



FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH

MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2023, AT 9 AM

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Nicholas Muller, Steve Whittingham, Jeffrey Cohen, Members; Gary Koehler, Manager; Larry Kurpakus, PWD Director; Michael Stevens, Chief of Police; Shawn M. Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Alex Scott, Mayor; Frederick Leech, Councilmember; Melinda Guinn, Resident; Tim Byan, Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve for the Audobon Society of Western PA

VIA ZOOM: Carrie Casey, Susan Crookston, Jay Troutman, Members; Betsy Monroe, Councilmember

ABSENT: Liz Nelson, Member

Wes Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

The minutes of the September 11, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved.

As this would have been Liz Nelson's last meeting with the Park Commission, Mr. Posvar thanked Ms. Nelson for the twelve years she dedicated to Fox Chapel Borough parks and trails. Ms. Nelson contributed greatly to the Welcome Garden at the corner of Fox Chapel Road and Delafield Road, where she assisted with the planting of twenty-five Sycamore trees.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

None

COMMISSION OPENINGS

The Park Commission has two vacancies due to the resignation of two of its members. The Park Commission met virtually on November 13, 2023, to discuss potential candidates.

At 9:08 AM, the Park Commission adjourned into Executive Session to discuss the vacancies. At 9:10 AM, the meeting was reconvened.

The Park Commission unanimously agreed to recommend to Council two candidates for six-year terms expiring on December 31, 2029. Mr. Posvar stated he would email the names of the two candidates to Ms. Peterson after the meeting.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Stevens stated that the Police Department continues to issue warnings and citations to violators without parking permits at designated Borough parking lots.

Chief Stevens said that in regard to aggressive/problem dogs in Borough Parks, he recommends that any aggressive behavior be reported to the Police Department as soon as possible by calling 911. The Police Department will fill out a report regarding the aggressive behavior. Individuals who report aggressive behavior by a dog and would like action to be taken cannot remain anonymous. A citation can be issued, and the matter will be brought before the magistrate, who will make the final ruling.

Mr. Troutman asked if the Borough has a right to revoke a parking permit due to a violation of Parking Permit Rules and Regulations for an individual who is supposed to be in control of an aggressive dog.

It was recommended that the Ad Hoc Dog Committee meet to discuss the issue, study what can be done, and make recommendations.

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Chief Stevens said he would share any report made regarding an aggressive dog with the Park Commission. He will also contact the Chiefs of Police from other departments, such as Sewickley Heights and Aspinwall Borough, to see how they deal with this issue.

FALL PLANTING EVENT

Mr. Cohen stated the tree planting event on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, with Shady Side Academy students and chaperones was a tremendous day. The 35 students and other volunteers are estimated to have planted 300 seedlings at Hardie Valley Park.

Audobon Society of Western PA Planting Opportunity

Tim Byan, Whetzel Land Steward for Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve for the Audobon Society of Western PA, attended to discuss a DCNR grant that the Audobon Society received. The funding is for a potential riparian planting in the Borough to help stabilize streambanks. The planting would occur between 2024 and 2025 with all native tree and shrub species. The process would involve site selection and review with the Audobon Society, a DCNR site approval, Planting Plan development with Borough input and another DCNR approval, and finally, the planting.

Mr. Cohen stated he would email the Committee to get a group together to start working on site selection as the grant funding is first-come-first-serve.

SPRING TRAIL RUN PROPOSAL

Mr. Cohen stated he would like to begin planning an inaugural Borough Trail Run event in the spring/summer of 2024 at McCahill Park, but the location and date are to be determined based on the park improvements at McCahill Park. He would like a subcommittee to be formed to see how feasible this event will be.

McCAHILL PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Koehler stated that the DEP permit had been approved for review and entered another review stage. Pashek +MTR and LSSE are confident the permit will be approved before February 2024. Once the approval is granted, the bidding for the work will begin.

Musical Additions to Annie's Field of Dreams

Mr. Whittingham requested that musical flowers, mushrooms, and beanstalk be added to Annie's Field of Dreams between the Lilliput Play Houses. The additions, which will cost almost \$30,000, will be fully funded by donations from Second Harvest, the Natali Family Trust, and Annie's Foundation.

Ms. Casey recommended the installation of the musical additions to Annie's Field of Dreams to Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Troutman and passed unanimously.

A brief discussion regarding permanent restrooms at McCahill Park occurred. Mr. Koehler suggested the park planner be consulted regarding the design and placement of such a structure.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Kurpakus stated the Public Works Department had begun working on the Sanitary Sewer Relocation clearing from the meadow at Riding Meadow Park to the parking area. Sections of the trail will be re-rerouted while the work is being completed.

Mr. Posvar thanked the Public Works Department for supporting the Borough Parks.

MISSION AND COMMISSION EXPECTATIONS INITIATIVE

Ms. Crookston suggested the Park Commission have a mission statement and that members of the Commission have clear direction on the expectations as members. Mr. Posvar advised waiting for information from the Joint Comprehensive Plan, then possibly updating the Park Master Plan.

He suggested an Ad Hoc committee be formed to help develop the core elements of the Committee. Ms. Crookston, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Muller, Mr. Posvar, and Ms. Casey will be the members of this committee.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

- The next Park Commission Meeting is on Monday, April 8, 2024, at 9 AM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:49 AM.

Shawn M. Peterson
Borough Secretary