



FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH

MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING HELD MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2022, AT 9 AM

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Jay Troutman, Carrie Casey, Jessica DeMoise, Susan Crookston, Liz Nelson, Steve Whittingham, Nicholas Muller, Jeffrey Cohen, Members; Alex Scott, Mayor; Gary Koehler, Manager; Larry Kurpakus, PWD Director; Michael Stevens, Chief of Police; Shawn Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Sorg, Sergeant; Melinda Guinn, Jim Herald, residents;

VIA ZOOM: Betsy Monroe, Council member; Sanford Leuba, Tree Planting Coordinator of the Allegheny County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America

Wes Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

The minutes of the September 12, 2022, meeting were unanimously approved.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Posvar welcomed new members Nicholas Muller and Jeffrey Cohen to the Park Commission.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Melinda Guinn, 107 Haverford Road, a Conservation and Native Plant volunteer with the Audobon Society at Beechwood Farms, shared information with the Commission regarding backyard stream care and maintenance, courses provided by Penn State Extension, a seed catalog, and an invasive species index. Mr. Posvar asked that she give a bibliography of the information so it can be shared online with residents and Commission members.

TRILLIUM TRAIL and ADDITIONAL PLANTINGS

Mr. Posvar updated the Commission on the successful planting of approximately 200 buttonbush, other water-loving shrubs, and small trees at Riding Meadow and Scott Park, and along the Trillium Trail. On behalf of the Park Commission, he thanked Melinda Guinn, Sanford Leuba, Carrie Casey, Alex Scott and the Scott Family, and the Public Works Department for all their hard work.

Sanford Leuba, the Tree Planting Coordinator of the Allegheny County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America, and Melinda Guinn, were in attendance to discuss the Ten Million Tree Initiative with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and their Riparian Buffer Planting proposal to plant an additional 550 trees in the Borough. The areas where they would like to concentrate their efforts in the spring of 2023 are Riding Meadow Park, Stoney Camp Run, and Salamander Trail. Ms. Guinn and Mr. Leuba asked the Commission to create a wishlist of plants they would like to see planted along the streams in the areas of concentration. Ms. Guinn suggested Sycamore, River Birch, Inkberry, Winterberry, PawPaw, and Buttonbush. She also suggested invasive species management in all three areas.

Mr. Posvar thought their proposal was a good idea. He wants the Commission to form an Ad Hoc Committee after the holidays with Mr. Leuba and Ms. Guinn to discuss the plantings they would like to see for these areas. Mr. Leuba and Ms. Guinn asked for a list by mid-January 2023. Mr. Leuba will send the Ten Million Tree Initiative seedling list to Mr. Posvar.

Ms. DeMoise stated she would like the Borough to consider adding a restoration gardener or arborist as an employee that can coordinate the volunteer efforts with plantings in the Borough and the long-term care and maintenance of the plantings.

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STORMWATER (McCAHILL AND HARDIE VALLEY PARK)

Mr. Koehler reported the data the Borough has been waiting for from the Army Corps of Engineers regarding Sycamore Run was received about a month ago. LSSE is working on inputting the data received into a model to calculate stormwater efforts needed for McCahill Park and Hardie Valley Park. LSSE should have this information input by the end of the month so that they, along with Ethos Collaborative, can begin working on designs for stormwater detention at Hardie Valley Park, and Pashek +MTR can work on their designs for stormwater retention at McCahill Park.

Mr. Koehler stated the Borough contractor had completed work on one of the streambank restoration permits from DEP below Riding Meadow Park. He also said there were two other permits the Borough would be working on in 2023. One is for Salamander Park, where gabion baskets are falling into the stream. Public Works temporarily fortified one area and will finish the scope of the work in the spring of 2023. The other permit is for an area across from Scott Park. Once the work is completed, these two areas will need to be fortified with additional plantings.

Ms. DeMoise asked that Public Works create a presentation for a future meeting explaining their standard approach to sediment and erosion control measures and restoration plan for working in a stream. Mr. Koehler offered to supply planting plan details prepared by LSSE to the Commission. Mr. Kurpakus said he could talk with LSSE about preferred methods, as they are the key designer for the streambank restoration projects. Mr. Koehler stated the Borough hired a contractor to perform the restoration work below Riding Meadow Park. Public Works will use that project as a model for future restoration projects.

RIDING MEADOW PARK – MUDDY CONDITIONS

Ms. Crookston reported muddy conditions along the trail in Riding Meadow Park and Hardie Valley Park. Mr. Kurpakus will have the Public Works Department spot-treat the worst areas.

Mr. Koehler stated he would like to propose wider trails to lessen the impact and proposed cutting bypass trails to relieve pressure from the main routes.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief Stevens said the Police Department actively patrols the parking lots to ensure vehicles have parking permits affixed to them. The vehicles without permits receive a letter as a warning providing information on how to obtain a parking permit in the Borough. A problem the Police Department is noticing is that the stickers are not adhering to vehicles as they have in the past.

There have been three separate incidents of theft in the past three months. The thefts have occurred in parking lots at Borough parks and private clubs. Residents should never leave anything valuable in their cars and always lock their doors, even in their driveway. Signage to remind residents not to leave anything valuable in their vehicles is currently being looked into for Borough parks.

Chief Stevens said there had been several incidents in the Borough parks involving dogs jumping on individuals. He said if an incident does occur, individuals need to call the Police Department when the incident takes place. Do not wait.

FOX CHAPEL PARKS CONSERVANCY

Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy would like to have its winter event on Saturday, January 28, 2023, from 4 to 9 PM at McCahill Park, with a rain date of Saturday, February 4, 2023.

Ms. Casey motioned to recommend that Council approve a park permit for the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy to have its Fire and Ice in the Park event with the condition of working with Borough staff and Park Commission representatives on logistics and safety. The motion was seconded by Mr. Troutman and passed by a unanimous vote.

PARK STEWARD REPORTS

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Mr. Kurpakus stated the fall mowing at Hardie Valley Park was not done as he was waiting on direction from the Park Commission. It was decided that the Public Works Department would begin a three-year rotation on mowing one-third of the field each year.

Mr. Kurpakus said Public Works would begin repairing the wooden boardwalks on the Trillium Trail. He was advised to look into an alternative product or solution that does not deteriorate as quickly as the currently used oak.

Mr. Kurpakus and Mr. Koehler, with the help of Jim Pashek, will begin working on standards the Borough will follow for treating trails and parking lots.

It was agreed that Jeff Cohen would be the Park Steward for Scott Park and trail bridges. Nicholas Muller will work with Ms. Casey and Ms. Crookston from Riding Meadow Park to Hardie Valley Park as a Park Steward.

Mayor Scott had a donor sponsor the creation of a wildflower meadow at the Welcome Garden along Fox Chapel Road.

OTHER BUSINESS

On behalf of Sergeant Craig Sorg, Mayor Scott asked the Park Commission for permission to have the third annual Fox Chapel Day on Saturday, June 24, 2023, at McCahill Park.

Mr. Troutman motioned to recommend that Council approve a park permit for Fox Chapel Day at McCahill Park on Saturday, June 24, 2023. The motion was seconded by Ms. Casey and passed unanimously.

Mandy Steele was elected to the State Representative position for District 33 and resigned from her position as Council member and, therefore, Council Liaison to the Park Commission. Betsy Monroe, a Council member, has agreed to be the new Council Liaison to the Park Commission.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

- Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy Fire & Ice in the Park event – Saturday, January 28, 2023, from 4 – 9 PM
- The next Park Commission Meeting – Monday, April 10, 2023, at 9 AM

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:19 AM.

Shawn M. Peterson
Borough Secretary