

**Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board Meeting
September 8, 2008**

1. The meeting was called to order at Town Hall. The time was 7:03 PM.
2. **Roll Call:** Present: Dave Spirk, Chair; Tom Butera, Vice-Chair; William Ross, Scott Schantzenbach, Sheri Herman, members; Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from August were presented. Motion to approve and seconded for the approval of the August 2008 minutes. All in favor.

4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items**

Guest – Donna Bristol was present.

At the last meeting, geocaching was discussed. Someone said he actually used his Garmen and went out. They didn't find anything as they just did it at two spots, and both spots they went to, it was big fields and tall grass and he didn't want to walk through there as he didn't want his kids covered in ticks.

5. **Projects:**

➤ **Town Hall Park**

Mr. Cahalan said there is a letter in your packet. It states (**NOT CLEAR**). He said we've never had any damage. The other group that showed up unannounced, he finally got cooperation from them. They would come in a van and take over the pavilion and roam all over the place. He finally tracked down the appropriate party, and explained it to them, and she said part of their program is to just have people go to places, and they just hit the road, and if they see a place, they stop. They get around, and the kids have some challenges. The students do this as an internship. He told them they can't show up with that kind of crowd as there are registration procedures. This person, she was very nice about it. Someone asked if there was a regulation we have like as to how many people can show up. Mr. Cahalan said there is a capacity. They were coming up every day with five vans while the kids were at the park program. Mr. Cahalan said they didn't have group insurance, but they could sign up, reserve the pavilion if it was available with no charge, and he never heard from her.

➤ **Southeastern Park**

Mr. Cahalan said there is nothing new here. There's a conference coming up in October and that will help us out with the meadow project at Southeastern. To follow up on the geocaching, after our meeting, Rett and Priscilla did drop off some material about the geocaching. He took it to the Council and recommended that they establish this at our parks. Council's reaction, as it was late that night. Council was tired and they didn't feel this should be done at our parks. He gave it to Council and told them to look over it. He said that it could be done on a case to case basis and we'll see what happens. If more people come in, and it gets too busy, we'll have to look into it. Someone said the people are just going to do it...just as long as they are not coming in with shovels.

➤ **Heller Homestead**

Mr. Cahalan said there was some vandalism of our nature trail. Not much, they kicked over some of the signs. That was it, so we fixed it and what we're working on at the nature trail is the Planner is going to come in and look for a place to put benches there overlooking the Saucon Creek. We're going to get a recommendation on a gazebo as a shelter for the programs. Someone said MaryBeth did a great job. There was the ribbon cutting ceremony and it was in the newspaper. Mr. Cahalan

said at the end of the trail, they will have to map the trail. They are going to be putting up a spotlight and going to do some repairs to the steps.

➤ **Polk Valley Park**

Mr. Cahalan said we are just about finished with the Phase III out there. They had a sub contractor do the fencing. The one issue we do have is with the backstops. The fencing material, the screen, and it is not the traditional style, and that's going to have to be replaced. The dog park is just about finished. The seeding has to be done. There isn't enough turf base to utilize it, so there are padlocks on the dog park gates. It will be open in the Spring of 2009. There are signs there now that say "No Trespassing". Another thing we talked about before was the parking issue by the soccer fields. They would park in the road. We talked about overflow parking which would be if all the spaces were taken up. We wanted to put some signage up and people can walk up to the field and the trails. That's what the plan was, but due to weather on Saturday, it was cancelled. Someone said you are going to have people that are going to go up there, and for them to figure out how to go back down to Polk Valley Road, go around and go in, we need to put up a sign by the gravel lot. It's by the soccer field. We need some sort of signage up there. Mr. Cahalan said Roger mentioned to him that he went up there, and there were people parking on the road. He talked to the Police Officers and a Police Officer came up and he talked to some of the people on the field and they indicated they would move their cars at halftime. Most of them were from the visiting teams. As it turns out, one woman from Catasauqua got ticketed. Someone said they told parents you can't park there. Mr. Cahalan said each time the Police Officer went there, there were spaces up at the top to park. They said they didn't want to walk. Mr. Cahalan said that's what you are going to have to do. They then said they couldn't walk on the stones on the trails. Someone asked what are the stones on the trail going to be eventually? Mr. Cahalan said it will be paved. That's held up because of the price of petroleum. We are trying to wait a little bit longer to see if it will come down. There is a concrete product that is pervious and water can go through it so they are looking at that. If they do it with the concrete, they can save a tremendous amount of money for the Township. Someone said park at the school if you are running late, drop the kid off or just walk. One other thing for next year we should consider, from the middle lot of the slope to the field, there should be one set of steps in there. A lot of people park there. There's a path where it is mowed, but it's steep and slippery. Mr. Cahalan said that was not meant to be walked on. Someone said it's better if we get a winding path that's not so steep. A set of stairs could be more problematic than a winding path. Just as long as we have something there soon because someone will fall down and break a leg, then we're looking at a problem. Some visiting team member parent complained about walking from the lower lot up, it's very steep. On the plus side, the fencing is working very well; they are keeping the balls in place. He'd still like to see a silt fence behind at the top of the hill going down to the middle parking lot as we are getting a whole lot of balls that are rolling down. We don't need a large fence, just a small orange silt fence. The idea the Planners had was to let the vegetation grow up to stop the ball, but that is not working.

Someone said the park has signs for a nature trail and the other is a field trail and there is no trail there, it hasn't been mowed. Mr. Cahalan said it will be coming. Someone said in the beginning they mowed it, it has big boulders around it. Mr. Cahalan said we received a grant from DCNR. He showed the area that is all going to be planted and where the rocks were. It's going to be a grass trail. It's all going to be planted with a natural meadow type plant. He showed where all the plants and trails would go from the map he had. In the dog park, there will also be a loop with a grass trail. There is a big field and we'd like to have access through there. Someone said it would be nice if they incorporated that into Polk Valley Park.

➤ **Kingston Park**

Mr. Cahalan said we want to get a plan before Council, get it adopted, get the money in the budget and work on it. The big issue is the paving issue. We don't know if it is going to be asphalt or

concrete. They are trying to consider the concrete and it would cover the gravel and come up to the edge of the grass. Someone said he liked it, it's different and natural and would look so much better than black asphalt. They asked if cars or trucks could drive on it? Mr. Cahalan said we aren't planning on driving on it. It is pretty solid. If it works at Polk Valley Park, we can use it at Kingston Park.

➤ **Grants**

Mr. Cahalan said we did receive a grant for Kingston Park from Northampton County for \$3,000.00. A grant was received for Polk Valley Park for the connector trail was \$93,000.00. We received \$25,000.00 from DCNR for the natural areas.

➤ **Volunteers/Scout Projects**

Mr. Cahalan said we have to check with MJ about the projects and see if the project was completed.

6. **Old Business:**

➤ **Polk Valley Park Phase I Improvements – Update**

Mr. Cahalan said this was already discussed.

➤ **PVP – SVSD Connector Trail - Update**

Mr. Cahalan passed a picture around of the connector trail from the Planner. According to the plan, the trail will narrow down to 18 or 16 feet to four feet. There will a barrier that will be put up. The bridge will go over Polk Valley Run. They were looking at Option 3 as it looks like the best option. The problem they had was all of this was in the township right-of-way and they would not need permission, but there's a barn that was actually built into the right-of-way and it's blocking the trail. They are negotiating with the property owner to remove that section of the barn.

Someone said when they were making their trails along the canal, by the Delaware, they would roller it and roller it so it would be really compacted. She said you may be able to use the tar and chip material. Mr. Cahalan said they have some in the back of the building, but it's very dusty. This will be the plan and they will start it as soon as they get the green light. They'll be a little pedestrian bridge. It's a way to get the children from the school to the park as safely as possible. The Polk Valley Run does not have much going through there now, but there is a stream under there and some wetlands and flood plain. They are trying to put some riparian plantings in the riparian buffer. He will keep you posted on the connector trails.

➤ **SEPTA Rails to Trails Project - Update**

Mr. Cahalan said they had a good meeting on August 8, 2008. We tried to get as many people there as we could. There was some press coverage. They had a power point presentation. It's on our website which is www.lowerSaucontownship.org. For a recap, the Rails to Trails project is something that the railroads, years and years back, was abandoned by SEPTA. It runs through these different communities and we were trying to acquire these trails for years and have been talking to SEPTA for years, and this year, they started discussing with us lacing the rail lines between the four communities...Upper Saucon, Lower Saucon, Hellertown Borough and Coopersburg...it runs eight miles all the way out to the Borough of Hellertown where it ends on Bachman Street. There's a section on Bachman Street up to Saucon Park, the City of Bethlehem, which will not be linked. Saucon Park into South Bethlehem, there will be a greenway. We'd like to get that one section eventually and link it. SEPTA is working with us to lease this property for \$1.00 a year for thirty years. SEPTA is going to sell the scrap from the rail lines and is actually

making money. He sent a letter to every property owner along the rail line and told everyone of the activity. They will apply to DCNR for a grant eventually. Someone said she bicycles and in different sections, they get a lot of clubs to sponsor certain area of the trails and they keep it clean. Mr. Cahalan said this would become a park. One of the things, as far as parks are concerned, with Hellertown and Lower Saucon, we are going to form a joint commission for the maintenance and other various items that will have to do with the park.

➤ **Dog Park Opening**

Mr. Cahalan said this was mentioned and it will be open in the Spring of 2009.

7. **New Business:**

➤ **Christ Lutheran Church Property**

Mr. Cahalan said this was reviewed by the Environmental Advisory Council and they didn't feel it's really the type of open space that they would want. Dave Spirk said it's a no brainer. Is there some advice they want? Mr. Cahalan said we had discussions and this came up awhile ago. Here's a map and here it Easton Road, and where the old man lives up the trail at Mockingbird Hill. We had discussions about this a way back and the man owns property behind the cemetery and one of the things we can suggest, as the fields are being utilized already, is put in some access off of Mockingbird Hill and that way you'd open both fields to access and they wouldn't have to go up to the top and contend with that gentlemen. That would open the whole place up and you'd have two baseball fields that are currently being used. If we could reach an agreement to purchase it, we might even get a lease agreement with them that we would maintain the whole thing. It would still be useable. Someone said purchasing it should be our first priority. Is Church Lane a private road or is it dedicated to the township? Someone said it's the gentlemen's driveway.

Motion made to pursue purchase of the property and to acquire a long term lease. All in favor.

It was discussed to talk with Hanover about what this would cost to put in a driveway and a parking lot in and we should have them review what changes would have to be made to make it township property, any liabilities we may have, and are there any liabilities with the dugouts. Anytime we can get ball fields, we need to, it's already there and we don't even have to put any improvements on it.

➤ **Saucon Valley Community Center Senior & Recreation Program Proposals for 2009**

Mr. Cahalan said the community center sent us some information. There are classes that have become very popular. There is information about how many children attended the summer programs at the different parks. He asked to get a report on the senior program, and it's just an update. Someone said based on the numbers we have at Steel City and the Heller Homestead, would it be out of line to close those down and increase the size we accept at the Town Hall Park? Mr. Cahalan said next year, we will have one at Polk Valley Park and the capacity up there will be a lot. He said we can explore that. The Community Center is going to charge us the same amount. We can move the Heller Homestead up to Polk Valley Park when they get a program there.

➤ **Pierpont Slater Recreation Fee**

Mr. Cahalan said he has a recreation fee received from Pierpont Slater Properties at Colesville and 378 and they have paid a recreation fee of \$3,113.00 in lieu of land dedication. The closest park to that would be Polk Valley Park.

Motion for approval of the recreation fee of \$3,113.00 to be given to Town Hall Park. All in favor.

➤ **Naturalizing Polk Valley Park Detention Basin**

Mr. Cahalan said this is what Dave talked about last time. Council is very interested in this and they have commissioned the Planner to work on the program for that and they are going to get some funding. A representative from Heritage is going to put something together to get funding.

➤ **Creating Sustainable Community Parks Conference – 10-29-08**

Mr. Cahalan said there is a conference at DeSales and it's going to feature Polk Valley Park. If you want to attend, let him know. They will pay for your registration. There's a key study panel and Bill Sweeney will be there. Larry Weiner will also be there. This is talking about the meadow, Polk Valley Park and he will try to get some additional copies.

➤ **Review Site Plans (Tarantino Minor Subdivision & Redington Estates)**

Mr. Cahalan said he has two plans, one is the Redington Estates and the other is Tarantino Minor Subdivision.

8. Agenda Items:

Donna Bristol said she wanted to know how you become a member of your group. Mr. Cahalan said give him your information and he can send you agendas and put you on the list and you can come to meetings anytime you want to. It's up to this group to make a recommendation to him or Council. At one time we had seven members, but seven weren't committed.

9. Adjournment:

Motion for adjournment. All in favor. The time was 8:18 P.M.