



**Montgomery Township
Park & Recreation Board
Meeting Minutes for February 9, 2011**

Tony Ruggieri, Mark Angelone, Heather Berkey, Keith Johnson, Dan Spinelli, Michael Fox (BOS Liaison), Kevin Costello (Director of Public Works), Lawrence Gregan (Township Manager), Ann Shade (Director of Administration & Human Resources) and Kate Grubb were in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Tony Ruggieri called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tony Ruggieri made a motion to approve the Park Board Meeting Minutes from January 12, 2011 and Mark Angelone seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Selheimer from MUSC shared with the Board his concerns regarding the Township's Red Flag No Play policy. Mr. Selheimer stated that since the Township's policy mirrors the school district's policy, the public cannot contact anyone with the Township on the weekends should they wish to reverse the usage decision. Tony Ruggieri commented that the Township wrote and adopted a policy for field usage based on the opportunity of maximum play with minimum damage to the fields during inclement weather.

PARK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Beth Pilling, Montgomery County Planning Commission, provided the Board a timeline of events for committee presentation and feedback regarding the Park Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Pilling distributed copies of the parks inventory, equipped with maps and descriptions of each Township park as well as a cheat sheet for when the Board takes their tour of the Township's park system. Additionally, she provided tips on how to assess each park by taking on the viewpoint as a new resident or visitor to the park. Ms. Pilling recommended using the 5 global questions (services provided, stewardship, volunteers, etc.) previously discussed to assess the parks and she will forward to Kevin Costello those questions to re-distribute to the Board.

Additionally, Ms. Pilling handed out information that might be helpful in learning about municipal parks, which included examples of neighboring townships' fountain structures, passive parks, playgrounds, etc.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Kevin Costello reported that there were about 20 contractors at the mandatory pre-bid meeting regarding the Whistlestop Project. The project will include the revitalization of the Connie Mack field and softball field. The meeting discussed the scope, timeline and details of the project. While the winning contractor may begin the project sooner, the seeding and sodding of the fields

will occur in the fall of 2011. Tony Ruggieri requested that he be notified if the contractor starts early so he, in turn, can notify the baseball teams.

NEW BUSINESS

Kids University Program – Summer Recreation

Larry Gregan reported that the North Penn School District had advised that they may begin charging Facility fees for all users, including other government agencies. This fee will impact the Township because the Township uses Montgomery Elementary School for its Kids University recreation program in the summer. In order for the Township to meet the Spring/Summer Recreation Newsletter deadline, it would need to include the proper fee for the program. Larry Gregan noted that absent this issue, staff was not proposing a fee increase for the program.

The problem that presents itself with not knowing the school district fee is that the deadline for getting information to the printer would be Tuesday, February 15th. Larry Gregan stated that he would propose to the Board of Supervisors to hold the fees to the 2010 rate and should there be additional costs that the Township tries to mitigate them as much as possible or the recreation newsletter could include all of the information regarding Kids University save the associated fees and send a notice later with the appropriate fee information.

Mark Angelone commented that the Township could publish the information as is but include an asterisk nothing to check the website for updated fees. Keith Johnson expressed his concern with essentially “double taxing” and the uproar that could ensue by the School District charging a fee to another government entity.

Tony Ruggieri said that he would call the School District representative and ask that they defer the increase in fees to next year.

Open Space Committee

Tony Ruggieri announced that there was a requirement that a member from the Park Board also be a member of the Open Space Committee. Park Board member Dan Spinelli had agreed to be the designee to the Open Space Committee and will be appointed at the next Board of Supervisors meeting.

Dan Spinelli reported that he had attended the recent Open Space Committee Meeting and believes the Open Space Committee will want to collaborate with the Park Board regarding trails. Larry Gregan reviewed some of the Open Space Committees comments on the Park Plan noting that in the past, the main focus was to balance passive and active recreation. Additionally, there was a goal to have a park within 2 miles of one another throughout the Township and that, for the most part, has been accomplished. The Open Space Committee also commented that part of the new Park Comprehensive Plan will include the cost of ownership, maintenance, and stewardship for the Township’s parks and open space. Supervisor Fox commented that when the upgrades are complete, both Whistlestop Park and Fellowship Park will be great parks for residents and visitors to enjoy. Supervisor Fox continued that not only is it expensive to build fields and parks but it is also expensive to maintain them and that also includes the maintenance of trails.

Chuck Ziegler asked if there was going to be a connection between the trail behind Montgomery Elementary School to the new trail off of the 202 Parkway Project. Larry Gregan stated that with the proposed Power line Trail, the county is looking for a connection of that trail to the parkway trail and has made the grant contingent upon the Township’s ability to make this connection. The power line trail project is currently on hold pending the County’s reinstatement of the grant program.

EAC

Dan Spinelli reported that he had attended the January EAC meeting and shared some of the discussions that occurred during that meeting regarding the Parks Plan. The EAC brought up the topics of community gardens and recycling. The EAC's primary focus is for residents and staff to recycle as much as possible including increasing recycling efforts in the Township Parks. One deterrent for community gardens is the lack of water to maintain them. Supervisor Fox commented that opportunities already exist within the Township, such as Memorial Grove, but no one comes out to weed it and by July it is overgrown.

Discussion ensued as to how the Parks Board could help the EAC and if there was any success with community gardens. Kevin Costello commented on prior efforts but issues of theft and damage caused by other animals to community gardens caused interest to decline.

Dan Spinelli also reported that the EAC would like to "go green" with the Recreation Newsletter. It was discussed that while the Township promotes the use of the website and other electronic means as a way of reducing printed material, the residents do like receiving the newsletter in the mail.

Larry Gregan reported that the Township receives about \$60,000 to \$70,000 annually of recycling grants through the Northern Montgomery County Recycling Commission. After \$30,000 is deducted for the annual leaf collection, that leaves \$30,000 to \$40,000 for recycling activities and EAC initiatives and that these funds can be used to purchase additional recycling equipment for the parks.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility & Field Use Permit

Tony Ruggieri made a motion to approve the permit from ACTS Sports Management requesting the use of the William F. Maul Park at Windlestrae on May 22, 2011 and Keith Johnson seconded the motion. ACTS Sports Management will be facilitating a 5K Charity Run for THON to help fight pediatric cancer.

Larry Gregan confirmed that the Township has all of the required documents and waivers. Additionally, Larry Gregan spoke with Chief Brady and a police vehicle will be visible in the area. Tony Ruggieri added that there were not any conflicts with MTSBA and also sent an email to Chris Brick with MTSA. The motion passed 5-0.

It was decided that residents surrounding the Mallard Pond area will be notified of the charity run through a flyer and Tony Ruggieri will send out a copy of the race course layout to the Parks Board.

Facilities & Field Use Policy

Tony Ruggieri commented that he felt the field use policy went over well with the Board of Supervisors on January 24, 2011. Larry Gregan stated that the staff met with both MUSC and MTBSA about field notification and permitting requirements. Larry Gregan also stated that the Township will be researching the use of the social network Twitter as an added means of communication between the Township and residents and user groups.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Tony Ruggieri made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m. and was seconded by Mark Angelone. The next meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Township Building.