

**Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board
Visioning Meeting on Improvements to Steel City Park
Steel City Firehouse - August 4, 2008**

Visioning Session began at 7:05 PM.

Jack welcomed everyone and introduced the Council members and Park & Recreation Board members in attendance. Jack introduced the Township Planner, Judy Stern Goldstein from Boucher & James Consulting Engineers, Inc. who will lead the visioning session.

Judy said that Angel and Tara wanted to let all of their neighbors in Steel City know that they would like to start organizing the yard sale for this year.

Judy said Valerie Spooner and Stacy Ogur from her staff are with her tonight. They are lucky enough to have the fire hall tonight. She'd like everyone to please sign in. They are trying to get what the community vision is. Not just the size of the park, what it's going to be used for, but how are you going to see it in the future. They are going to ask three questions which they will hand out. The first one is what do you most like about the Steel City Park today? The second would be what do you like least about Steel City Park today? They learn a lot more about what you don't like. The third question is what would you like to see happen in the future with Steel City Park? Everyone gets their say. We're going to go around the room. They are going to write down each person's answer. Everyone will get a chance to vote. We'll tally each one and report back to Council in order for us to come up with a plan for your park.

Judy said question 1 is: **"What do you most like about Steel City Park today?"** Megan said she likes the addition of the two pavilions and she sees a lot more families utilizing the park. Steve said he will pass. They see problems no one else sees. He lives too close to it. Sherry said they are here to say what they don't like. They like nothing. Kareen likes the convenience and it's pretty well maintained. Lee said it's a nice and small local park. Chris Snyder said its more family oriented than it has been in the past. Chris who was representing the Little League said now he's 43, and he has a lot of friends in Steel City, and as a child he used to ride his bike up to Steel City and play on that park all day, and as an adult now, involved with Little League. He thinks the accessibility of the park, public access to the park. Cindy said she likes that there's a lot of open space in the park and it's not real crowded, open areas for Frisbees, etc. Chelsea said she likes the playground equipment. Someone said there is not much traffic. Someone said there are two separate age appropriate play areas which are visible. Tara said she likes that there is a toddler area. John said it's a beautiful facility and the children enjoy it. Stacey said all park elements are visible. Scott said it's relatively undeveloped. Zach said he likes the basketball courts. Matt said the kids like the community park program there.

Judy said question 2 is: **What do you like least about Steel City Park?** John said it's across the street and if the baseball program gets any larger, the township will have to do something about the parking along Schwab Avenue. It has to be addressed. Matt said the size of the baseball field. Devin said there are bee's nests in the slides. Zach said he doesn't like the fact that there aren't any public bathrooms. Erin said lack of bathrooms too. Last year some bikers were making jumps. It's not that much of a problem this year...inappropriate use of the park. Someone said the parking is a problem. Allen said he'd like to see better maintenance of the ball fields. Tara said there are no walkways to get from one side of the playground to the other side...lack of walkways between the elements. Angel said there are not enough swings. Someone said poor drainage on the paved macadam court. Chelsea said the swings are too high. Judy said that reason the swings are too high is because the surfacing needs to come up a little, that's a maintenance issue. Cindy said the walkways, but there's no paved area to walk, ride your bike or roller blade...no walking paths for recreation. Chris said nothing. Lee said they like to see the grass cut more often. Chris Snyder said the gate on Riverside is not self closing. Pete said he walks around and picks up the cans that people throw around...the litter. Kareen said the vandalism that goes on at the park. Someone said not enough police presence.

Judy said question 3 is: **What would you like to see happen in the future with Steel City Park?** Chelsea said a dog park. Judy said there is a dog park being built at Polk Valley Park. The fence and gate are up and it will be

open in 2009. Cindy said more paved walkways for recreation for riding bike, jogging or walking your dog. Someone said they'd like to see the ball field more maintained with a real infield so it could be used as a practice field. Lee said a larger ball field. Chris said more enforcement of the park rules. Someone said better enforcement of the rules and they want people to follow the rules. Judy said to follow the rules is a community issue. Kareen said she'd like to see better maintenance of the grass, cut it lower. Maryann said more designated off-street parking. Sherry said the kids need to behave in this park. They should take responsibility for the park. Someone said if we are looking at the park, we have to look at where the access is to the park. The gate on Riverside is not the smartest thing. The second gate is on the corner next to an active garage and the third gate off of Schwab Avenue is the gates from hell...re-evaluate the entrance to the park and the access gates. Megan said a closing time of 11:00 PM is really late, a lot of parks in Bethlehem close at 9:00 PM. By dusk, the kids have to be out of the park. A lot of time she gets out of the cars and approaches the kids. This is our park. This is our community. Every time she drives by and sees anything, she'll stop and tell them. The 11:00 PM curfew is unbelievable. A 10 year old should not to be out at that time enjoying a park. She has two teenagers and at 11:00 PM they are certainly not going to be out at the park. It might help alleviate some problems, so the park hours should be adjusted - close it earlier. Someone said the park doesn't have lighting in it, there is no reason anyone should be in beyond dark. Someone said there is lighting at the basketball court. Angel said better maintenance of the playground equipment area. There is thistle growing in the mulch there. Tara said walkway from street to playground...between the elements, like connect the dot walkways. John said when the tennis court was originally built; there was a drain there, now it's covered. Erin said better public restroom facilities...no port-a potties. Judy said she can't promise everything, she has to see where the sewer is, but that's your vision. Someone said he'd like to keep it simple. Someone said more landscaping, flower beds. Zach said more land if you get it so there could be a pool there. Someone said the backstop needs to be raised and improved. Someone said there is a drainage problem, it needs to be improved. Improve the surface of the paved sports court.

Judy said they will vote on this now. She will hand out the green and red dots. You vote for what you want and what is most important to you. Be fair. The township is trying to get a fair vision of what this group wants in the future. She can't promise you will get everything you want, but she will promise that each comment will be reviewed.

The group voted and Judy said the first question, the winner with 15 votes is for ***parks programs***. The second place was ***basketball court*** with 12 dots. Tied for third is ***keep it simple and developed*** and ***small and local***.

The second question, the winner was ***no walking paths***, which was also tied with ***poor drainage in the sports court***. Second place was ***not enough area for older kids*** and no. 3 is ***no public restrooms***. Other items that drew votes were ***no parking*** and ***no appropriate use of the ball fields***.

The third question, the winner was ***better enforcement of the park rules***. Number 2 is a ***volleyball court***. Number 3 was ***better maintenance of the playground***.

This is telling us that so many of you came, you care about the park. It's important and it's your park. We have some parks in other communities where people don't care. You are telling us you like the basketball courts, the park programs. The Park and Recreation Board has a lot to look at and Boucher & James will be working with the Park and Recreation Board to see how this fits into the design of a new park.

Tom. Maxfield thanked everyone for coming. Dave Spirk from the Parks and Recreation Board said there are a lot of things they hadn't even thought of, so thanks again for coming. Someone said they want to have a park available for all ages and make sure the park is for everybody. Priscilla deLeon said it's an old fashioned play park and people like that. People like the summer program and that's a good thing. She'd like to thank the staff and the Parks and Recreation Board for helping set up this meeting.

Jack said that the Township did acquire an additional .2 acres next to the park that will be utilized in the planning that we will be doing for park improvements. He said thank you very much for the information you provided to us tonight.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned. The time was 8:15 p.m.

**Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board
Regular Meeting
Steel City Firehouse - August 4, 2008**

Dave Spirk called the meeting to order. The time was 8:25 PM.

Roll Call: **Present:** Dave Spirk, Chair; Tom Butera, Vice Chair; Bill Ross, Scott Schanzenbach, Sheri Herman, Members; Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison; Guests: Priscilla deLeon, Rett & Priscilla Oren

Priscilla Oren said she'll give a review why we're here. They are volunteers in Sarasota County Park, a 45,000 acre park, the largest state park in Florida. They have to wear uniforms. They also have a Sarasota County Park which is 25,000 acres and is adjacent to each other and form the large land mass. It's very good for our enjoyment. They volunteer at the Carlton Reserves. They were asked to plan a geocaching event by the Park Ranger. They knew what geocaching basics were, but most people never even heard of it. It's an international phenomenon and it's picking up. The reason parks are involved is because it's non-private land. Since they got involved down there, they had a one day event where geocachers came in and they hid items and other geocachers found them.

Rett Oren said it's a high tech treasure hunt. He showed them the GPS Receiver which gets data from six satellites. This started when the military released the rights to the satellites and to the public domain. A couple of these technical guys said they would hide things, give me the coordinates, and you go find it. This is the way it started. Then they used the Internet to say here's where I located a cache and give you the coordinates. This has been going since 2000. They've been involved for six months, and so far they found 40 geocaches here in the local area. The way it works, you go on the Internet and type in your zip code and it will tell you the location of all the caches and tell you the distance and miles from your house. He typed in the address of the Town Hall and the nearest caches were .25 miles away. It was across the river and they found it already. That's what it is in summary, a high tech treasure hunt. In LST Parks, there are not any caches and they'd like to get permission for caches in the Lower Saucon Parks. All the surrounding communities, Upper Saucon and Hellertown do this. The DCNR has a guidelines and a form for them to complete. Basically what they do is they want you to register what you are doing in the park.

Priscilla said people started putting out these caches in public domains and then that's how the Park Ranger we worked with got involved. Sarasota County said people were discovering things and they didn't know what was going on. People were planting them and we should know what's going on. Our Park Ranger was put in charge of all Sarasota parks. Anyone who wants to put something on that land has to go through him and fill out a form for approval. We're suggesting to you is that's probably the way you want to do this. Priscilla deLeon said she doesn't understand this. Jack said they were approached by a gentleman who lives at Four Seasons and he brought it to the Park and Rec board and Jack said he did some research on the Internet on geocaching.

Priscilla Oren said this will bring people into your parks and most people who do geocaches follow rules, they don't trash things. They don't have tools, so you don't bury things. All things have to be hidden. It could be as small as a film canister or a lipstick tube. People are very tricky. She showed things that you might find. Kids love this. Then there are travel bugs. Rett Oren said you take things and you leave things with equal or greater value. Jack said these types of things have been along trails for years before there were GPS's. They were little boxes and you'd open it up and take a small toy or something.

Someone asked if there is any device associated with these objects sending out this signal? Rett said no, it's all with coordinates that the GPS unit locates. You need at least four satellite receptions. It sends signals out with differences of time. This device will get you within about 20 feet. It's better if you are in a parking lot with no

trees. The military has things today that are more accurate. The trees will cause a signal to bounce a little bit. When you go to find a cache that's in the woods, your accuracy will only be about 25 feet. If you go to an open playground, you'll probably get within five feet. You go to the Internet and it will tell you the size of the container. They disguise them, they camouflage them. You want to do is find that geocache and sign in and put a date on it. Then we go home and log in on the Internet and make a comment about the hide. Sometimes you can't find it. It's so much fun. We tend to go to ones that were found recently. It will say on it that it's a geocache and then it tells you what geocaching is. An adult would understand it. We get people into our park worldwide. There are coins and those are really good things to get. There are travel bugs with numbers on them and then you go back and say you found this trackable item. We found a coin here that came from Alberta, Canada and its goal was to go to Cozumel, Mexico and it worked.

Someone said to be a geocacher, do you have to join this website? Rett Oren said no, it's free. Hunters and fisherman loves these things. We recommend you have the people who want to do it fill out a sheet. You could put one in each park and say visit all our Lower Saucon Parks. The area in back of Town Hall would be great. Priscilla Oren said a lot of people use magnetic holders and put them under guard rails. There are three over by the Promenade Shops. You can put them under benches by using velcro. Some people just love to hide them. We are getting ready to hide some things. They have to register with www.geocach.com They either say yes or no. You can't be in high traffic areas or it can't be within four miles of each other. You have to keep in mind the children.

Rett Oren said they were a picnic in NJ. They logged onto the computer. There was a kid that's pretty bright there and there was one 1.6 miles away. It was right over this mountain. So they get to this thing and there's a huge pile of rocks all covered with moss. What does this kid do – he climbs up the rocks and found it. He went back and was all excited about it. It's an activity for all ages.

Priscilla Oren said the geocachers have a thing called CITO (Carry In - Trash Out). There are geocachers all over the Lehigh Valley and they all have their own club. They take certain parks on certain days and clean up all the parks. We are going to recommend to Sarasota County who has their emblem put on a coin and that will be a trackable item. You just have to try it. Go on the website. Your kids would absolutely love it. There are 6,000 caches out there. They all use the same website. That's the only place you can get the coordinates.

Rett Oren said if you would put a cache behind Town Hall, you would have to register it and it would have to be approved by geocach.com who would basically bless it and say its okay. You have two levels of approval then people would go out and find it.

MOTION BY: Dave Spirk moved that we ask Rett and Priscilla to make a plan for us including how it gets done and where it gets hidden in each park and then recommend to Council that they allow this to happen.

SECOND BY: Bill Ross

ROLL CALL: 5-0

Rett Oren said if we would put the caches out, we'd be responsible for it. If there's a problem we'd get notified. Someone said, as a committee, can we do this without Council's acceptance and ask Rett and Priscilla to make a proposal for us. Then we can take it to Council and say this is what we'd like to do, this is the spot we'd like to bury it, we are not doing the burying, we are not supplying the object. We have to hear a plan first.

You have to put the coordinates into the site first and get approval. Priscilla Oren said you are going to have people do it in parks with or without your permission so it's better to have a format. At least you'll now know what geocaching is. They are all along the canals and about a dozen in Lower Saucon Township. There's one in the very wealthy development in Lower Saucon Township.

Someone said we have to go to Council to make them aware of it and seek permission. What we would like from you is guidance where in the park is a good place and we'd have to put restrictions on where you can and where you can't do it. You don't want them in wetlands or where people walk.

Jack said you'd have to fill out a form before you would hide something. Rett Oren said they want to hide it where it's the least obvious place possible.

Someone said what's to prevent people just driving down the road and putting one in the park down the road? Priscilla Oren said you need to get permission from the landowner first. Premise Maid Ice Cream Stand approved one because they want people to come in there and get ice cream. We found one on the Freemansburg Canal. She doesn't know who gave permission. You are going to hear it somewhere again, so we are suggesting you all become a little more familiar with it. Families do this all the time. The website is so good and tells you the history, and it's very scientific.

Rett Oren said his model sells for about \$200.00. You just have to have the unit on and press "mark" and it records the longitude and latitude. Priscilla Oren said she was using it for her ancestor's grave yards as they are so lost so she'd put the coordinates where the graves were.

Jack said send him the information. Priscilla Oren said for a Parks program, geocaching would be a good one day program. They probably had 100 people who showed up from all over the country who wanted to find the 22 objects we hid in our park. It's great for retirees.

MOTION BY: Dave Spirk amended his previous motion and asked that Rett and Priscilla give Jack a proposal.
SECOND BY: Tom Butera
ROLL CALL: 5-0

Rett Oren said you'd have to present to your Council some guidelines for the process and tell them this is a growing phenomenon and set up some sort of process. We're asking if you could give Jack a proposal and fill out the paperwork.

Priscilla Oren said she hopes this helps you understand it a little better. On the Internet, it tells you what you are looking for, the size, and they even do this scuba diving. They hide things for kayakers, for mountain climbers. Check it out. It's www.geocaching.com one of the premier geocachers in the Lehigh Valley is Tyson Sprandel. He's the Director of Safe Harbor and holds the record for first finds, which means as soon as those coordinates are out there, he's out there. He would probably be your best bet for the contact as he lives in Bethlehem. Down on the canal, the one we found was in a post and it was a micro and they pulled it out, there was a scroll in it, they signed it, went back, logged in and said they found it. People play all sorts of games and you have to figure out where it is. Clues are given also.

There's a meeting of the geocachers of the Lehigh Valley in September and we'd like to get the approval for Lower Saucon by that time. We need to get this to a Council meeting after Jack Cahalan gets the proposal from Priscilla and Rett. They will be in touch with Jack Cahalan. They are called the "Bird Guise".

Jack said he had a couple of quick updates.

Polk Valley Park Phase I improvements - Jack said the landscaping is almost finished, the fencing is up, the Dog Park has been seeded, and the other thing that has to be done is the trails have to be paved. Then Phase I is basically finished. The signage has gone up this past week. Take a ride out and look at the park. Dave said Tom Maxfield and him have been talking about the detention pond that's in there with grass. Grass is not a deciduous plant life. We should consider almost the same thing as what in Southeastern has at their park, a meadow type grass. You have to go in there every couple of weeks and cut it. We worked hard to get Southeastern to get to that point. Someone said why don't we put a fountain in it. Someone said we have to watch about the fencing and people going in, but that's a good consideration. Let's make some sort of natural habitat areas. We were just at the Heller Homestead and there was a nice presentation from Mary Beth Paskewicz who did the signs for the Nature Trail. We walked around and came out by Society Hill and there's a big detention pond with concrete on the bottom. We were talking about can we be on the forefront and come up with a better solution for these ponds. Can we take out the grass and allow wild flowers? They'll be more insect life and more birds and you don't have to

maintain it. We should at least investigate it. Can it be done? How can we make it get done? We are talking about at the planning stage, come up with something that might be tiered and it comes down and it would be perfect for that as it cascades down.

Connector Trail - Jack said we are still trying to reach some settlement with the owner of the barn. On the barn section in our right of way, hopefully, we can get that barn section taken down. Council looked at three options for placing the bridge that is going to cross Polk Valley Run and they selected option B which was a compromise and some trees will have to be taken down and it won't twist the bridge around. That's moving along. The County grant has been approved for \$92,030.00.

SEPTA Rails to Trails – Jack said we are having a meeting on Friday, at 3:00 PM. There are four communities, Coopersburg, Upper Saucon, Lower Saucon and Hellertown Borough. It's moving along with SEPTA. They are very hard to deal with. We started discussions with the SEPTA engineers and now it's turned over to their Legal Department and they don't talk to anybody but lawyers. It's moving along slowly. We've been trying to get a permit from them to allow us to get on the tracks so we can take pictures. We just did get today permission to go on the track this week. The other issue is SEPTA put out a contract to a scrapper and the scrapper is going to pay them \$3 million to remove the steel rails and ties. That contract has been awarded and will be on the site by the end of August. We wanted to get the word out to the public and let them know they will be out there working behind people's houses. The press will be there on Friday and we'll put information out to the four municipalities. Someone said the small piece that connects Bethlehem and Hellertown, what about that? Jack said no one is touching that right now. If Bethlehem can do their greenway, then there's going to be a real demand as people don't want to come to a dead end. The bridge at High Street in Hellertown needs to be repaired or replaced and the word was that the solution was to not fix the bridge, but to just fill in the cut and that would block a potential trail through there. That's an issue we have to keep on top of and not be blocked from the Bethlehem greenway. It's not SEPTA who owns that part. It's Norfolk Southern.

Dog Park Opening – Jack said this will not open until next spring 2009 in order to let the turf grow up.

Town Hall Park. Jack said that MJ Roche, the Boy Scout has planted bushes along the trail. They look very nice. That's all planted and they are going to fix the posts at the bridge and the posts are in the ground for his signs he did. When MJ is done with that, they will have a short dedication ceremony. Dave said he wrote up a two sentence paragraph to support MJ on his scout endeavors. He's doing well.

Southeastern Park – Jack said the meadow is growing up very well. There's a lot of good growth. We had a Natural Areas Plan that Larry Weiner designed for us. We haven't been able to get that off the ground, but the Saucon Creek Watershed is having a conference in October and Larry Weiner is one of the featured speakers and they have agreed to look into getting involved and give us some additional money to get the rest of the park meadow plan off the ground. We'll see if we can get some things moving on that. If we can get somebody to get in and mulch the trails, it has potential for next spring.

Heller Homestead – Jack said we did finish the Nature Trail. He's looking into getting some additional signs that will direct people from the entrance of the park so that they can find their way across the lawn and into the entrance of the nature trail. Mary Beth did a tremendous job. We will be putting up a bulletin board by the entrance and Mary Beth did a map of the trails and a terrific pamphlet. One of the things he was talking to Priscilla about, she suggested some sort of a pavilion type structure at Heller Homestead. He's looking into that and will come back with some recommendations. It should be large enough to put two picnic tables in it. Priscilla deLeon said it would be good for the kids when they have the summer program out there. We can't have the kids in the homestead because of all the antiques. Jack said the other thing on the nature trail, it runs up along the bluff that overlooks the Saucon Creek and it's really beautiful. He has asked the planner to recommend two sites where we can safely put benches, so people can walk up there and enjoy the beauty. Priscilla deLeon said on the minutes it talked about developing a partnership with the SV Conservancy, she sent a lot of emails out and coming up, we have our second Annual Barn Tour on September 13 and the tickets are available at the township or the homestead. Coming up in October, we are having a living history day. We do that in spring and fall. We are doing more educational things. The Parks and Recreation Board can be part of this. The Girl Scouts have been very active in

helping us. Thursday night we are having Meet the Artist. The paintings just get better and better. We sold five paintings last time. We are looking for volunteers for Community Day.

Jack said now that Polk Valley Park is getting finished with Phase III, we have to get the Planner re-involved in Kingston Park. Where that is, there were some conceptual plans brought to Council and the Historical Society came up with recommendations and it's up to the Planner to come up with a final design plan for Kingston Park and Council has to approve that. Someone said beyond a gazebo at Heller Homestead, you mentioned a swing set? Priscilla deLeon said she wasn't thinking along that line. Someone said he's not sure a swing set is appropriate for Kingston or Heller Homestead anyway. A gazebo is great at both Heller Homestead and Kingston. They have to enjoy it. They'll walk through, and then what are they going to do? He would assume that the children who went to the one room schoolhouse did something outside...maybe a little area with sand or something along that line. Jack said a pavilion is on the plan for Kingston Park. Someone said we made a trip to Dimmick Park with the kindergarteners. We went out and looked for clovers, came back to the pavilion and showed what we found.

MOTION BY: Tom moved for adjournment. The time was 9:33 PM.
SECOND BY: Bill
ROLL CALL: 5-0