



**Montgomery Township  
Park and Recreation Board  
Meeting Minutes for March 14, 2012**

The monthly meeting of the Montgomery Township Park and Recreation Board was held on March 14, 2012 in the Montgomery Township Municipal Building. The members of the Park and Recreation Board in attendance included: Tony Ruggieri, Dan Spinelli, Kim Greene, Mark McMahon, Michael Okino, Linda Brooks and Mark Angelone. Also in attendance were Michael Fox (BOS Liaison), Larry Gegan (Township Manager), Ann Shade (Director of Administration and Human Resources) and Sharon Tucker (Recreation Coordinator).

**CALL TO ORDER**

Tony Ruggieri called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Tony Ruggieri made a motion to approve the February 8, 2012 minutes with one correction. The date for the approval of the last minutes should be listed as January 11, 2012 and not November 9, 2011. The motion passed 7-0.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jack O'Hara, CFO from Smith Insurance Company, introduced himself and stated that his company would be interested in providing financial support to the township with regards to the parks. Jack O'Hara stated that there are probably other companies that would like to get involved as well. Tony Ruggieri thanked Mr. O'Hara for coming to the meeting and stated that the Park Board is interested in starting a Special Needs Challenger Program and that may be something Smith Insurance could get involved with. Jack O'Hara thanked the board for letting him speak and stated that Sharon Tucker has his contact information.

**PARK COMP PLAN**

Beth Pilling was in attendance to review the overall Park Comp Plan and the current status. Beth Pilling requested that the members of the Park Board, especially the new members, take the time this month to visit as many parks as possible. Beth Pilling passed out information about the parks and a questionnaire that she would like the members to complete. Beth Pilling will send the survey electronically to Tony Ruggieri so it can be forwarded on to the other board members if they need additional copies.

**PARK ACTIVITY UPDATE**

Larry Gegan reported that Kevin Costello could not be here but a park activity report was included in their packet. Larry Gegan stated that the Public Works crew is prepping for the upcoming season.

Michael Okino commented that the Connie Mack field has been leveled and it looks great and is safer.

Tony Ruggieri commented that the basketball rims at Spring Valley Park are bent. Tony Ruggieri recommended that they get stronger rims for now and perhaps new backboards. Since the summer league will be playing at Spring Valley, heavy spring backboards that give a little would be worth the investment. There was discussion about using chains instead of nets but it was noted that it can ruin the balls over time and the chains rust.

Kim Greene reported that the street hockey rink at Whispering Pines has a major crack down the middle and a big crack along the side of the court. Kim Greene also noted that there is trash and broken bottles behind the park in the woods.

Michael Okino stated that the right side picnic table at Gazebo Park is breaking apart or splintering. Michael Okino reported the following about Spring Valley Park: the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseline on field #1 at Spring Valley Park has a big hole in it; the backend of short stop 3<sup>rd</sup> base area is rutted out; the fence that surrounds the playground has some broken slats; the fence around field #1 is turned up at the bottom and the points are sticking out; the side walls of the restroom facilities towards the volleyball court and facing the fields has graffiti that was removed but it can still be seen.

Mark McMahon reported that the fence on the walk side of the Connie Mack field at Windlestrae Main is bent up at the bottom. The balls can go through at the spectators. Mark McMahon also commented that he knows there is a long range plan to redo the walking path at Windlestrae Main and he wants us to get a plan in place. Tony Ruggieri suggested that they get trails marked out as part of the Park Comp Plan.

Larry Gregan suggested that going forward the Park Board members could send an email to Kevin Costello with any park improvements or comments and Kevin will have follow-up at the next meeting.

## **RECREATION UPDATE**

Sharon Tucker stated that there was a problem at the printer with the Spring/Summer newsletter that delayed the mailing. At this time it has been mailed to the residents and will reach everyone before the start of any programs at the end of March.

Sharon Tucker asked the Park Board members for feedback regarding the Holiday Lights Contest and Celebration for this year. The Recreation Office is considering having a Halloween Lights contest and doing just a Holiday Celebration without the Holiday Lights this year. Sharon Tucker stated that the number of participants in the contest have remained below 20 for several years and it tends to be the same participants. After some discussion among the group Tony Ruggieri stated that he would like to keep the Holiday Lights Contest as it is.

Sharon Tucker requested guidance from the Park Board members regarding some permit issues. We have a few groups that are interested in using soccer fields early every Sunday morning for the majority of the year. Currently the fields are reserved for Montgomery United Soccer and they expect there could be a need to use the fields for some make-up games or on an as needed basis. Dwight Wilkinson was present from Montgomery United Soccer and stated that his organization does work with the township in an effort to keep the fields in the best possible shape. He doesn't know that other groups coming in will do the same and could be playing on the fields when it is a "No-play."

Mr. Kevin Kim from the Eagles Soccer Club, a group that submitted a permit request for a soccer field on Sunday mornings from 7:30 – 9:30 am was present. He stated that his group would be very

respectful to the policy that the township has in place. A large percentage of his group is made up of township residents, but they did not quite make the 75% required to be considered a resident group. Mr. Kim stated that his group just wants the chance to use the fields as any other group should be able to do.

Dialogue among the Park Board members took place to decide how best to proceed with the requests in an effort to accommodate all parties. The Park Board members agreed that the township should approve the permits for the groups requesting access to the fields.

Dwight Wilkinson stated that Montgomery United will agree to amend the permit request to give up access to Zehr fields 1 and 3 on Sunday mornings from 7:30 – 9:30 am, except when there are tournaments scheduled.

### **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The question was raised to see if there was any chance of getting on the Whistlestop fields earlier than originally expected. Larry Gregan stated that the project is coming along great but it is still on target to open next fall. The fields must be left to rest for 12-18 months post construction.

Tony Ruggieri provided Larry Gregan with a list of 2012 recommended activities for the capital improvement budget of \$50,000. Tony Ruggieri stated that their original list totaled \$42,5000, but if they add the renovation to the Spring Valley Park hockey courts it would take the total to \$52,500. The Park Board is requesting that we ask the Board of Supervisors to consider approval of the additional \$2,500 to complete all activities on the list. Larry Gregan will pass this information on to Kevin Costello to review and get ready for the Board of Supervisors Meeting. Larry Gregan also requested that the Park Board figure out a replacement capital and repair/upgrade schedule so we have a plan to take to the Board of Supervisors in the future.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Tony Ruggieri inquired about the Community Center workshop. The Park Board wanted to be informed of that meeting so they could have attended. Larry Gregan stated that the workshop was just to lay out a timeline and how the Board of Supervisors would like to proceed with a needs assessment. The Board of Supervisors needed to make decisions about getting a consultant involved and going through the RFP process. The Park Board will have the opportunity to express what they would like to see in the Community Center, but we are not to that stage yet. Michael Fox stated that the Board of Supervisors wants to have some clear guidelines established so residents are not asking for anything completely unrealistic at that property.

Larry Gregan gave out a draft of Athletic Field Maintenance procedures that the township staff wants to provide to the Venue Managers for MTBSA and Montgomery United. This is meant to formalize the policy of allowing them to open certain fields when the North Penn No Play is in effect. The process was started last year but it was very informal and the township staff wants to have a specific policy in place. Larry Gregan stated that the two groups would still be required to follow any specific requirements from the township and could have their permits revoked if they are not adhering to the policies. Dwight Wilkinson from Montgomery United stated that it was great to work with Ray Barndt and Kevin Costello last year to come to a decision about fields and would that still be an option this year. Larry Gregan stated that it is but this policy is meant to address the times when Ray Barndt or Kevin Costello may not be available to override a No Play and we want to give the

responsible parties at Montgomery United and MTBSA the ability make that judgment call in the best interest of the township and the teams with regards to safety and field conditions.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Tony Ruggieri addressed the proposal from Montgomery United Soccer regarding installing turf fields at Kenas 1 and 2. Tony Ruggieri wants to see Montgomery United Soccer provide information on exactly when soccer would be using the fields and when the fields would be available for the township to rent out. The Park Board needs to know what hours will be available for the township to make the \$50,000 that they are required to pay and what rate would we be able to charge?

Dwight Wilkinson asked how the township would feel about providing a ground lease for that space to Montgomery United. Montgomery United would rather move forward with the initial proposal but they are open to other options.

Tony Ruggieri stated that with new Park Board members just coming onboard they are not in a position to provide a recommendation on whether this should be moved to the Board of Supervisors. They will evaluate and discuss at the April Park Board meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mike Okino made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 pm. The motion was seconded by Tony Ruggieri. The motion passed 7-0. The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2012 at 7:30 pm at the Township Building.