
Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

May 14, 2007

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** 6:00 pm Polk Valley Park

2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Bill Ross, Chair; Dave Spirk, Vice-Chair; Tom Butera, Bernadette Fong, Michaelann Berger, Steve Zaharakis, members; Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison; Rick Tralies, Boucher & James; Carol Schneider Guests: Glenn Kern, Council President; Tom Maxfield, Council Vice-President; Sandy Yerger, Council Member; Ron Horiszny, Council Member; Rich Schuyler, Ed Sinko, HLSLL; Mike Heenan, Lou Moyer, SVSL; Erik Schneider, Saucon Valley Youth Sports (Football, Cheerleading), Saucon Valley Lacrosse; Bob & Kathy Rosar, Lenny Szy

Absent: Scott Schanzenbach

3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the Parks & Recreation Board meeting for April 2, 2007 were approved.

4. **Citizen Agenda Items:** Jack welcomed the Township Council members and representatives from the youth sports groups to Polk Valley Park. Jack stated that the Park will be opening next Spring and the Township wanted to give the sports groups and opportunity to tour the park and provide the Township with feedback and recommendations. Jack gave a brief overview of the park facilities (3 multi-purpose, 2 softball/baseball fields; tot-lot, future pavilion). Jack passed around a list of the Remaining Items – Polk Valley Park Development which listed: Roadway Construction/Improvements; Pavement Markings; Septic & Well; Lighting; Landscaping; Pathways & trails; Miscellaneous; Park Amenities; Additional, which were contained in the approved park plan. Jack indicated that there will be no sidewalks in the interior of the park. The well & septic have been deferred. The lights at the end of Reservoir Road by the emergency access gate were eliminated by Council and there will be no lights in the park. The landscaping consists of fencing, including backstops, protective fencing around the basins and infiltration facilities, trees & shrubs which Rick from Boucher & James is working on. Council had asked for additional landscaping along the Rosar property. Council has a plan for a walking trail around the perimeter of the park. There will not be any paved pathways in the park. The concrete steps have been eliminated. We will be putting in a connector trail linking the school district campus with the park. There will be appropriate signage placed around the park. There will not be water fountains. Doggie bag stations will be put in for use with the proposed dog park. Bernadette and Michaelann have been working on recommendations for equipment for the tot lot. The pavilion will be a future item. There will be park & player benches, picnic tables and trash receptables.

The group toured the park property. At the upper ball field there were comments about the poor growth of the infield turf and Dave Spirk asked the Council members to consider hiring an agronomist to come and look at the fields several times a year and advise Roger on how to maintain the turf in Township parks. It was pointed out that Hellertown Borough had the equipment to aerate the playing fields down at the Gristmill. Park & Recreation Board members advised that aeration of the fields was the number one recommendation from Mr. Oatis of the PGA who looked at the turf in the park last year. Bill Ross advised that the Park & Recreation Board would like to see 2 out of the 3 fields used in a season and one not used to recover re-grow. The soccer representatives stated that they would use their current game fields as practice fields and start playing their games on the Polk

Valley fields next season. The representatives advised that in the Spring there would be a heavy demand for fields because lacrosse will be in season and is growing more popular. It was also pointed out that per Mr. Oatis's recommendation, the field/goal placements should be moved around to preserve the fields. One issue that was raised was whether we could use combination football/soccer goals? The soccer representatives felt that the fields were large enough that they could fit three (3) smaller sized soccer playing areas on each of the fields. Rick pointed out that the fields were constructed large enough to leave open space areas around the fields. The baseball representatives stated that their Pony (9 & 10 year olds), Tee-ball, Knee-high Divisions, girls softball who now play most of their games in Dimmick Park, Southeastern Park, Reinhardt School, the Easton Road church field would use the upper baseball/softball field. The group thought that the condition of the grass on the playing fields was pretty good. There were some poor spots around the edges of the fields. Several of the sports representatives asked about lighting for the playing fields? Jack stated that the Council did not want any lights in the park to disturb the neighbors. Rick stated that for the park's steep slopes they will be recommending a planting with a natural seed mix to grow wildflowers up on the steep slopes. As a backing for the outfield there will be a split rail fence with a green mesh liner. They have not decided what they are going to recommend in the ravines between the soccer fields but it will be some type of shrubs and natural vegetation to delineate where the ground does go down. The group stated that the large ravine will probably become a ball collection area and any that gets planted there will get trampled on. Rick stated that it will be hardy plants similar to what's along a highway.

Jack gave a brief overview of the connector trail that will run between the school and park. It will include a pedestrian bridge over Polk Valley Run. He stated that the Township has a grant application in to the County for a grant to fund the trail and bridge and is sharing the costs with the school.

The group walked over to the Nor Car property and Rick gave an overview of the concept plan for the wildflower meadow and buffer areas and a dog park. The dog park would be approximately an acre in the southeast corner of the property. There will be a grass walking trail system running through the property. The idea will be to keep dogs off the park property. One question was where the residents will park their cars? It was pointed out that there was a potential parking area where the recreation building was planned that could be used. Dogs will be allowed in the park but will have to be leashed and policed. A visitor asked if there were any other plans for this property? The Council President stated that they wanted to keep it as natural as possible to keep costs down. Tom Maxfield pointed out that when the Township sent out surveys the majority of the people wanted walking trails so that is what the Council is trying to do. A Park & Recreation representative stated that a potential future use would be to have an adult sized baseball field with 90 foot bases that the high school could play on. One visitor asked if there were plans for the house on the property? Jack said that there were no plans for it. One suggestion was to use it as a senior center. A Park & Recreation Board member stated that he thought that they recommended at least 2 acres minimum for dog parks? Rick stated that it could be of varying sizes. It is a pretty minimal structure with just a fence. If it had to be enlarged it could be.

The group walked up the road to the top of the park. Sandy Yerger explained where there would be extensive trees plantings and natural areas. The park will be a combination of both active and passive activities.

Michaelann Berger and Bernadette Fong distributed brochures and printouts of types of playground that they had been researching for the playground at the park. They would prefer a combined play area for all ages instead of having one area for the tots and another for the school age children. This makes it easier for parents to monitor the play of their children of both age groups. They would like to see a large playscape area where an older child could be on one end of the playscape and a

younger child could be on the other end, and one parent can watch them. One suggestion from the group was to put the small tot play equipment closest to where the pavilion would be located. The play equipment should be able to accommodate children from ages 2 through 12. They are also interested in a rock climbing wall. One of their thoughts was to possibly put some of the smaller tot play sets along the perimeter trails around the park. Jack stated that the grant application that was submitted to Northampton County included a request for funding for playground equipment. There was a short discussion about the surfacing that should be used for the play area. Sandy Yerger said that she would like to see play equipment like rocks and climbing areas be combined with nature educational information for the children. Michaelann said that she would like the Township to consider shifting one of the playground equipment sets at Town Hall Park to Steel City. Jack said that Rick is in the process of evaluating the facilities at Steel City Park and will look into this.

Jack stated that he would like to receive any recommendations from the sports groups on the use of the playing fields by the end of this year. Carol Schneider gave a brief overview of how the Township fields and pavilions are reserved and rented out. The pavilions are usually reserved by February of each year. The sports representatives said that after seeing the fields in person they are surprised at the amount of space is available. They said that they would like to be able to come up to the park and take measurements to come up recommendations on how they would parcel up the fields. Jack said that he would also like to get an understanding from the groups on the maintenance of the fields.

5. **Projects:**

- **Town Hall Park** – no report
- **Southeastern Park** – no report
- **Steel City** – no report
- **Heller Homestead** – no report
- **Polk Valley Park** – no report
- **Grants** – no report
- **Volunteer Scout Projects** – no report

6. **Old Business:**

- **Saucon Valley Community Center Programs** – Michaelann stated that she, Bernadette and Jack met with Erin and Teresa from the Saucon Valley Community Center to discuss the operation, staffing and supervision of the summer recreation programs.

7. **New Business:**

- **Review Site Plans** - Plans for the Agentis Brothers Preliminary Land Development Plan and Pierpont Proposed Bank Preliminary Land development were not reviewed as there was no potential recreational space on these sites.

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Submitted by Jack Cahalan