

Draft Minutes

Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

July 7, 2008

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** 7:10 pm

2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Tom Butera, Vice Chair; Bill Ross, Sheri Herman, Members; Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison

Absent: Dave Spirk, Chair; Scott Schanzenbach

3. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of June 2, 2008 were approved.

4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items:** Nothing

5. **Projects:**

- **Town Hall Park:** Jack said the Boy Scout will start planting next week along the Nature Trail. The bushes came in this week at Neighbors. Jack advised about a problem they had with a group that came from St. Michael's School to use the pavilion on June 12th. He said that the group of children was well over the 125 person capacity they allow for picnics at Town Hall Park and they were inadequately supervised. They were not supposed to be using the ball field and after they left it was discovered that home plate and the pitchers rubber had been pulled up. This is the first time that we have had any vandalism like this. Jack handed out copies of the letter he sent to the principal at St. Michael's which stated that we were holding them responsible for the vandalism. He's hoping she'll give them a positive response. Someone said they hope they don't apply for a Town Hall Park pavilion permit next year. Jack said the Saucon Valley Community Center (SVCC) runs the summer recreation program at four (4) of our parks. At Town Hall Park, the kids start off the program at the basketball court, then they go up to the pavilion in late morning for crafts and snacks. He was advised that a large group of disabled adults and counselors were just showing up and using the pavilion around 11 AM everyday and they were interfering with the SVCC program. They come in 12-16 passenger vans with Lehigh University decals on them. Jack said he went up to the pavilion one day to speak to one of the counselors and learned that they were from a program called Community Choices that is run by Lehigh University and he asked them to fill out and return a registration form with the insurance information for the pavilion use. Sheri said that Lehigh has several programs in Special Education where the students get hands on experience working with disabled individuals by driving them around and helping them with home care. Someone said they probably think it's a public park and they don't have to ask permission to use it. Jack said with the SVCC, he is working with them on procedures on how they deal with situations like this where outside children and adults might mingle and interfere with their programs. We are thinking of posting signs at the parks during the summer programs to advise the public that there are programs in progress and they are to report to the program supervisor if they want to use the park.

- **Heller Homestead:** Jack said we are working with the SVCC on the summer recreation program at the Heller Homestead Park. He's a little concerned about that because there are no recreation facilities on the property. We're supposed to get some connection between the Saucon Valley Conservancy and the SVCC for some historical related programs for the children, but that hasn't happened yet. The kids are starting out at the Heller Homestead and ending up at the Water Street Park across the street in Hellertown Borough which has a playground. On the Nature Trail, Jack showed the signs that the Girl Scout did that will be put up along the trail. They need to be laminated and touched up a little bit. Regarding the issue with the use of the treated wood for the signs he took that to the EAC and they looked at the information on the wood product that was purchased at Lowes for the signs. Bob Davis from the EAC, who is a Chemical Engineer, said the signs are okay. There is a danger if dust is produced and inhaled, which is not going to be the case with the display signs. Jack said he's going to try to set up a short little dedication ceremony for the Girl Scout, Mary Beth Paskewicz, who did the work on the interpretative signs for the Nature Trail
- **Southeastern Park:** Jack said that there are wildflowers growing in the meadow. The Saucon Creek Watershed Association will be holding a conference in October where Larry Weaner (who designed the meadow) will be one of the presenters and they will have some money left over and want to donate it toward the construction of the trails in the meadow. We also have some money in our budget, plus the \$5,000 grant we received, and we have been lacking someone to take charge and handle the completion of this project, so the help from the Watershed Association will be great.
- **Steel City Park:** Jack said the August Park & Recreation meeting will be held at the Steel City Fire House. The main topic of discussion will be a visioning session to gather recommendations from residents and groups on improvements they would like to see at Steel City Park. Jack said he will be putting some signs up to invite the public to join us for the meeting and he will be sending out letters to community organizations inviting them to the meeting. The Township Planner, Judy Stern Goldstein, will lead the visioning process and will have some sketches of some of the plans. The Township did acquire another .2 of an acre adjacent to the park which can be used for off-street parking. One of ideas we have is to reduce the amount of black top at the park and create a regulation size baseball field. Tom asked about the skateboarders. Jack said he spoke to Jane Finger and told her that the young men came to a Saucon Valley Partnership meeting and gave a great presentation and made a good impression on the SVP members. Jack said there were recent news articles about the City of Bethlehem unveiling their plans for a state-of-the-art skateboard park near Daly Avenue on the proposed Bethlehem Greenway. They are working with the guy who owns a skate board shop in Bethlehem. It sounds like it's going to be very impressive.
- **Polk Valley Park:** Jack said the park is looking better everyday. They are finishing up the Phase III landscaping now and working on installing the fencing and the dog park. The last part it to put the backstops up at the baseball fields and the dug out fencing. They are also finishing up the work on the trails. One of the issues at the park was the parking. They asked the Township Engineer to look at this and he came up with a plan to install 18 more parking spaces in the top parking lot. There has been a problem with visiting teams who are parking on the grass along the roads. The police will give out tickets now if someone is parked on the grass. Bill said the lower parking lot between the baseball field and the soccer field; we should put some steps there. Jack said that we

are hoping to conclude our negotiations with the property owner to install the Connector Trail between Polk Valley Park and the school district campus.

- **Kingston Park:** No update
- **Grants:** No update
- **Volunteer /Scout Projects:** Jack said this was covered under Polk Valley Park.

6. Old Business:

- **Polk Valley Park Phase III Improvements - Update:** Jack said this was covered under Polk Valley Park.
- **PVP - SVSD Connector Trail - Update:** Jack said this was covered under Polk Valley Park.
- **SEPTA Rails to Trail Project:** Jack said this is going to be a big project. They are planning to have a public meeting on the Rails-to-Trails Project here at the Township on August 8th. The trail will run from Upper Saucon Township up to Bachman Street in Hellertown. The section from Bachman Street up to Saucon Park in the City of Bethlehem will not be open as it belongs to Norfolk Southern and is leased to a private owner. Someone asked if it will ever connect to Bethlehem. Jack said he thinks eventually it will connect. Jack said that when PennDOT widens 412 in 2010 there is supposed to be a bike lane on 412. Jack said on the SEPTA line, they own a 60 foot right of way and the tracks take up 20 feet. SEPTA is getting ready to award a contract to a contractor to go in and remove the rails and ties and cut vegetation. The purpose of the public meeting is to inform the public of what's happening with the Rails-to-Trails project because some property owners may have some concerns as it goes behind some people's backyards. People have grown accustomed to having the inactive railbed in their back yard. Bill asked if we might be able to get a utilities easement under the old railroad tracks? Jack said they had talked about that and Brad Youst from the LSA had told the Council that that would not work because down by the McDonalds the cut you'd have to do to get down to the creek level would be too great and you'd have to build it back up with the assumption that the railroad might come back. We're having discussion with Hellertown right now about the draft Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan which is going through the Planning Commissions. The plan is now on the Township website – SVP page, if you want to take a look at it. We're trying to get that adopted first by the Township and Borough and then we can look at the sewer-water issues on a regional basis and look at what the capacity is and try to address the issues with the sewer conveyance through Hellertown. Hellertown has its own issues with their sewer system. Jack said they thought it would be better if they looked at it on a regional basis. Sheri asked if there was a map where the trail will go. Jack said he only has a 1923 railroad map and the Planner is working with that. They will have a map produced for the public meeting. The Planner and Engineer will work on that and we will put it on display in all of the municipalities and then the public can look at it if anyone has any concerns. He'll be sending out a letter to everyone about the meeting.
- **August 4th Visioning Meeting at Steel City Park:** Jack said this was covered under Steel City Park. The meeting will start at 7:00 PM.

7. New Business:

- **Heller Homestead Nature Loop Interpretative Sign Project Dedication:**

Jack said this was covered under Heller Homestead.

- **Dog Park Opening:** Jack said this was covered under Polk Valley Park. Someone asked when the Dog Park opening would be. Jack said he'll have to get back to them as they just planted the grass. Sheri said what if a dog bites her dog and that dog doesn't have shots? Jack said the Township has adopted Dog Park Regulation which will be posted. The dogs must have their shots.
- **Review Site Plans (Tarantino Minor Subdivision: Wassergass Road Site Plan, Redington Estates at Lower Saucon Major; Leithsville Cell Site Conditional Use):** Jack said they are changing the cell tower in Leithsville. The Wassergass Road Site Plan, they have an idea about using it as extended stay suites. It's like a hotel you would stay in for extended periods of time. Someone said it's not a bad usage, but he doesn't know if people are going to drive to Lower Saucon. Sheri said you may get a lot of people who may want to stay there while they are building their homes. Jack said they were talking about the Iron Pigs maybe staying there. There have some sewer issues with that property.

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned. The time was 7:55 PM.