park and they liked that idea. We need some input and recommendations. He said he will let the sports organizations know by the end of the week about the sheds and the fencing.

- **Kingston Park** - no update
- **Grants** - no update
- **Volunteer Scout Projects** - MJ Roche Nature Trail Project – Mike Roche was present representing his son, MJ, who could not make the meeting. He said they contacted Bill Sweeney from DCNR and they spent well over an hour walking the nature trail with him. Bill had quite a few suggestions for MJ. One was removing a lot of the blackberry bushes that are in there that are not native to the area. Bill had suggested as part of the project they remove 15 to 20 of the larger blackberry shrubs and replace them with spice bushes which are a native shrub. The blackberry shrubs will have to be dug out. There are probably 100 of them back there. They will concentrate on the area 10 to 12 feet off the trail. The important part of the spice bush is the berry which the birds eat. You don't see as many of the spice bushes around anymore as there are so many blackberry bushes around and they take them over. There are only three trees that need to be removed. Bill suggested the Scouts not get involved with that and the Parks Department take care of that. They are going to put down stone on the trail. MJ will start this project and next year if there is another scout working on an Eagle project, he can continue with the replacement of the blackberry bushes with the spice bush. If we remove 75 blackberry bushes, that's a lot of work there. They are hoping to have at least of ten of the older boys from the troop help MJ out. This will take about six solid weekends to get this done. Mr. Cahalan said they'll make sure they have shovels, drinking water, whatever is needed. The Township will bring the stone and the bushes in and whatever needs to be in there. The P&R Board said

that they supported the project. Mr. Cahalan said he will take this approval and the EAC approval expected tomorrow night to Council.

6. **Old Business:**

- **Update on Meeting with Youth Sports Groups** - covered under projects report
- **Polk Valley Park Phase I Improvements** - covered under projects report
- **Polk Valley Park Opening Day** - Jack gave a brief update on the program for the Opening Day Ceremony at Polk Valley Park on April 5, 2008
- **PVP - SVSD Connector Trail** - Jack said we have the appraisal done on the barn section and we think we have reached an agreement with Mr. Herman to take it down which will allow us to move forward with the trail construction.
- **Dimmick Park Master Site Plan Committee Update** - Jack handed out the most recent update from this group.

7. **New Business:**

- **Dog Park Rules** - Jack handed out a copy of the draft rules for the Dog Park that will be opened on the Nor Car section of Polk Valley Park
- **Maintenance Sheds at Polk Valley Park** - covered under Polk Valley Park update
- **Use of Polk Valley Park fields for practice or games?** - covered under Polk Valley Park update
- **Pool Pass Rebate for Hellertown Pool** - Jack advised that the Township is in the process of implementing an Intermunicipal Agreement with Hellertown which will eliminate the Non-Resident fee for Lower Saucon Township residents using the Hellertown Community Pool. For an additional payment of \$3,000 annually, we will eliminate the pool staff from having to check proof of residency and issue the non-resident tag; the Borough staff from tracking the resident/non-resident fees, and the Township having to accept and process rebate payments from hundreds of residents. Once in place, Hellertown and Township residents will pay one fee for the pool.
- **Community Gardens on Nor Car Property** - Jack said that this was an idea that came from members of the EAC who came to a Council meeting and proposed the idea of using some of the Nor Car property for a community garden. Jack said that he thought it would be difficult as there is no water there and no access. Dave said aren't community gardens more for densely populated areas like people in Allentown? Jack said there will be a survey question in the next newsletter asking people what they think about.
- **Recommendation for \$12,452 Recreation Fee for Hidden Meadows Subdivision** - The Board voted to recommend to the Council that this fee be deposited in the Polk Valley Park fund.
- **Review Site Plans** (Scenic View Apartments Site Plan; Hills of Polk Valley Minor; Kazan Minor; Estates of Stonehurst at Saucon Valley Major; Pierpont Proposed Final Land Development; Redington Estates) Site plans were briefly reviewed by the Board. There were no issues.

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

9. **Next Meeting:** The next Park & Recreation Board meeting will be on April 7, 2008 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Submitted by Jack Cahalan