

Minutes

Lower Saucon Township
Parks & Recreation Board

Business Meeting

November 1, 2010

1. **Meeting Called To Order:** The meeting was called to order by the Tom Butera at 7:02 PM
2. **Roll Call:**

Present: Tom Butera, Vice Chair; Bill Ross, Scott Schanzenbach and Judie Rossell, members; Jack Cahalan, Staff Liaison. **Absent:** Dave Spirk, Sheri Herman and Donna Bristol.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Tom said the October meeting minutes are ready for approval. They look fine to him. Motion by Tom, second by Judy to approve October 4, 2010 minutes, with correction. All in favor.
4. **Citizen Non-Agenda Items:** None
5. **Projects:**
 1. **Town Hall Park** – Jack said the paving is being done at Town Hall Park in the parking lot and the pathway up the pavilion and should be done shortly.
 2. **Southeastern Park** – Jack said no update.
 3. **Steel City Park** – Jack said the only thing we are doing is trying to get everything lined up so that we can start working on the improvements plan next year. He will talk about the money for that under “Grants”.
 4. **Heller Homestead** – Jack said he just received an email with some recommendations for landscaping around the parking lot after the maintenance garage has been removed. It’s been some time since that’s been taken down. The Conservancy wants to protect what is the historic ruins of the old saw mill that was underneath that garage. We’re going to need to protect those ruins and we need landscaping to dress up the parking lot and screen in the port-a-john that is sitting out there in the open. He’ll bring that back next month.
 5. **Polk Valley Park** - Jack said if you’ve driven by, you can see the bridge for the connector trail is up. We are talking to Mr. Herman about demolishing the house. Jack had to get some estimates for a house history report that you have to do on a house that is over 50 years old. We also need to check for any asbestos inside. Bill said are we talking about the actual residence on top or the building by the barn? Jack said it’s the old white house that’s right behind the big trees and is almost right on the road. Mr. Herman wants it all taken down. We’re going to do the house history and the environmental inspection and Mr. Herman has agreed to pay for that. In return, we will demolish the house and take everything away. It will be a savings for us as we were going to do some work to put the trail in front of the trees. We’ll save what we were going to spend on that with the demolition. The trail will be put behind the trees to protect them. It will be a very simple asphalt trail. When it’s finished it will connect the park to the school district campus. Judie asked how many miles of trails do we have in Polk Valley Park? Jack said he’s not sure but for exercise purposes we should probably post that information so people who walk it can see how far they walked.

6. **Kingston Park** – Jack said we are finishing up the paving. The concrete trail looks like it will be completed in Spring next year. They are holding meetings with Dr. Kingston, who was the person who donated the land. We're putting in a park in memory of his mother and we are discussing that before it gets approved.
7. **Easton Road Fields** – Jack said we are waiting for plans from the Engineer on the parking lot off of Mockingbird Hill Road. There will be pathways to both of the fields. We will refurbish the upper field, and hopefully, we will have it ready next Spring when the Little League gets out there.
8. **Grants** - Jack said we put in for additional funding of \$127,000.00 from the County Open Space Fund for Steel City Park. We hope to get that and add to the amount we have budgeted to the park so we have a comfortable amount to do all the improvements that are in the plan. They also put in another grant to the PCTI. That's something we're doing in conjunction with Hellertown so we can link the Rail Trail with the school district and also with the downtown district. It would give us money to do some planning. To put bike trails in the Township, it's going to take a few years because of the way the roads are configured. We are into a second round of grant applications for casino funds. We did pretty well in the first round. The second round is the uncommitted round in which every municipality in Northampton County can apply for. We put in an application for the money that it's costing us to develop the Rail Trail. Any money we get back from that, we can use for further rail trail development.
9. **Saucon Rail Trail** - Jack said we got the fencing contract approved for the bridges and the contractor advised us he'll be out there the end of November, beginning of December to do that. We got a price from him to put in the gates and the bollards. They will be installed at each of the road crossings on both sides and they will allow pedestrians and bicyclists to get through and it will block any motorized vehicles from getting on the trail. They will be installed at the two road crossings and at the entrance to what we hope will become the future trailhead access on Reading Road. We received good prices on them. The fencing, gates and bollards will be done sometime in December. The only thing that is holding us up is the surface. We were waiting for Hellertown to get the slag material from the Thomas Iron Works site analyzed. They are planning on having it done by the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation who is giving them some Brownfield redevelopment money to work on the Thomas Iron site. That may be delayed and we may have to come up with another plan for a base material to put down and put gravel on top of it. We are still hoping we can get everything done by the end of the year. That will be good as Upper Saucon has approved a contract for their section from the Lower Saucon line to Preston Road in their community park. They hope to have their section opened up by the end of the year also. Hellertown is still wrestling with a PennDOT requirement about the flashing lights on Water Street. They got an estimate of about \$40,000.00 to relocate the flashing red lights that are there. They are trying to break that cost down to where they can do some of it in house. That's something they have to overcome. At the north end of the trail where High Street is, they understand that the City of Bethlehem received a DCNR grant to replace that wooden bridge with another replacement bridge. If they can't come up with enough money, it would be a culvert that would allow the trail to continue underneath it and go north. Eventually we hope to connect with the Bethlehem Greenway that ends at Saucon Park. They started working on the Greenway in Bethlehem. Tom said at the last meeting he said he would help Donna with her horse rules. What he did was go through and looked at all the area parks. For the most part, the rules are very simple for horses. There was no mention of needing a permit. No mention of anything like that. He went through all the Pennsylvania State Parks and even went into New Jersey. Donna found a contraption that goes behind the horse that catches the manure. It seems pretty straight-forward. She presented it at the Rail Trail

Advisory meeting and Upper Saucon was amenable to having horses on the trail. Upper Saucon came back to her with a request for Donna and him to pull together a list of rules and regulations that covers horses, bicyclists, pedestrians and he thought that seemed odd for us to have to pull all that together. Jack said he read the draft minutes from the meeting and what they were talking about was the Manager from Upper Saucon said before we do this, let's have all of the rules for trail use defined and let's have it approved by all of the four municipalities, which is not a bad thing. Jack said that the Rail Trail Advisory Committee has been primarily focused on development issues, such as how is the trail going to look and what are we going to put on it, that type of thing. The overall discussion of the trail has sputtered because we never really got the advisory committee together. Hellertown and Lower Saucon assumed in the beginning that each of the four municipalities would appoint representatives and sign an inter-governmental agreement and have a group which would meet and they'd decide all of these things. It would have to be approved by the municipalities, but at least you would have a body that would come up with these recommendations. Upper Saucon still has not appointed any representatives for the committee and hasn't signed the inter-governmental agreement. There's one woman from Coopersburg who comes to the meeting. The only representative from Upper Saucon is the Manager. To hear that he was making these kinds of suggestions is really the first time they stepped up and said okay, let's do something that's forward thinking for the entire trail. The rules and policies was something that was going to have to be done at some point. If they are suggesting that it be completed before you get to the horse issue, that may push that back a little bit. Tom said it seems like Donna has taken it on. Jack said as he reads the minutes, Donna brought the horse issue up and what Tom Beil said was let's get all the rules together before we consider having the Supervisors and Councils approve this. Jack doesn't disagree with that; he thinks that's pretty good. Tom said do you have anything that could be a starting document for them? Jack said there are park rules we have and he can get them for you. You could go through them. They are under the Township Code which is online. There's a list of about 20 rules. In the absence of any specific ordinance that governs just the Rail Trail, the Rail Trail was going to be a Township Park and be governed by those rules. The other thing that gets confusing here is that there are rules and there things that are just courtesies of the trail like keep right, etc. and now this manure thing with the horses could be a rule. We have to look at what's going to be in an ordinance, what is going to be enforced, and what things do you expect people to do while they are on the trail. This body could come up with something as a draft and we could put that on the table at a Rail Trail meeting. Tom said he can take a stab at putting that together. Judie said how many parks have horses or their trails? Tom said a lot do but they are very lax in their rules and regulations which surprised him. They say "ride on horse designated trails" and "stay there, clean up after your horse, don't tie your horse to a structure so it won't be damaged". That's pretty much it. He thought they would want some permit requirements and rules and regulations that would cover risks and insurance. Judie said you are thinking they need a permit? Tom said he doesn't want to overcomplicate the issue. A lot of parks around here all allow horses with no heavy-duty restrictions, so why should we make it harder for someone to have a horse on the trail? They have a contraption which catches the horses waste, but he doesn't know how essential that is on the trail as long as we insist that they clean it up. Jack read from the minutes of the meeting which said that Tom Beil from Upper Saucon was saying "you need to pin down the rules as it sets the stage. The Police are going to have to identify who are violating the rules. If the rules aren't well written, the Police can't interpret them. You are going to have all kinds of strange situations where people don't know if they broke the rules or they didn't break the rules. Dawn, the Manager from Coopersburg, said do we want someone in our group to present it at the next meeting or how do you want to approach this? Steve asked Donna if she could work on horse specific rules and the rest of us will come up with some general rules after doing a little research and we can talk about it at the next meeting". Tom said okay now he understands it and he's fine with helping Donna with the horse rules. Jack said the other thing that he read in the minutes was they

suggested that they allow horses on the trail on a “trial basis”. Jack said that’s okay, he’s not against horses also, but the surface material for the horses to ride on has to be determined first. They can’t ride on the ballast stones. If we are going to allow horses on there, you need some sort of surface material for them to walk on, or otherwise they are just going to go onto the gravel path. Judie said that has to be put in at the same time. Jack said the big ballast stones are not good for the horses. Donna had said she could get some people together and raise the money to put the wood chips or mulch down. That may cover Lower Saucon, but what about the other municipalities? If the horses are approved on a trial basis, they have to have some surface to walk on. Tom said we could use mulch. The trail is 30’ wide. It would be 10’ for the bikes and pedestrians and then off to the side would be a mulch trail. We would require that they stay on that side of the trail. There is a cost to that. Will the other municipalities be able to afford that? Jack said the other issue is the access issue. Where are people going to park their trucks or cars with horse trailers so they can get their horses off? Lower Saucon does not have any access. If we do get the access down at Reading Road, it will only have room for 20 cars, no horse trailers. Upper Saucon it’s going to be using their community park for their trailhead access. They are going to have to be on board with that. Hellertown would have some parking at the Grist Mill and Water Street Parks, but he doesn’t know if there is enough room for horse trailers. Tom said Water Street Park would have room. Tom said access is a big issue. Jack said otherwise you are just going to restrict it for people coming just from their homes to the trail. If the access issue can be addressed, then that’s fine. This is a good step to work on the rules. It’s going to need approval from the each governing body. Tom said he will work on the rules for the horses and will document the things that need to be addressed. This way it’s in writing and everyone is made aware of that. Jack said if Donna can get people together to raise the money for the surfacing material for the horses, that’s fine. We’d need people out there putting down the wood chips or the mulch. Tom said you could use a horse with a trailer with mulch in it and just throw the mulch out on the trail and the horse people could make that happen very easily. He thinks the parking is the big issue. Jack said he will send Tom the requirements for horse parks. It’s like 16’ for a truck with a trailer. Bill said it sounds like we need a separate egress access point strictly for horses, rather than tying it in with the trailhead. Just like a boat launch by the lake. It would be good if we could have one location between the four municipalities. Judie said that would be great.

10. **Volunteer/Scout Projects** - Jack said the Boy Scout is finishing up two kiosks which will be on the Hellertown section of the Rail Trail. They are typical kiosks with space to put the map of the trail up, announcements, some attractions in Hellertown, historic attractions, that type of thing. That should be a welcome addition.

6. **Old Business:**

- **Joint Recreation Study Committee** – Jack said our grant application has been submitted to DCNR. They basically told us that we’re eligible as we meet all the requirements and we are working together with the school district and Hellertown. They have to designate who the peer consultant is. Then they will come in and be assigned to work with our group for the next year or so and put together a plan.

7. **New Business:**

- **SV Lax Request to Locate Shed to Store Equipment** – Jack said Ron Bracalante has asked him about locating a storage shed somewhere in the Town Hall complex. Jack asked him to send something in so he can have it checked out by the Director of Public Works, but he doesn’t have any information on that.

Regarding the use of the Polk Valley Park multi-purpose fields for the adult soccer tournament on Saturday and Sunday, May 21 and 22, 2011 from John Masiado, Scott said if soccer has any games that weekend, they can schedule them as away games for those two days. Jack said they will give him the special events policy. Tom said can we vote on a conditional approval for this event and offer that to them. Jack said sure. It will be conditional approval based upon us getting a sign-off by lacrosse and soccer. Scott said he can take it to the soccer meeting next week.

A motion was made for approval conditional on us getting an okay from both soccer and lacrosse.

- **SVSD Field Use Needs** – Jack said the school district and Bob Frey have been talking, through the Joint Recreation Committee about the use of fields at Polk Valley Park. The School Board has been discussing a plan to increase the number of playing fields on the campus. They have a plan from an architect to do that and it involves spending some unspent bond funds. Several members of the School Board have said that before they make a decision to spend that money to make these improvements, they want to know whether the Township athletic fields would be available for them to use. Bob Frey is going to come in this week and give Jack specifics on what they are asking for. Bob was talking about Fall of 2012 when the PIAA rules are going to come into effect and girls' soccer will move from a Spring sport to a Fall sport. Jack thinks Bob is being pushed by the School Board members to come up with some sort of commitment. He doesn't really know what that entails. Bob may come to Jack this week and say if we need one of the fields at Polk Valley, could we have it for this period of time for the afternoon practices and games. He needs to fill Jack in on all the requirements. Jack told Bob to give him all of the details and he'll bring it back to this group and we'll discuss it and make a recommendation to Council which should also be discussed with the Joint Recreation Study committee. He told Bob that they are a priority group just like all the other athletic groups and we should be able to work out a solution that works for everybody. If Jack gets anything in, he'll send it out to everyone before the December meeting. He doesn't know what Bob's deadline is, but he thinks the School Board wants something by the end of the year. Scott said one turf field would solve a lot of problems. Bill said that's the direction they are going to have to go. You see how successful it is at Salisbury and Palisades. He could certainly see sharing with them.
- **Review Site Plan (Metro Pennsylvania PCS Site Plan)** no comments

7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

8. **Next Meeting:** December 6, 2010