
Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

April 7, 2008

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

2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Tom Butera, Vice Chair; William Ross, Scott Schanzenbach, Members; Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison; Jane & Bob Finger; George & Mary Jo Hellick, Guests

Absent: Dave Spirk

3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the March 3rd meeting were approved.

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

- **Geocaching** - Jack said that Mr. McPeck was on the agenda to discuss the subject of geocaching but he said he could not make tonight's meeting.
- **Skate Parks** - Jane Finger said that she is a resident of Lower Saucon Township and that she is here tonight to ask, very seriously, as we make plans for our new park, that we reserve space if possible for skateboarders. She said that she got involved with this issue about a year ago when she noticed a group of kids at the Water Street Park being rounded up by the police. She said there are other municipalities like Nazareth and one near Quakertown that have opened skate parks. She started writing to the newspapers and attending meetings in Hellertown Borough. She is a retired nurse and said that these kids could get injured if they don't have safer facilities to use. She was able to round up a couple of the kids to attend meetings with her. They are a great bunch of young people and they are willing to help with the building and maintenance of a skate park. They are not only in physical danger but their morale has been affected because all they do is get chased, chased, chased. They say you now have places for every group: the little leaguers, the soccer players, etc., but nothing for our group. The Public Works Director in Hellertown was not supportive of this. A man by the name of Dan Noctor came forward and offered to raise money for a skate park. He told the Borough Council that he would contribute \$1,000 if the Borough would come up with a matching donation of up to \$15,000. She said that they took notes but nothing came of that. He also offered a quarter pipe and other equipment to set up a temporary skate board park. She said she thinks he is a contractor. Another fellow who was at the meetings was a Jim from the indoor football franchise. Jack said it is the LV Outlawz. Jane said that he offered to help also. Jane asked if something could be done through the Saucon Valley Partnership. She said she knows of a school district that has skateboarding as an extra-curricular activity. Now it's another spring and she sees them out there again and she feels that the danger to them has increased due to the traffic. She thinks that you people with the new park plans could help. In the spirit of the new Olympics she wants to pass the torch on to other people. There was a short discussion about the Polk Valley Park opening and the facilities available in the park. Jack said that the reason that the park has the three (3) soccer, lacrosse, football fields and the two (2) baseball fields is because the Township did surveys with residents and heard from the youth sports groups that that was what was needed in the township. Jack said that the Township also acquired a 10-acre property adjacent to the park and that will contain a dog park. There will be paved walking trails that will allow residents to walk, bike through the

park, connect via a trail with the school district campus and go into Hellertown Borough. Bill asked what the rest of the 10-acre property was going to be used for. Jack said that there are no immediate plans for the area. Bill advised that the Park & Recreation Board is an advisory group only and can only make recommendations to the Township Council who ultimately make the decisions. Bill said that he is in favor of skate parks. George Hellick said that he and his wife lived in Irvine, California for a period of time and they had a skate park and it allowed the police there to tell kids not to use other public buildings and areas for skateboarding because there was a place dedicated for that. Bill said that based on his knowledge of a skate park that opened in NJ, he is confident that the participants at the skate park would take ownership of it and take good care of it. Jane said that Gail Nolf and Jennie McKenna were all for this and they went and found out that the municipalities would not be liable for any insurance for the skate parks. Jane said that these poor kids were not only chased out of Dimmick Park but the Police Chief wanted to fine them \$600 for skateboarding. Tom asked Jane if she knew how big an average skate park was. Jane said she could find out. Jack said that she is talking about a recreational activity that encompasses both the Borough and Township and that type of regional issue is what they are discussing at the Saucon Valley Partnership. Jack asked Bill if skateboarding came up in the Dimmick Park Master Study. Bill said that it did but it was a low priority. Jack said that the problem is if you send out a survey to residents in the Township and Borough you do not get a high response on skateboarding. You get back the type of activities that are in Polk Valley Park. Bill said that there is also a demand for winter sports activities and they recommended an indoor facility but unfortunately there was not enough money for that. Jack said that the Partnership meets every month and Jane was free to come and address that group. Bill made a motion that the Park & Recreation Board make a recommendation to the Township Council that they investigate the possibility of building or placing a skate board facility within Polk Valley Park or at another Township park. Tom seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously. Jane and Mary Jo also asked if it would be possible to have the Township put a basketball court in the grass area between Society Hill and the Heller Homestead Park for the teenagers to use. Jack stated that that area is a little bit out of the way, is only accessible by a pathway through the park, has limited parking, and would be difficult for the police to monitor it due to its remote location. Jack suggested that Water Street Park in Hellertown would be better suited to that activity and that this was something that should be discussed as a regional recreational need.

5. **Projects:**

- **Town Hall Park** - Jack said that Public Works did refurbish the restrooms with new partitions, lighting, painting to make them a little more brighter and comfortable
- **Southeastern Park** - Restrooms at Southeastern were also refurbished
- **Steel City** - Jack said that later this year we will talk about setting up the visioning meeting for the improvements at Steel City Park. Maybe a skateboard park is an idea for this park.
- **Heller Homestead** - no update
- **Polk Valley Park** - Jack said that the opening went very well even though the weather did not cooperate. They are still waiting on the contractor to get mobilized so they can begin installing the landscaping, fencing, backstops, trails. The Dog Park will also be set up. The sheds were located in the park. Jack said they were still open to any recommendations for netting for the soccer, lacrosse fields. Scott said that he was up there for three lacrosse games and not one ball went over the hill. He hasn't heard of any problems with soccer balls either. They had teams up there from Nazareth and Forks Township and they loved the fields. Scott said that there was a problem with the location of the port-a-johns at the park. One of them is too close to the road and someone opened the door and it was almost hit by a car. Jack said that he would take care of it. The members discussed having some sort of steps to let people get up the steep inclines. Scott said that all of the parents and spectators like to sit up on top

and look down. It's also good if you're taking pictures. Jack said that they are still moving ahead with connector trail between the park and the school campus.

- **Kingston Park** - no update
- **Grants** - Jack said they are awaiting official word on the DCNR grant and the Northampton County grant that they applied for Polk Valley Park.
- **Volunteer Scout Projects** - Jack said that he had a meeting with MJ Roche and his father and representatives from our Public Works Department out at the trail and MJ is getting geared up for this project. He will be giving me a list of the plantings that he will be putting in along the trail. Public Works has already put in new gravel on the trail so that is something MJ will not have to work on.

6. **Old Business:**

- **Polk Valley Park Phase I Improvements** - covered under projects report
- **PVP - SVSD Connector Trail** - Jack said we have a meeting with Mr. Herman and his attorney scheduled to review the appraisal the Township had done.
- **Pool Pass Rebate for Hellertown Pool** - Jack advised that the pool pass rebate was approved by the Borough and Township Councils. Now the fees paid by Township residents will be the same as that paid by Hellertown residents. This will eliminate Township residents having to come to the Township for a rebate payment.
- **Dog Park Rules** - Jack stated that the rules for the new Dog Park will be adopted as an ordinance by the Township Council and hopefully the individuals utilizing the dog park will self-police themselves. Jack said that the current park rules prohibit even leashed dogs in the Township parks. The Council will have to take a look at this. Bill said that a lot of families like to take their dogs to the park to watch their children's games. Scott said that the soccer league has a problem with dog droppings on the Grist Mill fields from dogs that owners let run around unleashed.
- **Dimmick Park Master Site Plan Committee Update** - nothing new on this.

7. **New Business:**

- **Review of Dravecz Property For Passive recreation Potential** - Jack advised that the EAC Open Space Committee is interested in acquiring the 66.5 acre Dravecz property out on Apple Street and Alpine Drive. The Township will be submitting a grant application to DCNR for funding to purchase the seven (7) parcels outright or purchase conservation easements. Jack said that the EAC had made two requests to the Park & Recreation Board: (1.) if representative(s) from Park & Recreation would go out and visit the property and come up with an opinion as to its potential for passive recreation purposes. Tom said that he would be willing to go there, possibly this week-end, and take a look at the property. Jack said that he will set this up with Mr. Dravecz. Bill asked what are passive recreation activities. Jack said hiking, trails, bird watching, etc. (2) The Open Space Committee is requesting a letter of support from the Park & Recreation Board to go with the DCNR application that has to be submitted by April 25, 2008. Jack said if the Board is okay with that he will draft a support letter for Tom to sign. The Board members voted unanimously to support the application for DCNR funding.
- **Review Site Plans**

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

9. **Next Meeting:** The next Park & Recreation Board meeting will be on May 5, 2008 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Submitted by Jack Cahalan