

Minutes

Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

October 5, 2009

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** The meeting was called to order by Jack Cahalan, Manager at 7:05 PM.

2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Dave Spirk, Chair; Tom Butera, Donna Bristol, Sheri Herman, members; Jack Cahalan, Staff Liaison.

Absent: Scott Schanzenbach, Bill Ross, John Sweeney and Stephen Prager, Jr. Member.

Approval of Minutes: David Spirk read the minutes from September as he had them hand written. Motion by Sherri to approve the September 14, 2009 minutes, Second by Donna. All in favor.

3. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items:** None

4. **Projects:**
 - **Town Hall Park** – Jack showed the Playsafer Rubber Mulch to the group. He said it's shredded rubber tires. He has black and they were thinking of doing black and green. Dave said it's three or four times the cost. Southeastern is planning on using the rubber mulch. You would remove everything before you put down this product. To make it ADA accessible, they will put a border around each of the play areas. They will build up the slope. Dave said they went over this before and brought in samples. They were all for it at that time, but the price was even more than it is right now. The price has actually dropped to the point in analysis what we're spending year to year on the mulch, it's cheap because you never have to put it down ever again. There's very little cleanup. He spoke with Roger Rasich about this. The mulch actually freezes and this stuff doesn't freeze, so it's actually safer year round. There is a point where mulch freezes. There was a point mentioned about fire. They've actually been to many businesses, one in particular a car wash. The people get out while their car is cleaned and the people stand around. People on the outside smoke and flip their cigarette butts in the mulch, and they have to put out fires sometimes. If you think about it, the mulch is more flammable than the rubber. The fear is how do you stop someone from throwing a cigarette butt down. The bottom line is he doesn't think it's any more flammable than the wood mulch. Dave said they go a lot of places for the kids and it's taken over. When they go to a playground system at Polk valley, it would be very strange to see regular old wooden mulch in a new place like that. It never compacts. Jack said we addressed all the issues. Roger would like to move ahead with this. Jack said this rubber mulch is non-toxic and it is pervious.

Dave moved that we support the Playsafer Rubber mulch with the black in some spots and the mixture in other spots, because of the cost. Second by Sheri. All in favor.

- **Southeastern Park** – Jack said the rubber mulch will be done next year.
- **Steel City Park** – Jack said the rubber mulch will be done next year.
- **Heller Homestead** – Jack said the maintenance garage has been demolished. It was a building that was put up in the 50's. It was filled up with a bunch of junk. After the garage was demolished, he asked about the concrete pad. The Conservancy was concerned that right below the pad were the ruins of the Stever's property. There was historically a little set of train tracks adjacent to the Saucon Creek. That's something we have to do. He asked the Planner to come up with some recommendations. Dave said are they recommending that the parking lot be paved? Jack said that is an issue that Roger and the Conservancy have to talk about. Dave said do they plow it? Jack said yes.
- **Polk Valley Park** – Jack said he received a report from Dr. Doug Linde from Del Val Soil & Environmental Consultants. They were approved by the Township to take care of all of the agronomist tasks such as soil testing and reports. Doug Linde works with Del Val Soil and he did the first part of the work. Jack gave you an executive summary of the report. The second part of the report, Jack gave Doug the maintenance policy and he went through and made recommendations to revise that policy. The third part was actual soil tests that he did. Dave said he's actually citing herbicide. Jack said when Doug met with him, he was pretty impressed - we were the only Township that has such a policy for their parks. Jack is circulating this to all the consultants. Doug is also looking at the schedules that were being used. He's monitoring them to see how the usage of the fields is. He did make some comments and recommendations. At Town Hall Park baseball field, he just mentioned what slit-seed should be and where to fill in the bare spots. He made some recommendations on the strength of fertilizer that should be applied. The multi-purpose field said there is little usage, and not really used. On page 3, it goes over Polk Valley Park. He's aware that he schedule this fall is going to see heavy use. He's also aware that it might be approved for Saucon Valley School District use in the spring. Doug said an inch or two under the soil, it's filled with pebbles. He doesn't know where that came from. Dave said is that bad? Jack said he doesn't know. He has some recommendations. Monitor to see what happens when fields are in use. Use herbicides; recommendation for the mowing contractor; apply preventative grub control; as coaches to do drills and warm-up away from field center and goal mouths; ask coaches to move goals away from game goal location for some practices; establish more grass in ball field. Jack said he also asked the Engineer about this, there's a well up there and about getting some water supply. Doug had mentioned purchasing a hose reel irrigation system and getting water to potentially high use fields. In Southeastern Park, he had some recommendations. He didn't look at Steel City Park. This is all good stuff. Dave said we talked about moving the goals, very rarely do you see those things in the ground that are screwed in holding them down, and he doesn't think we should recommend them. He thinks the sand bags are appropriate as you want them moved a lot. Dave said we need to get some heavy duty sand bags. Jack said it has stones in it also. He doesn't know if it's just supposed to be sand in it. They look like they weathered and they gave out. Dave

said he will talk to them about it. Unless it's a river rock and completely rounded, it's going to tear the cloth. Jack said it looked like the decorative stone. Dave said we should not be recommending the things that screw into the ground. Jack said safety is number one.

Dave said we already talked about Steel City Park, and the parking isn't a great issue, but the parking should face the fields. Jack said he thinks we made that recommendation. Dave said he hasn't seen it changed, did you bring it up to Boucher & James or to Council? If it didn't happen, it's okay, but it makes a lot of sense. If you are a parent, you are going to come and sit there and watch, or the kids they run to the cars and if you are constantly backing up, you are almost asking for trouble. Jack said he will give them that recommendation. Dave said it's still on paper at this point. It's the new parking lot inside the park. Sheri said you have the mom's sitting in with the baby, not wanting to get outside. Dave said the parents sit there the whole time. He showed how you should bring the driveway more east. We're in the design stages now, make it the way it works. Someone said that's nothing to change. Dave said he never sees it getting changed. Jack said he'll make sure Boucher & James see the change the P&R want made.

Jack said on Polk Valley Park, all the trails have been done. PW is up there landscaping the trail edges. On the connector trail, between the school and the park, the barn was demolished and we are still waiting for the permit from DEP. Nothing has been done with that. It looks like we lost another year. The Integrated Pest Management policy is in its final draft. The EAC has been looking at that and there are some tweaks to the policy. In the Polk Valley Park, he mentions no insect damage. Dave said if you are about to put the final approval on that, make sure if he has something to offer, put it in. Sheri said is there anything on bugs you may get in the dog park that you may get from dogs or a flea. Do they treat it for fleas? Jack said he'll have to check into that. It's a good question. Dave said did they bring soil in? Jack said they might have brought topsoil in and had to add it to certain areas.

Jack said we did award the Polk Valley Park Landscape Improvements Project to All Seasons from Aston, PA. There was only one bidder. This company was highly recommended and does work for municipal and federal government. They look pretty good and are within the parameters. The Planner checked them out. We've had the pre-construction meeting and they are ready to go.

Jack said we opened the dog park on September 10. We're going to have an official grand opening in October sometime. Council wanted this. We'll let you know when it is going to be. Donna said they went to Frenchtown for a community day, and they had a competition with the dogs. The dogs came dressed up in different outfits that promoted environment conservation. She has seen another contest where they have a look-a-like contest for dogs and their owners. If you were planning a big grand opening, you could do something like that. Jack said it's already opened and hopefully it will get some use.

Jack said the aeration and slit seeding of the multi-purpose field are scheduled for September.

Jack showed the signs that we spoke about a couple of months ago that are going to go in the meadow areas of the parks, Southeastern Park and the naturalized areas, any

detention basin. In the Phase II bids, there are some plantings and that sign will go up to educate people. They will go up in Polk Valley and Southeastern and also at Clover View, Meadows. Dave said can any citizen walk through those areas? Jack said yes, it's a natural area and hasn't been designated as a park. Maybe at some point there will be some trails. At Clover View, there will be some improvements to the lot. We are going to do it all in-house. At Kingston, it's just a natural area right now. Most of the naturalized areas are for educational use, there is no park use.

- **Kingston Park** – Jack said we are still waiting for the final design to come to Council for their approval. He's not sure if PW will have enough time to get in there and do the parking area and the pathways.
- **Rail Trail** – Jack said you have a copy of the minutes of the meeting. Right now it's just LST and Hellertown. Coopersburg Borough Manager came to the last meeting and we had people there from the Rail Trail in Ironton. They gave us a lot of information and tips. Our next meeting is October 26. We will meet down in Coopersburg. They don't have any recommendations for any representatives as of yet. We're trying to get the representatives together. Donna said she did go to Coopersburg, and the Borough Manager wasn't there, but Donna left her a long letter and explained how important it was that they get a representative and then the Borough Manager actually came to the meeting. She thanked her for coming to the meeting. Jack said he's sure Upper Saucon will get someone. The lease has been approved. They were waiting for it to come back from SEPTA. SEPTA is okay with the changes we recommended, but they will not approve the lease until the November board meeting. Dave said the day you sign it, you have some responsibilities. Jack said if it wasn't for him and Hellertown, a lot of the stuff may not have even gotten done. He just tried to move it along. The Saucon Rail Trails is a good name. Dave said how did Hellertown feel about that? Jack said they were okay with that name. Dave said you would assume that Upper Saucon would be okay with it. Donna was saying that you try to keep "Rail" out of the name. Jack said the signals will still be left on the track, and electrical boxes. All the hazardous material has been cleaned out. There are some communication poles left. The good thing is the lease is going to come back in November. We did have the guy at the meeting who was going to do a grant for us, but we need four bodies there to sign for it. We are hoping that Upper Saucon and Coopersburg gets involved. We have to talk about what the trails will look like and what the surface will be. The rail crossings, Upper Saucon did do some work, and they will be giving us a standardized list of the crossing signage and road markings. The roads in Hellertown, Upper Saucon and Coopersburg cross PennDOT roads. They need to go through a couple of steps in order to do that. LST does not need to do that. Donna said the Ironton people told us that the stop signs are on both sides and are actually for the people who are walking, not for the traffic. She has seen where the road came to where people were going to cross, they have little white markers that say there is a warning there. Dave said we need to think about those type of things whether it's a speed bump or with painted lines. Maybe at Meadows, a blinking light. We have to think of these things before it opens. Donna said because there are white lines in the road, people just walk and think they have the right-of-way. They don't even watch as they see the lines and think they can walk right across the road. Dave said that's the law for the crosswalks in Hellertown. We have to consider this and that's good. We have to come up with good signage. Stop, you must yield to traffic before you cross this public street – whatever it is. The surface, we talked about modified stone. Some parts of it are getting overgrown with weeds.

The railroad should bring a vehicle down on the tracks and spray a herbicide. That pest management and best practices methods we are thinking about for the parks, we have to think about it for the Rail Trail. We can't run a lawn mower there. There's stuff growing up through those stones. We have to do something about it. He's suggesting in our best practices we think about what the impact for the trail would be as well. Donna said you can get as much "milling" as want for free if you'd want to put that down. Dave said that's great. Jack said we could store it. Dave said we talked about in the minutes, which Donna hit on at the last meeting, the Meadows offer for the parking as a trail head. He thinks we should pursue that somewhat. There's a lot of parking there. Jack said if you are there in a rainstorm, it floods and it's in a floodplain. If it was a trailhead, it would be unofficial. Donna said they can park there from 6 AM to 4 PM and if you wanted parking after 4 PM, he could rope off an area. Jack said they are trying to discourage people from using Old Mill or Meadows. We are talking to the owner at and that would provide an access so people looking for parking in LST could park there. Donna said the normal person who goes for a walk, if they want to go from here to there, they want do go to a certain section very close to where you park. Jack said there are issues with the Meadows that have to be resolved first. Donna said we shouldn't neglect his offer to park there if he puts up the sign. Jack said he can welcome people in and say they are free to park there, but you are at your own risk. Donna said we have to leave it up to the person's discretion. Jack said we are trying to work with Lehigh University ATLSS Center to work on repairs and rehab of the Old Mill Bridge adjacent to the Rail Trail. He needs to work with these experts to get it repaired. Donna said each community or Township has two representatives. Don't you think we should have three people each? Jack said you could make a recommendation at the next meeting for alternates. Dave said should this be for each municipality? Donna said yes, for all municipalities. Jack said as soon as we get this thing ready, there will be a lot more people in Coopersburg and Upper Saucon. There was a problem at Lutron with the rails and there was some litigation. Dave said the rails go through Lutron's property. Jack said it's SEPTA's property. The only thing they had to get was an understanding that Upper Saucon would maintain it. There was also some problem with the Tumblebrook Golf Course. The trail north of South Bethlehem, by the Sands, that is finished and it's paved. It really looks nice. There is going to be a skate plaza there also which is going to cost \$2 million directly across from the Sands Casino.

- **Grants** – no updates.
- **Volunteer/Scout Projects** – Jack said a Boy Scout completed a signage project for Polk Valley Park. There's another Boy Scout doing some bird boxes for his project. The Girl Scouts had cleaned up the Native Plant Garden and tomorrow night at the EAC meeting, we'll have a brief ceremony for them.

6. **Old Business:**

- **Draft Pest Management Policy – Update** – discussed above.
- **Draft Policy for Use of Township Parks & Athletic Facilities** – Update – discussed above.

- **Report from Agronomist/Turf Management Specialist – Update** – discussed above.
- **Polk Valley Park Connector Trail – Update** – discussed above.
- **SEPTA Rail Trail – Update** – discussed above.
- **Christ Lutheran Church Ball Fields – Update** – No update on this.
- **Dog Park – Update** – discussed above.

7. **New Business:**

- **Recommendation for Joint Recreation Study Committee** – Jacks said he will bring this up at the Council meeting on Wednesday, October 7. It has taken momentum because the school district is saying they need additional fields next year so they are ready to start working with LST and Hellertown. The Hellertown Borough Planning Commission has really been pushing this issue. We'd like to form a Joint Study Commission with Bob Frey from the school district, and if anyone from this body is interested to serve as a representative, let Jack know. Dave and Sheri said they would be interested to serve as a representative. Jack said he recommended to bring in a consultant to look at the issues and legal issues. If you do get that study one, the State will pay for the salary of a Recreation Director. That would get you going. The big thing is to have somebody work on this on a daily basis. The other thing they are thinking about is doing programs. Dave said they've been talking about having a position like that for a long time.

8. **Adjournment:** Motion by Dave, second by Sheri to adjourn. All in favor. The time was 8:44 PM.