

**Montgomery Township
Park & Recreation Board
Meeting Minutes for April 9, 2008**



At 8:00p.m. Chairman Bill Maule called the meeting to order. Leesa Meade, Larry Fiel, Keith Johnson, Barry Weinstein, Officer Peoples, Kevin Costello (Public Works Director), Pam Gural-Bear (Assistant Township Manager), Beth Usic (Recreation Director), Sudha Suryadevara (Recreation Coordinator) and Jeffrey McDonnell (Board of Supervisors' Liaison) were present.

PRPS Lay Honor Award Presentation:

Sue Lohoefer, President of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) and the Upper Dublin Park and Recreation Director, was very pleased to announce that Bill Maule, Chairman of the Park and Recreation Board, was selected as the winner of the PRPS Lay Honor Award 2007, its highest honor for community Park and Recreation volunteers.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The March 12th and April 2nd minutes were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Anthony Ruggieri, MTBSA

Tony informed the Park Board that Baseball and Softball Association's field day is Saturday, April 19th. They have many volunteers to clean up the area and to spread stone where needed.

They would like to move forward and determine the placement of the two batting cages – one location would be at Rose Twig and the other location is still to be determined.

Chuck Ziegler, Montgomery Township Resident

Mr. Ziegler made the recommendation that the Township investigate the feasibility of acquiring the Zehr tract.

Keith Johnson, Park Board Member

Keith discussed the field usage for the Shoot for the Cure tournament to be held on May 17th and 18th – schedule the fields. Kevin Costello will make the final call for the usage of the fields if there is inclement weather.

Township Staff

Township staff has requested game schedules from both the Baseball/Softball Association as well as the Soccer Association in order to ensure that fields are not double scheduled.

OLD BUSINESS

Capital Projects

Kevin Costello stated that the Rose Twig Project will reconvene as soon as the area dries up and allows construction to begin again.

Bark Park's small dog area will have a slight delay in order to take down a tree now versus after fencing goes up. The tree will be taken down by the Public Works team.

NEW BUSINESS

Open Space

Chuck Ziegler elaborated on his recommendation that the Township move towards a possible acquisition of the 50 acres known as the Zehr tract. It would be a great move in order to

preserve open space and have additional land for recreational use. There is a 50 foot easement along two of the neighboring properties for access to the tract.

It was suggested to talk with the developer and see if making an offer on the land was possible. **Larry Fiel** made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to pursue the acquisition of the Zehr tract. **Keith Johnson** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeff Mc Donnell asked the Park Board if they would reallocate their capital budget projects to fund open space projects. All were agreeable.

A brief discussion regarding possible funding of Open Space ensued including topics such as a possible referendum on the ballot and grants.

Disc Golf Subcommittee's Alternative Plan

It was reviewed that none of the disc golf holes would be placed in the wooded area. The Public Works team is working with community service folks in order to clear the paint ball area, exercise bikes and other debris from the wooded area.

Chuck Vesay walked with one of the Boy Scout leaders along the proposed new walking trail and noted that they were at least 50 feet from the disc golf holes. They marked off the area along the trees to zone off the area for the walking trail which is a higher and drier area than where the existing trail is located.

It was noted that there exists a natural tree buffer in between the two trails (one for disc golf and one for a walking trail). In addition, temporary pedestrian bridges would link the walking trail. Public Works would grind logs to make the mulch for the trails. There would be approximately 27 acres left of the wooded area.

The whole course is approximately utilizing 18 acres of the 172 -acre Park. The main course is

8 feet wide or 10 acres total. In order to get to the Wiseman tract, bridges would be needed and the Township Engineer's input would be needed.

Marilyn Tontoni stated that many styles of discs are utilized for the sport. Some are heavy and sharp. It was noted that there are many rubberized, plastic and flexible discs. The average speed of discs ranges from the amateur throwing at 20 mph versus professionals at 60 mph.

It was suggested to actually throw a disc at a tree stump to determine the damage that could be caused and provide proof of it. It was asked how many times it would take for a disc to hit a tree to cause damage.

At Tyler State Park, it was stated that actual damage to trees including scars on the trees existed. Pictures from a previous memo show the damage.

Keith Johnson stated that a majority of trees can withstand damage from a disc. ***John Chambers*** stated that a decision was made to put the course in the park. The decision was made based on what environmental impact would result versus the recreational impact on the residents and community.

Exhibit 1 shows the existing course and how it was laid out to minimize the environmental impact on the area. Efforts to preserve the wooded area were made. Disc golfers will be part of the solution to maintain the course and to minimize the environmental impacts. The plan meets the objectives and is a good alternative.

Chuck Ziegler stated that taking a look at the disc golf course from scratch might be the answer. The terrain makes it difficult for an 18 hole course where one and eighteen can begin and end at the same location. Five streams come together in the park along the sewer easement. There is low lying land or wetlands. Thus, recreate the course elsewhere.

A bridge in the wetland area is problematic. ***John Chambers*** confirmed this statement.

The question was asked, how do you access the Wiseman tract? Off of Stump Road or the area between the flood plains.

The Park Board considered the original plan dated March 15, 2008. One would access the Wiseman tract and if successful in obtaining the Zehr tract, one could access the area from that point with only 1 bridge crossing!!!

Barbara Vesay stated that the holes on the plan dated 3-15-08 were too close together and too close to Neshaminy Falls.

It was suggested that an environmental group could remediate the whole wooded area.

Marilyn Tontoni stated that the concerns by 200 residents were not addressed at all. Some of the holes are placed by streams with pedestrian traffic near them goes against all recommendations made by environmentalists.

An environmental impact assessment will be completed on the area and a monitoring program will be put in place.

Larry Fiel said that it is the Park Board's job to speak for all residents regardless of one's individual position. The disc golf course is a viable recreational alternative to be used by all.

Kevin Costello revealed that the Department of Forestry (Penn Sate) would review the preserved wooded areas in the Township.

Bill Maule made the motion to recommend the plan dated 3-15-08 to the Board of Supervisors. The motion died due to a lack of a second.

Bill Maule made the motion to recommend the disc golf course alternative plan dated 4-5-08. It was seconded by **Keith Johnson**. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

The Park Board will present the alternative plan to the Board of Supervisors. A power point presentation will be prepared by staff. In addition, recommendations will be made to the Board on the environmental monitoring process.

DCNR Grant

A Department of Forestation grant was discussed in order to make an assessment of the total forested areas within the Township. A professional would be brought in to consult. The invasive plant species would be cleared. The Natural areas cannot be touched. ***Barry Weinstein*** made a motion to apply for the DCNR grant and ***Larry Fiel*** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Park Tour

The annual park tour is scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd at 8am.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Maule adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

The next Park and Recreation Board meeting will be on Wednesday, May 14th at 8 p.m. at the Township Building.