

Minutes

Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

May 3, 2010

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Dave Spirk at 7:02 PM.
2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Dave Spirk, Chair; Tom Butera, Vice Chair; Sheri Herman, Donna Bristol, members; Jack Cahalan, Staff Liaison. **Absent:** Bill Ross and Scott Schanzenbach, and Jr. Council member, Stephen Prager.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Sheri, second by Tom to approve and accept the April 12, 2010 minutes. All in favor.
4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items:** None
5. **Projects:**
 - **Town Hall Park** – Jack said they haven't put the rubber mulch in the playground on the lower level yet. It still has to be scheduled by Public Works. Everything else is fine. He did report that there was some vandalism out here. Somebody smashed all the signs we put on the nature trails. They went along pretty methodically and broke the Plexiglas. It didn't damage the information in the Plexiglas. We are going to do some paving on the parking lot and the trail that goes up to the pavilion. Everything else is fine there. He'll talk about this event that Chris Garges wants to hold at Town Hall Park later on.
 - **Southeastern Park** – Jack said Southeastern Park is looking good. They did put up the signs for the meadow. You may have seen them if you went out to Polk Valley Park or Southeastern. It's a sign we brought here to a meeting that says "Naturalized Meadow". It gives people some information on what we're doing in the detention basins and the meadow at Polk Valley Park and Southeastern.
 - **Steel City Park** – Jack said Park and Rec had made a recommendation on the Conceptual Plan and at this week's Council meeting, it will be discussed and if they approve it, it will be ready to go whenever we can schedule that, which will probably be next year.
 - **Heller Homestead** – Jack said nothing new on this other than he has a meeting out there next week to see if we can remove that concrete pad that was left over from the demolition of the maintenance garage. The reason that was left there was because the Saucon Valley Conservancy says there's remnants of a historical wall that's right along underneath that foundation, so they are trying to preserve that. That apparently was what was left from a saw mill that was there back when the Geyer's occupied the Heller Homestead property.
 - **Polk Valley Park** – Jack said the bulletin board has been put up. The entrance sign was put up and it looks good. We are moving along on the connector trail. There was a bridge style selected and it was shown to the Parks and Rec group. Jack said they were at a conference and somebody came across a fiberglass bridge design which is a lot cheaper and looks attractive. We looked into fiberglass and there are maintenance issues with fiberglass. Dave said he would think it could get damaged easily. Jack said they gave that to the engineer to look at and see if it's feasible. He will

come back and make a recommendation. At Polk Valley, the LAX day was Saturday and they had a good day, weather-wise. Ron Bracalante was really good working with us like getting the information to the Township about the vendors. Dave asked if anyone had any complaints? Jack said no one had any complaints. He went up there and it was set up pretty nice. He took a couple of pictures. They were playing on two fields. They had all the parking signs up. They put the overflow parking signs up over on the dog park property. They were patrolling it. Ron had a golf cart and made sure everything looked okay. They really did a good job. Everything held up like the port-a-johns, the trash, etc. We gave them some cardboard trash receptacles from the landfill. Everything went great, he didn't hear one complaint. Dave asked what about Monday morning, any complaints? Jack said no, they just had to get the trash picked up. The only thing, at the end of today, Roger from Public Works said somebody ran into one of the boulders we put up in the top parking lot. He said they had to hit it pretty hard as they knocked it back out on the pavement. Jack sent an email to Ron asking him if he heard from anyone as there must have been damage to the vehicle. Ron said he didn't hear a word and when he left at 5:00 PM, he didn't see anything. Dave said it could have been done anytime. Jack said there was a soccer game after that, but anybody who did it must have had a lot of damage. Dave said he would think they did a lot of damage, especially if they didn't know it was there. Jack said the LAX event was really well run and the first special big event was done very well.

- **Kingston Park** – Jack said Kingston Park is going to resume paving and pervious concrete trails. Speaking of the pervious concrete trails, one of the concrete suppliers is actually running a seminar for pervious concrete, Four Winds. We're sending our staff and Hellertown is sending some of their staff. They actually have a certification program that we will see if they can take a test and be certified as installers or technicians. We will be doing the ones at Kingston and also Steel City and will be doing them at Easton Road fields once we get that parking lot put in there. Sheri asked if you will have to hire anyone to do it? Jack said no, we are doing it all in-house and it's worked out pretty well.
- **Easton Road Fields** – Jack said the Township owns Easton Road Fields. He did send a letter to all of the people who lived adjacent to the fields. He was out there one day and talked to several residents and they told him about the issues with people driving up the lane. There were issues about kids who were running in the trees to go to the bathroom as there were no port-a-johns. Balls were coming over and landing in their yards. That's why Jack sent them all letters saying we will address all those issues and the residents were all happy about that. He told them about our future plans to put in an access and parking lot from Mockingbird Hill Road and to put paved ADA walkways to both fields. The upper field, which cannot be accessed now, will be opened and there will be two good playing fields available. He did contact the Hellertown-Lower Saucon Little League so they know the 20 year lease they had with the church is being honored by us. They are continuing to use it. On the short term, we are going to put a parking area in off of Easton Road. He has to get a plan back from the engineer. In the meantime, they are parking on the grass as that's what they've been doing as long as they've been playing on that field.
- **Saucon Rail Trail** – Donna said we have a lot of different committees working on a lot of different things. The committee she's on, they are putting together a map, which is their major focus right now. The map will show where the trail goes through Hellertown, Upper Saucon, Lower Saucon and Coopersburg. It will show where parking lots are, where all the roads cross the trails, where the parking areas are and where historical sites are. Dave asked if there were any Upper Saucon representatives? Jack said no. They look like they are not interested. Donna said the person who is working on the map and the brochure, she's from Coopersburg. Dave said Coopersburg does have some people involved? Jack said they have Jennifer coming to the meetings and she's excellent. Upper Saucon and Coopersburg have not stepped up about the inter-governmental agreement. Upper Saucon is claiming they are having some issues, but we haven't

heard what they are. He doesn't know what their plan is. We are basically all moving along on our own. They are working on recommendations on all of the features they need and he's going to bring it to the meeting in May to figure out what the cost will be for surface materials, for fencing, safety features for the crossings and will see what is doable for this year. Hellertown was hoping that they just had two crossings, Water Street and Walnut Street. They are hoping they can do markings and put some signage there. One is a PennDOT crossing at Water Street. They sent in an application for a shared use agreement and PennDOT came back and said if you know Friedensville Road where it comes down to Water Street, at the top of Society Hill, there's a blinking light and another second one that's down by the entrance to Water Street. That was put there when Society Hill was built. They were required to put those blinking lights in as there is a crossing right by the Saucon Creek and Heller Homestead marked "Pedestrian Crossing". The idea was if you wanted to cross there, you pushed a button and the blinkers lit up and you walked across there and went up to a paved walkway which went up to Society Hill. They wanted Hellertown to move the one blinking light between Water Street and the trail to the other side of the trail. They want that to become the blinking light on the Hellertown side of the trail. There's an expense involved in that and we're looking to see what that will cost. It's not what we were talking about at Meadows because it's a little bit more awkward as those have to be manually pushed. You're coming down the trail and go across Water Street, you almost have to dismount and walk over, push the button and get back on your bike and the lights would blink and the traffic would stop. They have to look into Meadows Road where they've had a lot of recommendations from people on what is the safest way to do that. He requested the engineer to do a traffic study on that so we can actually come up with some conclusions on what is needed and then he will take that to Council. He's hoping to do something by the end of this month or the beginning of June. Hellertown hopefully will know what their costs are and we can say, okay, it looks good to open up portions of the trail for 2010. Dave said you can stop it right on Meadows Road. Upper Saucon put big signs up with black letters saying the trail is closed, no trespassing. Jack said there was a discussion at one of the meetings and the residents who come to a lot of the meetings said you have to put up "No Trespassing" signs. One of them was saying they wanted a sign looking to go on the trail so nobody would walk the trail. Another resident wanted it on the other side so they wouldn't walk off the trail onto their property. He went to the Solicitor and told him are we responsible to do something like this? He said no, because we're not the owner of the trail. SEPTA is the owner of the trail. If anyone has the responsibility of posting it, it would be SEPTA. We are leasing the surface and the portion we lease, we haven't opened up yet. We have not done really anything to the trail. SEPTA has cleared the tracks and the railroad ties. It's still their property, so we didn't have any legal requirements. We did block each end so motorized vehicles can't get up. People are walking on it so they are walking on it at their own risk, and that's the way we left it. Upper Saucon went and put up signs and he thinks somebody said they may have seen something in Coopersburg. Dave said he doesn't even know where you would see the trail in Coopersburg. Jack said if you go to Station Avenue, on the east side of 309, there are not too many people driving over there. Whatever they do, that's fine. Upper Saucon has a big budget. Donna said they have around \$250,000.00 set aside for this. There was a meeting at Upper Saucon and the Manager took over the meeting and was gung ho that we were going to have this done and so forth, and the next meeting he did a complete turn about and was saying we have to be careful. Hellertown and Lower Saucon are the only ones that are really gung ho. We want to get it open. We want to get people using it. Jack said Jennifer and Donna are working on the publicity, the brochure and the map. Steve LaBrake from the bike store is trying to work on the website. He has a guy who is willing to do it. Jack said we haven't worked out an agreement on who is sharing the cost of the website and he told Steve we'll have to talk about it at the next meeting. A lot of that is on hold until the next meeting. Donna said they did a lot of work on fundraising, setting up how they would do it and how they would go out to talk to different groups, and so forth, but they don't know if they get groups to raise money. If so, where is that money going to go and how is it going to be divided. Jack said if somebody walked in today and wrote a check out for \$100,000.00 for

Saucon Rail Trail, we wouldn't know what to do with it. Donna said we wouldn't know how to divide it as Upper Saucon has lots of money and then there's Coopersburg who is flat broke. Jack said Hellertown doesn't have a lot of money either. Sheri said why would any of our residents expect us to put a no trespassing sign up so people don't come onto their property. Don't you put those signs up on your own property? Jack said there's been discussions and one of the reasons they wanted to have the advisory committee so we could hear from residents who live along the trail so we can discuss these issues. There are two types of issues. One is residents have privacy issues. There's a resident who says he and his wife soak in their hot tub and they don't want people walking by. Another resident is concerned about trespassing. That's normal when you open up a rail trail. Donna said they want to know who is going to pay for this. They kind of want us to pay for it, but it's not really high on the list as we don't even have the trail yet. Sheri said there's no reason for the Township to pay for it. They purchased the property knowing it was there. Jack said to be perfectly honest, before the rail trail was there, and if the train came back, that would be a bigger problem than the rail trail. The other issue they tried to deal with were people who were concerned about the traffic and crime. Our response on that was it will be patrolled on a regular basis. It's a park and it's closed at night. The police will be there in each of the communities and will have a plan. It will be closely watched. This committee is helpful because people can come and talk about these things. In the Township, there are only about five residents who are impacted by the rail trail. The rest of it is actually the way it goes through part of the Township, the residents are up above and there are no houses. It's only around Old Mill Road and that's where the Earhart Mill was. They'll be able to solve that and come up with some resolution.

- **Grants** – No update.
- **Volunteer/Scout Projects** – No update.

6. Old Business:

- **Joint Recreation Study Committee – Update** – Jack said Dave was at the last meeting and we were struggling to get a turn out. This is the group made up of representatives from the Borough, the Township and the school district. Long term, the goal is to form into some sort of recreation commission or authority that would have responsibility for all of the recreation – the athletic fields, it could encompass the community pool in Hellertown and in long range, it could involve a building for winter sports and whatever other recreational type of asset that the community needs. There were issues last time about the kind of losing control or ownership, and that will be worked out. There were issues with insurance and we will try to work that out also. The big thing is going to be cost because if we do go into this, and if there's a separate body, they are going to do a budget, then come to the Borough, Township and school district and say this is what you owe for 2011 and 2012. Dave said he can see one of the things could be that the economy scales would be cost per entity. Jack said if they do want to do programs, they could be fee based. Dave said he sees that as the only direction. All these school districts are cutting and it makes sense. Jack said the two issues that are coming up and they are perfect for this group, is the first thing at the Reinhardt School, the Borough is going to demolish all of the buildings in that area. They have a bid out. They got money to do it from Northampton County. The only hold up is they have to go through the state as tour commission and they have to give them an okay because it's over 50 years old and you need clearance. We need to get that done and it'll be all green space, athletic fields. They are talking on the Hellertown Borough Council about some type of building that could house winter sports. Something simple and inexpensive that would work like a pole bar building. That's something that this group is perfect for discussing as we can all look at it on a regional basis and see what the cost is. The second thing is the Hellertown Community Pool. We are working with them on the tickets so we can see if the resident is from Lower Saucon or from Hellertown. They want to start talking

to us long-range about improvements to the pool and that's another good subject for a group like this. We work it out that you just go to the ticket office at Dimmick and you pay the money and you pay the same as a Hellertown resident. The rates are on the website. Dave said it makes sense for Hellertown. Jack said half the people who go there are from the Township. We just need to look at that long term. This group is exactly what we need. We'll move along and keep you posted. Sheri said there's an interesting pole building up in Scranton. There were three soccer games and two basketball games going on all at the same time. It was a steel building and all hardwood floors, all in the same building. Dave said the turf fields are really getting popular. Jack said they might have to look into something like that.

Jack said the blue bird boxes are going up at Polk Valley Park. The scout, Patrick Miller, took that on as an Eagle Scout project. He's going to see the boxes popping up at several locations out at the park. He also did kestrel and bat boxes. The only holdup on kestrel and bat boxes is they have to be mounted high up, but not in trees. We are looking at putting them on the utility poles out there. Kestrel is kind of a falcon type of bird. It's very beneficial and eats a lot of insects. We have the bat condo up at Kingston Park and individual bat houses are very good and are good at cutting down on insects. Donna said they put up blue bird boxes and the squirrels took them over. What they should do it put a plate on the front of it with a smaller hole. These were mounted on different trees and had a lot of blue birds when they were mounted the first year. Jack said you could probably put a baffle on them.

- **Integrated Pest Management Policy** – Jack said this has been worked on. We worked on this with the Township Planner and it's gone through the EAC and they had a guy on there who was a chemical engineer and he looked at it and tweaked it. It's a plan for us to work on our athletic fields and other township properties. This is the final draft. It sets down the policy on long term pest protection and non-chemical methods and first considerations when selecting treatment methods. Sometimes you have to use a chemical base, but we'll first look at it. The least toxic method will be chosen. It's been worked on pretty well. He'd like a recommendation so they can get it to Council to get it adopted and start. Motion by Dave to recommend the Integrated Pest Management Policy to Council, second by Tom. All in favor.
- **Cyclocross Event** – Jack said he took the draft of the special events policy and he touched on all of those issues in there and addressed how all that would be taken care of. He's addressed about everything. It still needs our recommendation and approval from Township Council. Public Works is on board. Dave said it's a cross between a mountain bike and a racing bike. Jack said Chris will come in once more before you make your final recommendation. He's going to utilize part of the Public Works and then outside of the multi-purpose fields. Dave said they'll probably be at least 100 to 200 participants. Donna asked if they charge for a spectator? Jack said no. Chris means the proceeds would be the registration which is paid for by the contestants, and then they are going to invite someone to sell hot dogs and things like that.

7. New Business:

- **Review Site Plan (2200 Wassergass Road Site Plan)** – Jack said this is the old Wassergass school. He wants to do a business incubator and is moving ahead with it. It will be a series of office space and use it temporary like if you have a start up business. He's addressing all of the issues. It's not going to be that busy and parking isn't that much of an issue. Dave said over the years, everyone who brings anything, they shoot it down. Jack said they did get the okay from zoning to put something in like this. He has to address some of the issues on the site. Mr. Haddad purchased it from Abe Atiyeh. They are going to Planning also. He's not sure if there is a recreation fee. He's trying to work on the field in the back and make it available for soccer. Sheri said that's all well accepted.

- Jack said next month is June. He asked where the board wanted to have their meeting? Dave said he'd like to go near the rail trail. Jack said okay, we can do that. Dave said is there somewhere to park and we could meet informally in that area? Jack said there's no access at Old Mill Road or Meadows Road. Donna said we didn't get to Heller Homestead last year. Jack said that's an idea. We could either go to the Heller Homestead or park at the Water Street Park in Hellertown and just get on the trail right there. The scenic area is to park down at the Grist Mill and go on from there and walk down to our section. We could walk down to Meadows Road also. Jack will send something out next month reminding everyone about the meeting.

8. **Adjournment:** Motion by Dave, second by Scott to adjourn. All in favor. The time was 8:35 PM.