

1. **Meeting Called To Order** – The meeting was called to order by Jack Cahalan at 7:36 PM.
2. **Roll Call: Present** – Dave Spirk, Chair; Sheri Herman, Priscilla Oren, Bernadette Fong, members; Jack Cahalan, Staff Liaison; Rett Oren, guest. **Absent:** Tom Butera, Scott Schantzenbach, Bill Ross, Glenn Kern, Tom Maxfield.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Motion by Dave Spirk, second by Sheri Herman, for approval of the June and August, 2012 minutes. All in favor.
4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items** - None
5. **Projects:**
 - **Town Hall Park**- Jack said nothing new there.
 - **Southeastern Park**- Jack said nothing new. We did not have an opportunity to a meeting out there this summer, but Southeastern is in good shape. The biggest problem we have out there is bees.
 - **Steel City Park**- Jack said we had the meeting out there on August 6 and it was a really good meeting. We had a decent turnout of residents and a good exchange. Sheri and Priscilla were there. We had the planner and the engineer there who ran down the plan for the upgrades for next year and discussed the composting toilet, rubberized mulch for the playground, fixing up the playground equipment, the new pavilion, and the basketball court and lighting. We heard they did not want the basketball court lit at night the way it is out here (Town Hall Park). A resident asked why there is tall fencing all around the park; Jack said he did not know the history of that. They suggested something like a post and rail fence, where it fronted on Riverside Drive, but the same young man who suggested it said if children are in the playground they can run out to the street. Dave said there were also people who thought it should be gated and locked up as well, so there are differing views. Jack said we have to talk about that. Jack said I expected a Police Officer to be there, but he could not make it. We wanted to talk about the vandalism. Most of the discussion was about vandalism and how we can prevent it once the park is fixed up and looking nice next year. There were not a lot of ideas. We did say we would be installing a video system that would record and allow the Police to download any images from the park in case something is vandalized. Dave said I think that would be the greatest deterrent. Jack said they did make one good suggestion, which was to put electrical receptacles in the pavilion.
 - **Heller Homestead** – No update
 - **Polk Valley Park** – Jack said there are a couple of minor improvements. He showed them the Polk Valley Park plan and said this is Polk Valley Road down here. This is the park road going up to the top. If you have been on the new connector trail that comes from the school campus and comes down and takes you into the park. Jack said he looked at it and discovered we are missing a portion of the pathway. People coming into the park are having to walk up the road until you get to the intersection with the lower road, and then they can cross over and go up the pathway. We are going to add a pervious concrete pathway to complete it so people will be on pathways and not walk in the road down here. Second thing, this is the pathway from the upper parking lot, through the two quarries, that takes you down to field three; this is pretty steep. If you go through the quarry on the other side, it is steep on the drop off, so we are going to put post and rail fencing here for safety purposes.

Rett said Priscilla and I were at Polk Valley Park two weeks ago, and we were having a pretty nice walk when we came across two people. Priscilla said this is an idea for you guys. I saw these two gentlemen

as we were going around the corner, and I stopped and said, “Hi guys. How do you like this park?” They said “we love it”. Priscilla said can you tell me, I am a member of the Parks Board, and I would like to know what your thoughts are; what are the good things; what do you think we need; what would you like here. Priscilla said more benches was one of them. They were so enthused and excited to talk about the park. Jack said I was out there on a weekday and I was walking around the pathways and I heard this sound like something going up in the sky. I walked around the path and this man was releasing carrier pigeons. He had cages of them. He was from NJ. I said to him it was interesting that he came up here to do it. The man said I’ve been here a couple of times. Sheri said it would be neat to do in our newsletter, or on the website, to send us an email of what are some of the neatest things you’ve experienced at the parks so we can put it out to the Community. Rett said there should be a parks column in every newsletter we do. Priscilla said and right there you can incorporate this concept of Friends of the Park and ask what park do you think needs it, what do you like about that park, what parks do you frequent; that is a good way to start the Friends of the Park.

Rett said the gentlemen we talked to asked about a dog park. They were saying that sometimes people don’t take care of their dogs and sometimes big dogs attack the little dogs. I guess it is self policing. Priscilla said they don’t use the dog park, even though they had a dog sitting with them, because of the lack of maintenance and lack of control in the dog park. There is a job for the Friends of Polk Valley Park. Sheri said someone with a dog who likes to go there a lot. Rett said right, and that dog park is very popular. Jack said the people who do go to the dog park regularly, do police it. The rules are prominently placed and people will tell others to leave if they are violation of the rules. Bernadette said are dogs allowed in all our parks. Jack said yes, with a leash. The dog park is off leash, there are small and big dog areas.

Jack said he had two additional things to show you. This is the infield of the ball fields of Polk Valley Park. Last year the little league came here in spring time, when they were just starting to play, and they said the grass in the infield was in bad shape. We rushed out and tried to fix it for the baseball season and it looks like we were too late. I went out and took a look at it recently and it doesn’t look like any of our treatments took. I thought it was crabgrass. I had the vendor look at and he told me that one of the problems with these fields is that the base that it is built on is sand and aggregate which is not conducive to grow. So, what we are going to do is, in late October, we have authorized the contractor to go out and remove all the vegetation in the infield, to split seed, and quadruple aerate the fields. That will be done before November so it will germinate next year; and hopefully, we will get good growth. We treat the infields to kill off the weeds. We did discuss with the little league if we want to remove all the vegetation and have a skin infield, but that was not something they thought would be safe because the balls can travel faster. Dave said it is actually more maintenance in the long run. Jack said Dave mentioned the agronomist. We do have an agronomist from DelVal College, Dr Linde, and he goes out and looks at the fields in October/November, after they are done playing soccer and lacrosse. He gives a report to us about the conditions of the fields and he makes recommendations to treat or revise our policies. Rett said isn’t it best to put grass in September? Jack said yes, but you have a window until late October. Dave said if you put it in September, it may start to germinate and then the frost kills it. If you put it in October, the seed stays there and germinates in the spring.

Priscilla said I want to say something about Polk Valley Park. It was about 4years ago when we introduced you to geocaching, and little did we all know how it would blossom. We have two geocaches in that park. Rett said we got an email from someone going through their first geocache and it turns out she is a teacher at IU20, housed in the Saucon Valley School. They put on a session for the IU folks and they thought geocache was a great idea. Priscilla said I used to be an IU teacher and we volunteered to go teach some of their kids what we know. We will have a little classroom and go right up to the park.

- **Kingston Park** – Jack said, for Kingston Park, we got the money from the state for the composting toilet. The company is Bio-Sun Systems. The guy patented the technology, but the company was acquired by Modern Concrete. The walls are concrete. You couldn't fire a canon ball through that wall. The clapboard design is the one that was selected. The restroom module will come in on a truck. They will put in the vault that has the aerator and Bilco door to access the restroom in the ground. The restroom will be dropped on top and they hook up the electric. Dave said does it have to be on a slope? Jack said it has Bilco doors down to the chamber below. Dave said I thought it had a drawer that came out. Jack said it has a Bilco door that will give you access to the vault as if you were going down to your basement, below ground. Dave said they remove the peat at some point. Jack said that it takes 5-6 years for it to dry. Dave said how do they remove it? Jack said you just go down and shovel it up, it is dried and aerated and it is compost. Dave said what is the cost? Jack said originally it was \$49,000.00, now it is \$63,000.00, as Modern Concrete has put a little more into it. We are going to do that at three of the parks, Kingston first. Bernadette said why Kingston first. Jack said because of the planning. We are not going to work on Steel City until next year and we wanted to do one at one park first before we did Polk Valley. Dave said Kingston is much further along, virtually done. Jack said Kingston is ready to go. The paving is in, the garden is in, and all we need is the pavilion and composting toileting. We are discussing lighting and we are almost finalized on that, with the pathway lighting and a light by the toilet. Dave said does that include excavation? Jack said Public Works is going to do that. Dave said they just truck it in and set in place, no electric. Jack said yes, electric to run the fan and lighting inside. Dave said I saw hand dryers, is that for these toilets? Jack said no, not these because there is no water. There will be a Purell hand sanitizers. The composting toilets are pretty low maintenance and virtually indestructible.
- **Easton Road Fields** – No update
- **Saucon Rail Trail** – See New Business
- **Grants** – No update
- **Volunteer/Scout Projects** – No update

6. **New Business**

- **Friends of the Park** - Jack said Priscilla brought up Friends of the Park. We were talking about starting something like this, focusing on the Steel City group initially, to see if we can get some buy in, to let them take some ownership of the park. Dave said I think that is a great idea. If you have ownership, you would think people would then take better care and have responsibility of their park. Priscilla said it really works in Florida. We are Friends of one of the parks and we are devoted to that park, as well as the other volunteers. I don't know if it will work up here, but you would be the first Township to do it. Jack said I think it's a great idea. I will work up something we can put out in the next couple of months. We can get it out to the media, website, and the newsletter going out late fall/winter, and have it tied into the plans to upgrade Steel City Park. Maybe we will have another meeting with the Steel City residents to see if there is interest. Dave said I think it's a great idea and Steel City is the one park it can work in because it is a big neighborhood park. Sheri said she would be willing to act as a liaison to the group if it is formed. She would sit there, listen, hear what they have to say, bring that back to our Parks & Recreation Board meetings, to get them more involved, and have them hold a monthly meeting and stay more organized. Dave said it doesn't have to be monthly, or any agenda type thing, just something that gets them together and creates ownership. Sheri said there is definitely negativity from them. They seem frustrated about what to do about the vandalism. As a liaison, she would lay structure for them so they don't have to do any of the footwork; they just have to be part of the group. Priscilla said what you have here is the umbrella overview of the Friends of the Park. What you don't have,

which we can provide, is what each Friends organization does. Sheri said that would be great. Priscilla said you have to tailor make it for the park and what that park has to offer. We will have to brainstorm what we would expect people to do for each park. What you have here is the umbrella; underneath is each individual Friends of the Park group and each individual agenda. Dave said perhaps it is picking up litter one weekend, pruning flower gardens back, things like that. Rett said I have an idea. They talked about putting bulletin boards in each park, how about we let somebody in that area maintain each bulletin board. I did see the bulletin boards up at Polk Valley, which is nice, but they are more for the trails, it is not really a bulletin board. We want both, for notices particularly in the parking lots. Priscilla said that would be a great project for an Eagle Scout to make the bulletin boards. Jack said we got them on the Rail Trail and we are hoping to get one built at the trail head on Reading Road. If we have another Eagle Scout who wants to do it, it is pretty ambitious, but the plans for their design, the whole thing are nailed down. All we need to do is have someone donate the wood and have the Eagle Scout cut it and assemble it. Jack said have you seen the one at Water Street Park in Hellertown right on the Rail Trail. It actually has a green roof on it. Priscilla said he and I were just at the Polk Valley Park bird watching and it dawned on us they need a bird list. Rett said Priscilla and I were counting birds there, before the park was built, and I have the list somewhere. Jack said great, send it to me. Priscilla said if we were Friends of Polk Valley Park, as Friends we would offer to do bird walks once or twice a week with that bird checklist. Jack said good. Dave said great idea. Jack said let me work up something to review at another meeting and add to it. Priscilla said we have more input we can give to you. Jack said send it in and I will start putting something together. Sheri said I will do some research on a neighborhood crime watch concept to merge with the Friends of the Park idea so we can cover both bases. Bernadette said I'm reading the minutes, are they reporting things, are they fearful? Jack said what I heard was, from the older people, that they were afraid of retaliation because they felt the kids knew where they lived and they were fearful of getting a stone through the window if they reported them to the police. Bernadette said make it anonymous right? Jack said what we were saying, is the way the park is being redesigned, it is not just static playground equipment, where the kids come and sit and have nothing to do. We are going to put walking paths in so it gives them a good excuse, the older folks, to come there every day, twice a day, walk the dog, walk around the park, and observe. Jack said we are working on a group for the Saucon Rail Trail that is similar to this, that will monitor the trail and they will wear a safety vest saying Saucon Rail Trail. Rett said on an equivalent Rail Trail we actually have people on bikes patrolling and they wear special garb. They make sure people on bikes have helmets on, and that the bikers are going on the right side of the trail. Jack said that is what we want for the Rail Trail and there is a lot of interest in that. In fact, on the Rail Trail, we almost have to restrain people from going out and doing work. Sheri said I got the impression they don't care what is done in the park. I think they have a trust in the Township as a whole because all our parks look nice. I think they trust whatever we do, and however we design it, that part is great. I really think their fear is if we make it nice the more undesirables will come. We have to get them to overcome that thought process, make them understand the better we make it, the more you are going to want to come and use it. If you take ownership and you are there, people who are really there to cause trouble will not come back because people will see them. We really have to help them get past that hurdle.

- **Pavilion Options** - Jack said he talked to Council about a pavilion. This is where the pavilion site is a Polk Valley Park. We have approval for this model (showed them the Orlando style pavilion). This is the same model that will be at Polk Valley, Kingston, and Steel City parks. Dave said who is the manufacturer? Is this a kit that Public Works is going to put together? Jack said yes, we can have this installed. It is all reinforced steel, but I am not sure how it comes, or is erected. Priscilla said have you seen one? Jack said this is the type of model they like and its pretty simple. Bernadette said what is the size? Jack said the size is 30x64; let me show you how many picnic tables it will hold and that will help. The 30x84 will go at Polk Valley so it will get a lot of use. Sheri asked how big is the pavilion at Southeastern? Jack said it is probably the 30x64. Priscilla said whose model is that? Jack said I don't know. That was put up by the Lions club. Sheri said we are not doing electricity at Polk Valley. Jack said no, there is no electric there. Jack said this is probably about the size of what Southeastern is, and

this is the one that will be at Steel City and Kingston. We are going to move ahead with that. This is a really good model and there is no wood, so it will be durable and clean. Rett said is it going to be near the restrooms? Jack said there are two restrooms at Polk Valley at the upper parking lot. The location of this is because people pull up and they can use the pavilion and sit here and watch the activities in the park. Priscilla said don't we need more restrooms if you are going to have that? Jack showed her on the map where the restrooms are located. Priscilla said how many people can that pavilion hold? Sheri said a lot. Jack said the composting restroom will go over here.

Jack said we are working on the composting toilet and pavilion at Kingston this year. If the composting toilet goes in, then we are going to do Polk Valley Park next. He indicated that he did not have a schedule for this yet. He has to go back to Council one more time and get costs approved and I will do that at the next council meeting. The only thing he said he has not discussed with them is the tot lot. For Polk Valley, we are going to go out there and show some of the Council members where it is located, as one of them is concerned about the view shed, that it is not blocked, so people can sit in the pavilion and still look out over the valley, which should not be a problem. Rett asked if there are still plans to have a basketball court? Jack said not at Polk Valley. Rett said originally there was. Dave said what about a recreational building? Jack said long term, if the Orban property was turned over to the Township that would be a logical location if you are going to put anything in there like an indoor recreational facility. Jack said Dave and he attend meetings with the Saucon Valley Recreation Partnership, which has members also from Hellertown and the School District and that is one of topics, but we don't have anything concrete. Dave said it is a tough thing to talk about in these economic times.

- **Electric Hand Dryers in Park Restrooms** - Jack said I proposed to Council that electric hand dryers be installed in the restrooms at Town Hall & Southeastern Parks and they seemed to like the idea. We don't have a lot of vandalism, but these models are vandal proof. The reason they are is there is nowhere to grab on to it. It does not have a sharp edge on it. It uses a very low amount of electricity. We are going to plan on putting these into the permanent restrooms here at Town Hall and at Southeastern Park because we have electric in both of them. It is a "green" type of product and will cut down on the use of paper towels. One of the reasons I thought about this was, I went out to Southeastern Park and when I walk around I look in the bathrooms. The kids were using it for the summer park program and I looked in the trash cans and they were half full of paper towels. They were being good and washing hands. The cost of the paper towels is only a couple hundred dollars a year, but this will save us a few bucks and pay off in the long run. Bernadette said it will make the bathrooms stay cleaner.
- **Review Reading Road Trailhead Sketch Plan** - Jack said the plan for the trailhead on the Saucon Rail Trail Head is moving forward. Let me show you what that looks like. This is something we have been working on since we acquired the Rail Trail, trying to get access in Lower Saucon for the public to get on the Rail Trail. Hellertown has access, Upper Saucon has access, Coopersburg will have access, we didn't have any access. We got a grant from the State with the funding to acquire this 2.2 acre piece of property, owned by an estate in NJ, an odd shaped piece, which they probably acquired from the North Penn Railroad. Priscilla said is this the one we already have started? Jack said yes, people are parking in it. We acquired this piece of property and this was the site of the old Bingen train station. Bingen was a little village along the railroad. The two buildings right here, one was the North Penn hotel and the other was the General Store. That is all gone, but there is a bit of history which we are going to focus on when we develop this. Priscilla said is this where those three benches are right now? Jack said yes. If you're coming off Reading Road, you have 14 spaces, 6 in reserve, 2 ADA accessible, space for a portable toilet, no plans for a composting toilet as we are just starting these, and a picnic area under the trees with some tables. Priscilla said Jack, give me an idea of what exists right now because we use that access, how big of an area is it. Dave said it will almost be the same size. Bernadette said a water fountain, very good. Jack said we are trying to do the least disturbance of the trees. Priscilla said does

anybody else use this. Dave said no, I park at Water Street. Priscilla said we use this one because it is most convenient and the only one we can access in Lower Saucon. Bernadette said do you get on it up by the McDonald's. Jack said that the McDonald's is in Hellertown, a bit further up, behind Neighbors and Saucon Creek Bridge. Dave said its before you get to Spring Valley Road. Jack said this is good because, as Priscilla said, you can park the car and walk up to her bench at Old Mill Road. Dave said yes, because you are pretty far away from Preston Lane and Water Street. Jack said this is the aerial photograph to give you a better picture. I have to take it to the Rail Trail Oversight Commission, have them take a look at it, and then it has to be approved by Council. Then we can put that in, hopefully, by next spring. Dave said we already recommended this to Council right? Jack said yes and everybody is in favor. The water fountain was something that someone approached the Rail Trail Commission with. A group of runners wanted to donate a water fountain. We are going to hook up a water line, so if someone steps up and says they are going to pay for the fountain, we will have a water fountain at the site. Priscilla said can they be kept from being vandalized? Jack said yes, some of them are made out of stone. There is one up here by the basketball court and another by the tot lot, and they've had no problems, but those have to be turned off in the winter time. The one we would put at the trail access would be winterized, meaning it would not freeze up in the winter. Sheri said not to go off topic, but is the Rail to Trails maintained in the winter time? Jack said when it snows people cross country ski. She said ok, it's not plowed. Dave said no. Jack said it is open like the parks, if you want to sleigh ride or cross country ski. Dave said you can walk on it. Priscilla said do they allow horses? Jack said no horses. Dave said it is too crowded. Jack said it has done very well. We had our first race that Chris Garges organized, and it was a 10k on Labor Day. He had over 300 people and they loved it. Sheri asked just on the Rail Trail? Jack said yes, from Upper Saucon Park, up to Meadows, and then turned around and went back down. Bernadette said what did it raise money for? Jack said the HCM Foundation and they also donated money to the Rail Trail Commission to use to beautify the trail.

- **Memorial Bench Program for Parks** - Jack said I had some people ask me to get real benches on the Rail Trail and I am still thinking about that. I have asked them if they would like to have a bench in the park they could buy as a memorial, and I think there is some interest in that. I have heard from the dog park people that they would be interested. I am planning on bringing back to this group, a Memorial Bench Program policy that could be used for all the parks. I am trying to find something that is a little less expensive than the benches on the Rail Trail. Dave said why would you want to go cheaper though? Jack said I thought something a little more durable. Priscilla said I don't think there is anything more durable than those on the Rail Trail. Jack said I thought if it was in the \$500-600 range it would be more attractive to people. Dave said why would you put a limit on the number of benches? Jack said on the Rail Trail? Dave said anywhere. Rett said so not to clutter the trail. Jack said one reason, on the Rail Trail, is I did not want to put the benches near the populated areas. On our section, the areas where yours is, where mine is, and Dr. Salen who bought one, and then another one, are in areas where there are no houses around. People are already complaining that people on the trail are too loud. I did not want to put a bench where people would be sitting around, having a conversation, and someone sitting in their back yard would have an issue. Dave said that is a good reason, but if people are asking to buy a bench, I think we just keep putting them in until there is a point where there is a clutter and it looks tacky, but I don't think we are even close to that point. Jack said I think we can do a couple more on the Rail Trail in between your bench and David Willard's bench before the Bingen over pass. Priscilla said who purchased one and dedicated it to Lower Saucon Township council? Jack said that is Dr. Salen. His is going towards Meadows Road. The bench before Bingen, with the banks on either side, is David Willard's bench. Rett said most of the Rail Trails I've been on have one every mile, any more than that and I think it is cluttered. Dave said our section is only two miles. Bernadette said less is more. Priscilla said are you talking about the Rail Trail or our parks? Dave said both. Jack said parks, no question we can put benches. Dave said I don't think there is that many on the Rail Trail. Jack said seven. Priscilla said what are the other communities doing? Jack said Hellertown, I don't know that they did limit them, and Upper Saucon, they don't have that many, maybe three or four. Rett said what about water fountains; can you have a memorial water fountain? Dave said you need a water

Parks & Recreation Board Minutes
September 10, 2012

supply. Jack said the problem with water fountains is it is not cheap to hook up. We are donating the cost, about \$1,500.00, to run that line for the fountain, and luckily there is a water service line that runs down Reading Road. Jack said I will look into the benches and come back with that.

Jack said this is something offered by the Pennsylvania Park and Recreation Society. It is a course and certification on playground safety. Public Works inspect the parks on a monthly basis; they check the equipment and so forth. This would certify one of the guys from Public works. Dave said that is a good idea. Jack said that is in December so I am working with Roger to see if we can do that. Sheri said those are the types of things in the liaison role with the Steel City families I can share when I meet with them, to reassure them how much we really do, from a Park and Recreation perspective, care what they have going on out there. Jack said yes.

Priscilla said one more thing, have any of you noticed that the City of Bethlehem was just certified as a natural wildlife habitat? Jack said yes, the Borough of Hamburg, in Berks County, they did that. They worked with organizations to sign up people who have backyard habitats in order to get certified. I think they did it through the Environmental Advisory Council. Priscilla said yes, our own yard is certified as a natural wildlife habitat. We went through the process of doing it 7-10 years ago. We have a sign in our driveway, "This is a certified natural wildlife habitat". A teacher walked by, saw that sign and got her school certified as a natural habitat. Now the City of Bethlehem is certified as a natural habitat. Jack said you need someone out there to coordinate it. He took it to the EAC and asked for interest in starting something like this. It's was daunting and I believe the effort in Bethlehem has gone on for 5, 6, 7 years to collect all the backyards that meet the criteria. Sheri said it could be another thing we use the website for, just to put it out there. Rett said why not do it for each of our parks? Bernadette said what is the benefit? Priscilla said it raises people's awareness and consciousness to wildlife and what it takes to preserve it. Jack said let me get information for the Parks.

8. Adjournment: The motion to adjourn was made by Dave, Priscilla second. The meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

9. Next Meeting: October 1, 2012 @ 7:00 pm