

**Montgomery Township  
Park & Recreation Board  
Meeting Minutes for November 14, 2007**

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Chairman Bill Maule called the meeting to order at 8:05p.m. Leesa Meade, Keith Johnson, Dave Keightly, Barry Weinstein, Larry Fiel, Kevin Costello (Public Works Director), Pam Gural – Bear (Assistant Township Manager), Meghan Williams (Recreation Intern) and Evelyn DiFeo (Recreation Coordinator) were present.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

The Minutes were approved as submitted.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

***Montgomery United Soccer Club***

Chuck Vesay, Executive Director of Montgomery United Soccer Club, wanted to thank Kevin Costello and the Parks Department in Public Works for the great job they had done to preserve the soccer fields. Mr. Vesay said they had received a lot of compliments this year from parents about how the fields are in such great shape. Mr. Vesay said the Township was very proactive in helping to do this by purchasing the irrigation system to water the fields.

***Disc Golf***

Several Mallard Pond residents came to express their concerns regarding the installation of the Disc Golf Course.

**John Blasko, 134 Mallard Drive**, said he walked through the woods and saw a metal contraption and then found out the Township was installing Disc Golf at Windlestrae Park. Mr. Blasko said when the nature path was constructed the residents were asked for their help in developing this area, but this time they were not consulted. He said the residents would have appreciated being notified prior to the installation of the course so they could help aid in the planning process. Mr. Blasko wanted to know if the Township performed an environmental impact study. He also inquired as to the number of trees that were removed, was concerned about his tax dollars paying for something he did not want, mentioned the possible impact to the nearby wetlands, and was concerned that the course was disturbing the habitat for

the animals. Mr. Blasko also wanted to know the total cost of the course and what the return is on the Township's investment.

**Dave Hansell, 130 Mallard Drive,** said the nature trail is approximately 400 ft. from his property line and when he purchased his house in 1988, the Disc Golf course was not on the master plan that was shown to him. He continued to say that when the trail was developed, the Township did not consider putting the trail any closer than 250 ft. from the residential property lines.

Chairman Maule said that he remembers when the trails were being installed and that he does not remember a 250 ft. set-back as a requirement to install the trails.

Mr. Hansell continued to say he is worried about the wildlife being disturbed from their natural habitat and strongly opposes the course going in the natural area -- particularly holes 1 thru 5. He wanted to know why these holes were not considered to be installed in/near the sewer easement area.

Mr. Hansell also said that the residents of Mallard Pond are not opposed to the Disc Golf per se; but they are against the location of holes 1 - 5.

**Marilyn Tontoni, 219 Mallard Drive**, said her property is not adjacent to the natural area, but the Township residents are currently upset because of the lack of open space and traffic congestion in the area. She was concerned about people outside of the Township using the park and whether trees will be replanted to make up for the ones that were removed for the course. She also stated that the park will not be as nice as it was with all the changes that are being made.

**Neil McDevitt, 111 Damson Lane**, said he was thrilled that the Disc Golf course was being installed and that the Township was providing this free recreation – especially for teenagers. He explained that since he has been playing Disc Golf, he has never seen a course in which participants had left litter/debris behind.

**Joe Meehan, of 136 Mallard Drive**, said he understands the Township followed the proper procedures to install the course, but the Township should have given all the residents whose properties back up to the area individual notification about the matter. He continued to say that the residents are concerned that people outside of the Township will use the park. And he also wanted to know how many more trees, if any, would be taken down.

**Marianne Platt of 116 Mallard Drive** asked if the outside organizations using the course will be charged a fee.

Chairman Maule explained that there is a rule that any organizations with a party of 25 or more people are required to complete a permit and it has to be approved by the Montgomery Township Staff. Chairman Maule continued to explain that a lot of the parks were purchased with County Open Space Funds. Accepting those funds means there is an understanding that the parks are open for public use by county residents.

Ms. Meade also explained that the park is a public park and you cannot monitor who can and cannot use it. She further explained that as township residents, we go to other municipalities and use their parks without paying a fee. Accordingly, non-residents who use Montgomery Township parks should have the same rights.

**Jean Verne Ziegler, of 119 Rose Twig Lane**, was disturbed about the placement of holes 1 through 5 and is concerned about the underbrush and trees that were removed. She is worried that people will be cutting through her back yard to access hole 1. Several years ago, the residents of Mallard Pond were told that the natural area would always stay the natural area and it would not be developed. She continued to say that the bridges are out and the residents have been trying to get them replaced, but they are told by the Township that they are not able to replace them because they were constructed by Boy Scouts as projects.

Chairman Maule said the only bridge that has not been replaced is the one that had washed out during the heavy rains we had one year; otherwise there are bridges throughout the park. Chairman Maule continued to say that the Park and Recreation Board is considering adding a permanent bridge to connect the Rose Twig Section and the Main Section of Windlestrae Park.

**Lawrence Coldwell of 264 Mallard Drive** said that the disc golf people will keep the course clean and will respect both the area and the local residents. He continued to say that it is becoming a very popular sport among the young and old.

Mr. Blasko then asked if an environmental study had been done before the course was installed and if the Army Corps was notified.

Chairman Maule said he walked the course and noticed that a couple of holes were relocated from the original plan, but that the rest of the course looks fine. He continued to say he had also noticed that some of the residents have encroached on Township property. Chairman Maule said that when the Park and Recreation Board reviewed the disc golf plan, the goal was to keep the course on the outer limits of the trail area.

Dr. Deusler, the developer of the course, said he has met with the Park and Recreation Board four times to discuss the course. He apologized to the residents for the unintended issues that arisen from the installation of the course. He said that the course will bring excitement to the residents and will be an asset to the community. He continued to say that the course is 98% completed. He did say that two holes were changed from the original plan, and that the change was approved by the Park and Recreation Board. Prior to this change, Dr. Deusler also consulted the Township staff. Dr. Deusler told the residents that they should keep an open mind about the course and its possibilities.

Mr. Hansell said he would like to see the plan that was approved by the residents. Chairman Maule passed out the plan that was approved. Mr. Hansell said that he would like to see the master plan of Windlestrae Park which shows the intended course, as it was not in the master plan that the residents reviewed when they purchased their homes.

**Roger Schaefer, of 126 Mallard Drive**, asked when the plan was approved.

Mr. Hansell then said that when he walks the trail, he sees deer, red fox and a couple of disc golf players. He feels this is a conflict of interest.

Ms. Meade asked the residents what are their main concerns regarding the installation of the course. Are they upset about it being to close to homes? Worried about nature? Or are they upset because of its use by non-township residents? The consensus by the residents was that they want holes 1 through 5 to be moved due to the proximity to their homes and the negative environmental impact.

Mr. Keightly asked the residents if the Township should survey their properties to see how far the course is from their property lines. Mr. Keightly proposed if the disc golf is off their property lines and the Township finds out the residents are encroaching on Township property, the residents should be required to move their items off of Township property. The residents were very concerned and somewhat agitated when Mr. Keightly made that suggestion.

Mr. Costello said that the reason why some of the hole locations were changed was because he did not want the course constructed on the trails, natural area or wetlands.

Ms. Tontoni said she is disappointed that the beautiful natural area was destroyed.

Ms. Mead explained that the Park and Recreation Board was trying to add passive recreation in a natural area.

**Diana Berg of 100 Quail Court** stated she is disappointed that the course was added around a nature trail. She explained that she is worried that the discs will hit the trees and chip off the bark.

Chairman Maule said that the Township has the authority to decide how many people in a tournament can use the course. Chairman Maule continued to explain that there were concerns when Bark Park was being constructed and the Township has had nothing but success throughout Bark Park's five-year history. He believes that many of the residents using Bark Park are not Montgomery Township residents, but it is successful none the less. Chairman Maule said if the residents would like wood chips installed on the trails it can be done, but the Township has not done so because of the maintenance required.

Ms. Meade asked Dr. Deusler what kind of use the course will get. He said he could not predict that at this time.

**Chuck Ziegler of 119 Rose Twig Lane** stated that a lot of these issues could have been avoided if the Park and Recreation Board would have notified the residents so they could have come to a meeting to express their concerns. He said he is concerned about people using Rose Twig Lane and the driveway leading to the park from Rose Twig Lane for parking. He said that the residents were not even notified about the installation of the baseball diamond. He wondered if this issue be discussed at a future meeting and if so, when. He continued to say that many people helped develop Windlestrae Park.

Chairman Maule said he remembered that the Township had asked the residents for their opinion regarding the location of the park amenities and that the hockey court was moved to accommodate their concerns. Mr. Ziegler thinks the residents should be notified when any amenities are added to Windlestrae Park.

**Sherri Antonacci of 121 Rose Twig Lane** said that she likes looking at the trees and wanted to know if the holes were permanent or could they be moved.

Chairman Maule said that holes one and three should be moved, but that the others should be left at their location. He thinks the residents should give it a chance to see how it progresses and what impact it will have on the Township.

Ms. Gural-Bear said that the Township has noted their environmental concerns and they will be brought to the attention of the township engineer, John Chambers. Mr. Chambers will review the concerns and make sure that all concerns have been addressed. Ms. Meade suggested the residents come back in February to further discuss this matter with Mr. Chambers.

Ms. Gural-Bear passed out a notepad and pen for the residents to write down their names, addresses and email addresses so that she can contact them at a later date regarding the course.

It was asked if holes 1 and 3 would be moved in the meantime and Chairman Maule said they would not be moved at this time.

**Kathy Dipangrazio, of 204 Mallard Drive** stated that she was upset that the natural area was disturbed.



Mr. Hansell said that he contacted the company that makes the disc golf tees and baskets and mentioned that the piece that anchors the structure in the ground costs \$22 each -- so it should not cost much to relocate the holes.

Ms. Tontoni asked why this particular form of recreation was approved when the residents have come to the Park and Recreation Board with ideas that were shot down.

Chairman Maule explained that you need to keep coming to the meetings with suggestions. The more you persevere the more you are heard. He continued to explain that the Township approved the five-year capital plan and that the Park and Recreation Board will be reevaluating it. He said that people had asked for the course and that is why it was constructed.

He told the residents that they should come back in January after the Mr. Chambers has had time to research their concerns.

There being no further discussion about the disc golf course, the residents of Mallard Pond left the meeting room.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### ***Capital Projects***

This item was tabled until January's meeting.

### ***Spring Valley Park Restrooms***

Officer Rob Johnson said that the restrooms at Spring Valley Park, Whistlestop Park, and Windlestrae Park were recently vandalized. The Spring Valley Park restrooms had graffiti on the walls and the portable toilets at Whistlestop Park were spray painted and tipped over. Additionally, the Windlestrae Park restrooms had graffiti written on the walls of the men's room. The trail at Spring Valley Park had been spray painted and logs were set on fire. In addition, the pavilion roof at Spring Valley Park was spray painted. Officer Johnson said that he has talked to the officer regarding the video camera option, but that it will be very expensive. He said he talked to the gentleman that installs the locks at the police department and he is going to obtain a quote for the installation of timed locks. Officer Johnson expects the cost to be approximately \$1,000 per door.

### **Open Space Committee**

At the Open Space Committee meeting, Chairman Maule suggested the committee use some of the monies from the county to improve the bridge that connects the Rose Twig Section and Main Section of Windlestrae Park so that hay wagons and tractors could travel between the two sections without having to access Kenas Road.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### ***Five-Year Capital Plan***

Chairman Maule tabled this item for the January meeting.

#### ***Holiday Lights Contest***

Mr. Weinstein asked when the Park and Recreation Board members were going to see the homes and will they get to see pictures of the homes before they go out to judge them. Ms. Gural-Bear explained that the three finalists for each category will be decided and judging forms will be provided with a map.

#### ***North Penn Recreation Consortium Program Network***

Mr. Keightly said that at the wine and cheese social he spoke with Jocelyn Kenney of the North Wales Council and the council is very interested in advertising and coordinating programs throughout the municipalities in the North Penn Area. Ms. Gural-Bear told Mr. Keightly that the Township is currently working on that with other municipalities. So far, the Township coordinates the winter blast event for all the North Penn residents.

There being no further business, Chairman Maule adjourned the meeting at 10:21p.m.

The next Park and Recreation Board meeting will be on January 9, 2008 at 8p.m.