
Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2012

1. **Meeting Called To Order** – The meeting was called to order by David Spirk at 7:08 PM.
2. **Roll Call: Present** – Dave Spirk, Chair; Tom Butera, Vice Chair; Sheri Herman, Priscilla Oren, Bernadette Fong, members; Jack Cahalan, Township Manager, Staff Liaison. Rett Oren, guest. **Absent** – Scott Schantzenbach, Bill Ross, Glenn Kern, Tom Maxfield, Council Liaisons.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Motion by David Spirk, second by Sheri Herman, for approval of the September 10, 2012 minutes. All in favor.
4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items** – None
5. **Projects:**
 - **Town Hall Park** – No update.
 - **Southeastern Park** – No update.
 - **Steel City Park** – No update.
 - **Polk Valley Park-**

We did get approval to put in the additional pathway and fencing. Sometime in November, after soccer and lacrosse are done playing, the agronomist will come out and check the condition of the fields and make recommendations for any additions or changes to the park maintenance policy. Jack said we have the plan in place to fix the baseball infields. The field will be aerated four times and split seeded by the end of October. The soccer teams have been notified the work is going to be done so as not to use the baseball infields for an additional practice area. We will continue the contract for the lawn mowing and lawn treatment companies as they did a good job. David said was it rebid. Jack said we rebid, but we can extend it. David said is that the same company the school uses. Jack said no. We use Geno's for lawn mowing and for treatments we use TruGreen Chemlawn. Sheri said are the fields marked when they are treated. Jack said they put up signs. We are not required to do the posting like the school district does. They are treated during a time when the field is not being used.
 - **Kingston Park-**

Jack said we have a couple of things to finalize. The composting toilet is taking awhile. We had to get approval for the color of the floors and the walls. Tom said it comes pre-done? Jack said I am not sure if it is done on site, but we had to pick the colors and everything that is in it, what it will look like. We have that approved. We are still waiting for the state to give us the final signoff so we can purchase it. Then it will be taken to the site which we will do all the prep work for. The one thing we are working on now is the lighting. We have a plan from the Planner for a tall lamp post and some lights along the pathway. We are looking at an alternate to that, which is a light from PPL, which is a lot cheaper and similar to what is in other parks. It is light post, but we can put a Victorian looking lamp on it. Tom said is that going to be in the parking lot? Jack said in Kingston Park, it would light the parking lot and the composting toilet. There would be additional lighting on the pathway. Tom said where is the toilet going? Jack said as you come in the parking lot, it will be between the parking lot and the tree line off to the right, accessible from the paved pathway. Rett said Priscilla and I were up there on Saturday. We drove by there in the morning and afternoon and there was a big crowd, a nice turn out up there. Jack said the paving is all done. Rett said it looks good and the parking lot was full. David said you can see it from Applebutter and it looks pretty neat. Jack said yes, the pathway and garden is done. We just want to get the lighting, the

composting toilet and the pavilion done. We have the model that Council likes, we just need to go back to them with costs and get it approved. The pavilion with picnic tables will be set up just off the pathway by the garden. Hopefully, by springtime, it will be in full operation. Dave said do you know the cost on the pavilion, and do they assemble it, or Public Works? Jack said I am not sure. We will have to have someone put a concrete base in. Jack said I am not sure on the specifics on who assembles it, but I am pretty sure Public Works can do it. It probably gets shipped here and they can put it together. Tom said who monitors the bat house? Jack said no one, it gets left alone. Dave said with the pavilion, if you could let me know that, because we are building those two at the Environmental Education Center. We don't have the permit from the state yet, but as soon as we do we are bringing it here. Dave said I have a question about the toilets. Some people complain that some types of toilets smell too much. I am wondering if we put this in at Kingston Park, where is the next one going to go, Polk Valley or Steel City. Jack said either one, but I am not sure which is first. Dave said we will have maybe a year to test it out. Jack said yes we are doing it first in Kingston to see how it goes. It is supposed to be odorless because it turns into compost. The vault in the ground is not open at all. It does have a Bilco door, but it is not open, and is below ground. Dave said all I am saying is it would be nice to try one out before we order the next one. David said it needs no water or chemicals? Jack said no water or chemicals. It gets cleaned out every five years. Dave said but you will have water to wash your hands. Jack said no, there will be a Purell hand sanitizer. Dave said I thought we were talking about water and hand dryers. Jack said the hand dryers are going to go in at Southeastern and Town Hall Parks where there are sinks with water. Dave said and the connector trail, we were talking about water there as well, ok, they are three separate things. Jack said a composting toilet is being used at a park in Newtown Township and has been there two or three years with no problem. Dave said did anyone from here visit that one? Jack said the planner did, that is where we got the idea. Jack said did I tell you the story of the first module they did in Newtown. It was made out of wood and fiberglass like a trailer. A bunch of kids beat it with baseball bats and almost destroyed it. The one we will have is solid concrete; you could not knock it over with a truck. The equipment inside is vandal proof and there is anti-graffiti paint on the outside. Bernadette said what happens every five years, who cleans it out? Jack said Public Works will go in and the stuff will be reduced to couple of shovels full. Jack said Kingston Park is close to being finished and we hope to have it done in a month or two.

- **Easton Road Fields**

Jack said this is being put to the side until we get some other projects done. We are still working on getting the parking lot plan approved. Dave said and it's keeping the bigger field. Jack said the bigger field in the front; the parking area would be off Easton Road. Dave said taking away one field and making it bigger and maybe a higher fence.

- **Saucon Rail Trail** (see below)

6. **Old Business**

- **Review Reading Road Trailhead Sketch Plan & SRT Oversight Commission Recommendations**

Jack said I showed you the plans before. This is Reading Drive, this is the Rail Trail, this is Saucon Valley Country Club, and Bingen Road is up over here. There will be about 14 spaces, 2 ADA spaces, and 6 in reserve. There is space for a portable toilet, and later on, possibly a composting toilet, picnic tables, a kiosk, and maybe a water fountain. We took this to the Rail Trail Commission and the one thing they asked, as this was proposed as a gravel parking lot, if it could be paved. We are going to give both of those options to Council and let them decide. Paving looks nicer and is easier to maintain. Dave said I don't think you could build an ADA parking space on gravel. Jack said no, they were going to be paved. They didn't like the location of the port-a-potty for two reasons, and I agree with them. They think it should be closer to the Rail Trail. They were asking it be moved and be more visible for the people on the Rail Trail. Dave said but it has to be

accessible for a maintenance truck. Jack said it is. Jack said they also think the kiosk should be moved closer on the access way. They also don't like that the planner proposed vinyl fencing, they want wood fencing. The other thing they caught was the Planner proposed barbeque grills here. One of the things we asked the Planner to do was locate the picnic area in a location where there are a lot of trees and we didn't want them cut down. Any one of the barbeque grills could potentially take out the entire area, so we are getting rid of the barbeque grills. Dave said I can't imagine people would picnic in this situation. People sit down and pack water bottles and maybe a snack, but not barbeque.

Priscilla said the fence is eye level so you can't see. Jack asked what do you mean. Rett said as you walk down the Rail Trail, and I think it's mainly in Upper Saucon, the top beam on the fencing is right at eye level, so you actually can't look out. Priscilla said all you see is wood. Dave said they did that purposefully because the houses and yards are close to the trail. Rett said this is all over. Rett said I want to make sure that is addressed as you are looking at the height of the top rail. Jack said the ones across the bridges in the Township and Hellertown Borough are 47" high and the reason is for the safety of someone on a bicycle. Some people, the walkers, have said that is too high and I can't see the creek. Priscilla said that is what we are talking about. Jack said that is the recommended height for safety purposes both for walkers and bicyclists. It is designed to get people safely across the bridge, not for sightseeing. Rett said I don't think we are talking about the same thing here. What I am talking about is not going over the bridges, but walking along the trail. You want to look over there and you can't see because it is right at your eye level, like at the Saucon Valley Country Club. Dave said that is Upper Saucon. Rett said that is what I'm saying. I think Lower Saucon is ok, and I compliment the people, who are doing it for safety, but it is really a concern, the upper level of the wood fence, because if you are walking along the trail and you can't see out, it is like having a billboard there. Jack said that was done with recommendations of Engineers and Planners. They go with what best practice, or industry standard is, and on most of the trails, that is what the height is. If you see a lower fence on a trail, that potentially could be dangerous.

Dave said if there is nothing stopping you, why wouldn't you go ahead and install the fountain. Jack said that the fountain was initially proposed by a potential donor and he got turned off because the fountain we need to put up there would cost between \$2500-\$4000.00 because it has to be winterized and so forth. Jack said I think he had sticker shock. Sheri said what did he expect to donate? Jack said he thinks he thought it would be a couple hundred dollars, but we may have another donor. We are going to put a list out on the Rail Trail of things you can donate. The only thing we are worried about is the big money corporate donations and how they would want to advertise that. If you have been on the trail, you've seen the posts donated and the small plaques on them, which is the extent of advertising we want to do. Bernadette said what did St. Luke's want to do? Jack said it was Physical Therapy in Hellertown and they wanted to get involved from a wellness standpoint and maybe they will for events. LL Bean talked a bit about it but we did not get anything firm from them. Down the road there will be some support, but the Rail Trail Oversight Commission wants to keep it low key and natural.

- **Memorial Bench Program for Parks-**

Dave asked did you find a bench that you like? Jack said not really. I am still working on it. Dave said no rush, I am sure you can buy benches from a lot of different suppliers. Jack said I am just looking for something I can bring back that looks sturdy enough and is affordable. Dave asked are those benches composite on the pathway? Jack said no they are steel. Priscilla said that is why they cost what they do, because they are really well done. Dave said I got something in the mail from one of our suppliers and it had benches in it, but they make them out of recycled material. Jack said those are good. Tom said steel is not a bad idea though. Jack said the only thing is it is more expensive. Dave said not to mention, you can't move them around, they are heavy, not unlike the

picnic tables at Steel City, and they would be all over the place. Tom said or gone. Priscilla said you need to take that into consideration to make them more affordable, but then does someone want to pay \$500.00, and have it stolen. Jack said the ones we have out at the parks have no arms on them, are a grid pattern, not attractive, are heavy, and they will take some abuse, so you need to get something like that. I would love to have a wood one, an estate bench. David said but it won't last. Jack said the guy that did our benches stopped in today, but at the price, I am leery of asking that much. I want to stay in a lower range. Priscilla said did you talk to him about the possibility of getting lower cost benches. Jack said yes. David said you didn't have a hard time selling them out on the rail trail. Jack said for awhile it went pretty slow. I put together the policy, put it out there, and I literally had only one bench that was purchased for a year and a half. Priscilla said we got our bench right away. Jack said it had been going awhile. Priscilla said it was when Rett brought up the issue of it being a taxable donation. Jack said up until that point it seemed like no one was going to buy a bench, and then all of a sudden four people purchased them. Priscilla said I don't think people knew about it. Jack said we put it out on the website, we talked about it here, and we discussed it at the Rail Trail Committee meetings. Hellertown put my policy on their website. Upper Saucon didn't do much. Dave said if you do it again you should put it on The Hellertown Patch because a lot of people get that. Priscilla asked if we can talk about Friends of the Park? I want to talk about benches when we talk about Friends of the Park.

- **Friends of the Park**

Priscilla said Jack sent a link to all of you for the Friends of the Park that Rett and I volunteer for in Florida. Please look at it because it is really unbelievable the stuff that the Friends do. Now, that is Florida, and a lot of people are retired and have more time on their hands, but just go to the volunteer's portion on the link and look at it. What the friends do is what the park needs. It is tailor made to the park and the necessities. I believe I mentioned the one we are at had all kinds of events. The amount of energy that goes into it and the amount of money they raise for that particular park is unbelievable. We don't need to raise money for the parks because this is the Township, but you could raise money for specific items. That is why I mentioned the benches. The Friends themselves may want to take that on and raise money or donate benches. Priscilla said, Sheri, you talked about wanting the volunteers to do something with Steel City Park. I suggested to Jack we take a look at what these volunteers do at the park, put together an outline, and then put it out in a newsletter. Dave said I think it's a good idea. Rett said one example would be, on the Rail Trail in Florida they actually have people patrolling. Do we have that here? Jack said I went to the last Rail Trail meeting and they want to do something like that. I need to come up with an Adopt-a-Trail program. I am pulling stuff together and I will work on the Friends of the Park in conjunction with that. They want to outfit trail tenders with a vest that says, "Saucon Rail Trail Volunteer", and they will go along and take care of the trail. Dave said are they going to police it when it's busy? Rett said when it's busy with walkers and bikers and other people, they get them to obey the rules. For example, we go to Freemansburg a lot, and the problem there is you have to be single file because it is so tight, so they are there to make sure people understand. It really is safety oriented. Jack said a couple of them want to be out there after storms cleaning up. Dave said that I understand, but I don't see the policing of it on Lower Saucon's end of the trail. Rett said I don't mean policing, I mean monitoring. We are not turning people in; we are making sure the trail is safe, neat and clean, and properly taken care of. Dave said what I thought you were recommending was that you have a volunteer to tell people what to do. We don't need that in Lower Saucon. Priscilla said no, but we did have an instance on our Rail Trail in Florida, which is heavily used, where a biker ran into a walker and seriously injured that walker. Rett said we've actually seen ATV's down there. Jack said Hellertown has a problem with ATV's. They've been using the cinder banks for years; that's been a riding area and that is adjacent to the Rail Trail.

Jack said they also want to work on other projects like cleaning up or beautifying the trail. In order to do that, we need to have a master plan put together as to this is how the trail will look. We have a

lot of people that want to do something, but we need to make sure that we are not removing something we shouldn't be nor putting something in there that is invasive. We are working with the Saucon Creek Watershed group and they are going to put together a plan for pieces of the trail, which will be looked at by the Borough and the Township. Once we have that, and then let's say a Girl Scout Troop says we would like to plant something on the Rail Trail. We can say, here is the list and work with one of these volunteers and they will help you do it. Volunteers will know, as things begin to grow, what can be cut back and what can't. On the Rail Trail, there is old railroad equipment and people are interested in fixing it up and we want to make sure it is done safely and correctly.

Priscilla said getting back to Friends of the Park; I would like to see our Township be the first to introduce the concept. David said can you send us an outline? Priscilla said that is the email link Jack sent you. Tom said I thought that is what Jack is going to do. Jack said I will try to get something together before the end of the year. Priscilla said, Jack, you don't have to do it alone. Sheri and I would like to work with you on it, as we are the ones who have to set the guidelines.

Sheri said when is Steel City closing? Jack said next year for construction. Sheri said next year meaning January or spring? Jack said I don't know, we are still getting the permits. Sheri said what I am thinking is that we should have a Community Day there to share our outline first. Dave said like a ground breaking. Sheri said not so much a ground breaking; just to explain that this is what we would like to do and would you like to be involved. Then when the park is closed, we can build your concept of Friends of the Park, so when the new park is established, then we have a committee already to go. Plan it based on when it is closing. Can we squeeze a Community Day in before it closes, and then start a committee? Community Day would bring them out to see if they have any interest before we exhaust any efforts to know are we really going to get a buy in for that park. Priscilla said we can put together a synopsis of what Friends of the Park is going to be, before we ever establish one, which can go into a newsletter, to get it out there, to get interest and input from citizens of what they think it should be. Sheri said I would not open it too much, give to many choices, but rather small guideline choices. Dave said Priscilla is referring to what they might want to do. Sheri said what they are willing to do. Jack said Steel City is not as open as some of the larger parks, so it is going to be limited to what they can do. Event wise, there are some things they could get involved with that are unique to that area, such as community events and children's programs, which we can help them with. The big thing is the ownership and monitoring of the park and reporting any incidents. Jack said Sheri, once I get the schedule, I will let you know. I think it's going to be a three – four month period where it is shut down and they will tear it up, and begin doing the bigger stuff. Sheri said if we tried to do some community event, we would have to have the buy in of the Fire Company. If it will still be closed down in March or April, we will not have time to do a community event outside at the park before it gets closed now. Jack said at the ground breaking or the dedication you could do something, and if the park wasn't available, we could use the Firehouse. Dave said I think it will be much easier at the dedication when it is complete. Bernadette said yes, it will be tough ahead of time. Jack said we could arrange to have a little celebration there. Set up different things, like a mini-Community Day, and you could generate some interest in the Friends of the Park. I think if you, as this group, say we support you, it will be better. Sheri said it will be a summer thing.

7. New Business

- **Review Site Plan (All Wydnor Site Plan)**

Jack said this is the cell tower being proposed up on Hickory Hill, there is a tower already there, they are just adding more. David said we don't have to look at that. Jack said some of the people in the Woodfields are upset about it. They are placing another array on the tower. There are several cell companies that share cell towers. They can show on a map where all the dead spots are. Then,

they will come in and add equipment to fill this area. Dave said do we have to make a recommendation for that. Jack said no, it's here if you want to take a look at it.

Rett said Jack, when you do the budget, do you divvy out the money from Park and Recreation between each of the parks. Jack said we have Recreation fees from developers, and we did have one here just recently for a two-unit subdivision and they paid \$3113.00, which is the minimum rec fee. We would put that money in the park fund and then we would supplement it with \$5000.00, for basic maintenance. One of the main things we use to do was replenishing the mulch for the playground equipment each year. We replaced all of the wood mulch with the rubberized mulch, so we don't have to spend it on that, but we still put \$5000.00, in each of the park funds. Rett said in each of the parks funds? Jack said each of the park funds have sufficient amounts to handle basic maintenance. For example, if something happens with one of the bathrooms and they have to fix it, there is money for that. If there is a major project, like Steel City, we went out and got additional money, like a grant from Northampton County. We have had money for park improvements which we divvied up. We got the money for Kingston Park from our general park loan from a couple years ago. We also moved money to Easton Road Fields to do the parking lot and we have enough funds to finish all the projects.

Priscilla said I am grateful we have such beautiful signs. Jack said speaking of the signs; we are going to be putting an addition on the bottom of the signs that says that the park is open from dawn to dusk. The police indicated they have found people there after dark at some of the parks. It is in the rules, but we do not have that posted prominently.

8. **Adjournment** - The motion was made by Priscilla to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm.
9. **Next meeting date** - November 5, 2012 @ 7:00 pm