

Minutes

Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

October 6, 2008

1. The meeting was called to order at Town Hall. The time was 7:00 PM.
2. **Roll Call:** Present: Dave Spirk, Chair; Tom Butera, Vice Chair, Sheri Herman, Donna Bristol, members; and Jack Cahalan, Council Liaison.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of September 2008 were presented. Motion for approval and second for the September 10, 2008 minutes. All in favor.
4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items**

None
5. **Projects:**
 - **Town Hall Park Nature Trail**
 - **Eagle Project**

Mr. Cahalan is trying to get a hold of M.J. Roche, the Boy Scout so a small ceremony can be planned for him. He did four different signs. Mr. Cahalan showed pictures of the signs. He said they took out a lot of evasive plants and replaced them with Spice Bushes. Public Works helped out a little bit with the railing. It's finished and he did the signs and did a nice job. It looks great. People have rediscovered it. Rett Oren was out there and said how nice it was out there. He wants to confirm a Saturday with MJ and they are going to shoot for Saturday, October 25. It'll be about a half an hour where they will cut the ribbons and take some pictures. We'll do a Council resolution and will get a Council President or Vice President to be out there to present that.

➤ **Town Hall & Heller Homestead**

Geo-caches placed in Town Hall , Heller Homestead Parks.

Mr. Cahalan said you can see the fields are now being used. The lights are on. He can jump into the geocaching. Rett Oren, at one of the meetings, had given us a whole list of suggestions and procedures. Geocaching is where you hide something and then you put the coordinates on the web on a site and people have these handout GPS locators and they punch out the coordinates and they go find your little treasure. Rett and Priscilla Oren are now involved with geocaching. It gets hidden, you go find it, and then you go and put something there. Rett suggested we establish some procedures and Mr. Cahalan ran that by the Council and Council said not at this time. We are handling it on a case to case basis right now. He asked Rett to fill out the DCNR form which he did. You fill out this form if you want to place something. You go on the website and there are do's and don'ts and you put some information down. It's a way to get people out into nature. The people that are doing this have a code of ethics. They will not be digging holes in the middle of a soccer field and will respect the fields. He went on the site and put in the zip code of 18015 and found about 900 caches in this area. There were thirty-eight pages. There's one at the Waffle House and one over at the Promenade Shops. The one at the Waffle House is in the grassy spot, and then you have to hunt and use your gadget. If you want to place one somewhere, you take your Garmen along and see what the coordinates are on your Garmen, and then that's how you tell them where it is. When Rett and Priscilla came to us, they didn't have to come to us, but they did and we thought we could make it easy for people to just sign the form, and it's something nice to have in our parks and it's a reason to explore the park. We are getting some good feedback from people.

Rett asked a couple of questions about the Park and put it on the website, so it's a little promotional for the Park. Someone asked what the little smiling girl attribute stands for? Mr. Cahalan said that is probably for the playground. It must be kid friendly. Someone asked what's the snowflake? It's for Cross Country Skiing

➤ **Southeastern Park:**

Mr. Cahalan said there is nothing new here.

➤ **Heller Homestead:**

Mr. Cahalan said they are still working on waiting for a recommendation from the Planner for the benches up on the nature trails and also working on a recommendation for a gazebo to put in the park. We'll come back when we have more on this.

➤ **Polk Valley Park:**

Mr. Cahalan said we're still trying to work with the contractor to finish up the Phase III landscaping. They are still fixing some things up in the dog park, which is closed right now. There is some fencing material and there was a problem that some of it had to be replaced. Some of the landscape material died and they are supposed to maintain it, so they had to come back and replace that. The biggest thing is they had a subcontractor who did the netting on the backstops, and they did a very poor job. Someone pointed out they did the lower one and used the leftover material for the upper one to patch. We're not going to accept that and it's up to the subcontractor to come back and replace it. If they don't, then we're holding money back and will get someone in to do it. The benches are going in the dugouts and once that is done, home plate and the pitchers mound will go in. For the trails, Council finally did decide on the pervious concrete which is much cheaper than the asphalt paving. They put bids out advertising it. Public Works will put it down. The bids will be opened on October 14, 2008 at the township during the day and then we'll award the bid the next night and then we'll get the concrete trails in by the end of October. If the weather stays the way it is, we can get it done. Right now they are doing the paving on the roads, and when they are done with that and we'll move right in and do the trails. This should all be done if all goes well by our meeting in November. They will take a while to cure, about two to three weeks as they have to put plastic down on them to make sure that they don't dry out too quickly. It's mainly to keep out the moisture concept. If it dries out too quickly, the edges start crumbling. This should go fairly quickly. They can just get the cement trucks up and should be able to get it done in a week or two. It has to be done under a certain formula.

➤ **Kingston Park**

Mr. Cahalan said there is nothing new.

➤ **Grants:**

Mr. Cahalan said there is nothing new. They put in a grant for the E-House for solar panels next door and hope they get some money on that. It'll be in January if they get it.

6. Old Business:

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

The park is being used for soccer in the fall. Soccer started using it a couple of weeks ago and we had some parking issues. We added 18 more spaces up at the top, but apparently, that's not the issue. Someone said the issue is they don't want to park up at the top and walk. The times were

spread out for the soccer games so the start time for the next game, almost everyone is cleared out. The problem is they are still not parking in the right spots. Why can't people park, in the dog park lot? Mr. Cahalan said you can, but not beyond. There's a gravel parking lot and people are going in there, and five cars come up there, and then more cars come up and they pull up on the grass, and that's where they are getting ticketed. They have signs along the road. Originally, the sign said "Don't Park on the Pavement". Then everyone parked on the grass. We took that off and it said "No Parking", but they still park. Someone asked what if we use caution tape? Mr. Cahalan said he's waiting for something to come back. Actually, the police gave him a drawing where they feel they want more parking signs and he has to run that through. That dog parking has to be some kind of a barrier so people can't drive beyond. Someone said he will envision later on, like all around Lehigh's Park, there are 4x4 small posts all around. Why not make the dog park parking lot bigger and extend it? Mr. Cahalan said that wasn't even envisioned as a parking lot, they just came up with that as a temporary overflow. First of all, we didn't even know we needed an overflow. Someone said he was at the dog park parking and no one was there as it was too far away. Mr. Cahalan said the overflow is going to be at the school, and people are not going to like that. There will be signage to park at the school and walk down the connector trail. Someone said we go to soccer games every weekend and we have to hike. All he's suggesting is the dog park parking lot and just make the rest of it gravel. Mr. Cahalan said that area was supposed to be the future site of the indoor recreation center which isn't on any horizon at this point. It could be considered at this time. Even if you made it a parking lot, there still would be people who would say they don't want to walk that far and they want to park right here and watch their grandson play. If you park in the upper parking lot and go through the quarries, you are less than 100 steps from the field. Someone said when we host a tournament, which we haven't done yet, there is going to be a massive amount of people. Mr. Cahalan said they are going to have to stage it and some are going to have to be at the schools. They are going beyond the gravel and parking on the grass. He'll bring it up about the area by the dog park. People who are going to be bringing dogs, we are going to have to deal with them then. Someone said it's going to be an issue when somebody falls. We have to talk about it and take some steps. Mr. Cahalan said maybe fencing all around that edge would handle that. He showed a map to the Board and showed them where everyone is parking, where the walking trail is, where the fences are, and an area that is not fenced and balls are going down in that area. Steps were the original plan and they were rejected. Someone said we did talk about this years ago, that we could maybe somehow get pads that go up on an angle. Mr. Cahalan said the one slope has a nice incline and gradual as with the other one. Another one does not have anything as it's limited in terms of the distance. Any ramp would be pretty steep. The other side is Urban's property. Someone said can we start from here and go to there? Mr. Cahalan said he could make a recommendation that we do something like that. Someone said in order to get down to the one field, you have to run down the slope, but if you at least put some trail somewhere, and have it wind and go up and end up on the top. Mr. Cahalan said the only people that should go down the slope are the coaches. There's no room down at the bottom for the spectators. Someone said a big guy asked him how he was going to get to the field? Mr. Cahalan said you have to walk sideways down. Someone said we have to have the referees get down, the kids can roll down. We have to give it some consideration – how do we get to the field. Mr. Cahalan said he has a recommendation that he will put together for the fencing, and then he will put one together for the ramps. Someone said he hopes no one takes a chance and tries to walk down and breaks his leg. Mr. Cahalan said you could say the parking lot isn't for the fields above, they are just for the baseball fields. You get out and walk over to the baseball field. Someone said Boucher & James and Hanover are more suited to come up with these answers. We should make a recommendation based on feedback. You can see what the slopes are on paper. There is nothing direct to the baseball field. The fields are beautiful, but we have to make it work with the pathways and walkways. Someone said if you could translate that somehow into a recommendation to Council, they should look at the paths to get to the field from the coaches perspective and the fans, all three fields from the closest parking lot. The only flat spots are the fields and the parking spots. Mr. Cahalan said he'll make a recommendation to Council.

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

Mr. Cahalan said we're still working on the connector trail. We still did not get a signed agreement back from the homeowner. He asked for a little bit more money which isn't a big problem. We're willing to give him that, \$1,000 or \$2,000 more. This is the barn section. There's a connector trail and the barn is sticking out on the trail. We hope to get that concluded and as soon as we do, we'll take a look at the structure and we think Public Works can take it down and we can move ahead with the construction of the trail. We have a plan that is ready to go. That will be the last piece, and then the bridge has to be put in across Polk Valley Run. As soon as that's in place, we're all set as far as Phase III improvements at the park.

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

Mr. Cahalan said there is an update. He handed out pictures and said this is what the trail actually looks like going through Lower Saucon right now. It looks like one big jungle. He asked the Engineer to walk it to make sure there weren't any obstructions. It isn't too bad. They found a couple of places where kids are hanging out and one kids clubhouse which is no big deal. The bridges are in good shape and they go back to 1916. They are pretty solid. They'll put railings on either side. They are going to have to decide what to do with the gravel there. Someone said parts of the trails can be sponsored by certain groups. Mr. Cahalan said we need to get an Advisory Committee together and need to coordinate this entire thing with the grants, the design, and the maintenance. In Lower Saucon Township, it's going to be a linear park and Lower Saucon might decide we want to pave ours and Hellertown might say they don't want to pave there's. There could be different variations. It would be nice if we had uniform signage and paving. That's what we want to move towards. There are sections of rail trails that have a different surface and are being maintained a little bit different. Some have fancier bridges, some have steel, etc. They are at Coopersburg and are coming north. The contractor started with SEPTA and they are pulling up trees in the middle of the tracks. They don't seem to be disturbing the sides of the tracks. The tracks are coming up next. They are clearing a section which is 30 feet wide and the rail itself is 29-1/2 feet. They are pulling it down with a tractor and a guy has a torch and he's cutting them up. They have to turn them to get them off the rail bed to the flat bed truck and they need places like that. He told them there is no access in Lower Saucon like that so they may have to drag the rails five miles to get it to a point where they can get loaded on the truck. This is not our problem, it is Upper Saucon's problem, as there's a place by the Country Club, and there is a section that's piled up with stones. The contractor is going to be knocking on someone's door. We don't seem to have any problems and neither does Hellertown.

Mr. Cahalan said Chief Balum in Hellertown said people flee crimes in Hellertown and head up towards Wendy's towards the concrete plant. Once this is cleared out, that will be patrolled.

Mr. Cahalan said we should be done with this in a matter of a couple of weeks. By Thanksgiving, they should be up in Lower Saucon. The Solicitor is looking at the lease agreement and there doesn't seem to be a lot of issues with that. Hopefully, by the end of the year we'll have an agreement on the rail line. We'll keep you posted.

➤ **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 they looked at that property and they gave a recommendation to Council to look at it and Council agreed and they authorized an appraisal. That's currently being done. This is right by Mockingbird Hill Road. They don't want to maintain it anymore. It's on Easton Road. They ran out of money and there was no access. There's a lane there and some guy lives there and he gets very upset if you go up his lane. We want to get access from Mockingbird Hill. It's about 10 acres and will be very suitable for recreation. We'll cut the grass and have porta potties. They are happy we are doing this. The church will be happy with the cash, and we'll see what it's appraised at. Someone said a 99 year lease should be looked at. Mr. Cahalan said he will keep you posted and if the price is right, the Township will take steps to obtain it. We'll see what the appraisal comes back as. It's definitely not going to be developable.

Someone asked about the Steel City meeting – Mr. Cahalan said he hasn't really seen anything from the Planner. They will see a draft plan and it will come down to what they can fit in that park area. What he is doing is putting money in each of the parks for the 2009 budget for improvements to Steel City Park. When we get a plan, Council can look at it and we can invite some people from Steel City and we'll be ready to go. It's not a major project. As soon as she has something, he'll bring it back. We're finishing Polk Valley Park and have money in there for a playground and a pavilion. The next thing he'll be bringing to this group is we are going to start making some selections and recommendations for a playground. At next years budget, instead of the mulch we are using, we are looking at the rubberized mulch which is a little more durable. Mr. Spirk said the price is a higher, but the price is coming down. A guy came in and said it's only 1% of metal in the tires, and Mr. Cahalan checked it out. It's been looked at and tested and the stuff being used now is 99% okay. If you have mulch, and someone throws a cigarette down, you'll have a fire. They have it in Upper Saucon and they have a thing you can build in it and it's built off the ground and it's accessible by a wheel chair. Mr. Spirk said it's like being on a rubber mat. He was just at a park in Bucks County at a soccer game and they had a big area from toddlers to 12 years old and the whole thing was the rubber surface. You could fall down on it and bounce. Mr. Cahalan said we definitely want to do Polk Valley Park so we can have a summer recreation program and it can get pretty big up there. We can also use the same pervious concrete at Kingston Park and that will be ready to go, and the next one after that is Steel City, and in the meantime, we'll be walking on the rail trail. By the end of next year, we should be pretty up to speed in getting our parks finished. We are working with Hellertown on a inter municipal plan to see if we can form a Joint Recreation Commission and that'll be starting off with a feasibility study. We had a Joint Planning Commission meeting with Hellertown and Upper Saucon and they said that's the first thing they want to see done. We are all using the fields, let's start working together. The history on that, is there actually was a Joint Recreation Authority with the school. When we started talking about this the people from the school said what about us. Everybody thinks it's a good idea. We'll have dedicated people for the maintenance and we need to get staff that will do the programming. That's what we are working on.

➤ **Creating Sustainable Community Parks Conference**

Mr. Spirk asked if there have been any meetings on this yet? Mr. Cahalan said whoever wants to go, let him know. It's being held on October 29, 2008 at DeSales University from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Donna Bristol said she would like to go. Mr. Cahalan said it will be good as an introductory thing for her to go to.

8. **Agenda Items:**
None

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