

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION BOARD**

### **July 8, 2014 Meeting Minutes**

Members present for the meeting were Chairman Greg Churach, Vice Chair Sue Thompson, Matt Dallas, Nancy Toothaker, Dennis Elliott and Commissioner liaison Herbert Miller, Jr. Also present were Township Manager Carol Lewis and Planning & Zoning Administrator Michelle Reddick. Commissioner Taylor was in the audience.

**Call to Order** - Chairman Churach called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

**Pledge of Allegiance** - The members, after a moment of silence, pledged allegiance to the flag.

**Introduce new Township Manager** – Chairman Churach introduced newly appointed Township Manager Carol R. Lewis to the members of the Board.

**Oaths of Office** – Notary Michelle Reddick administered oaths of office to members Greg Churach, Matt Dallas, Sue Thompson and Nancy Toothaker.

**Approval of Minutes** - A motion by N. Toothaker, seconded by S. Thompson and unanimously carried to approve the May 13, 2014 minutes as written.

**Open Space and Trails** – Commissioner Taylor wanted to commend the Board for all their efforts in pursuing the open space and noted that the residents are also excited and pleased with their efforts. He encouraged members to continue their efforts to plan and implement the trail system throughout the township which will provide connections to all our open space and connections to the open space in surrounding townships. Chairman Churach advised that he does not wish to rush the process of developing the trail system and would like to make sure the new regional recreation coordinator is on board with what the township is doing. He noted that he and Commissioner Miller reviewed and revised a wish list and the list will be presented at the next meeting. C. Lewis advised that if the Board can prioritize the list, then she can investigate grants that may be available to help with the development of the trail system.

#### **Old Business**

**Update on Hollenbach field work** – Chairman Churach advised that the field work at Hollenbach Park is completed; however, there are still some washouts that need to be repaired. Commissioner Miller noted there is also work to be done on some draining issues. C. Lewis advised that the swale will be addressed immediately, but the lower field needs additional seeding which will not happen until the fall. Commissioner Miller noted that C. Lewis suggested post and rail fencing as opposed to concrete parking blocks. He advised that he will be meeting with someone tomorrow, and if approved by this Board, will move forward with the installation of the post and rail fencing. He also noted that vandalism is occurring at the park involving the tree line and the port-a-potty. In response to a question from Chairman Churach, Commissioner Miller advised the new field will not be available for another year. Commissioner Miller suggested that we contact Gary Derenzo, athletic director for the School District, to see if the school will provide any monetary assistance and/or labor for repairs to the lower field. D. Elliott suggested we consider installing cameras at the park as we did in other parks to possibly catch the vandals. Commissioner Miller noted this would only work if they could get a secluded area to place the cameras and right now that is not possible.

**Update on Credentials for Open Space & Recreation Board Members** – Chairman Churach advised that Chief Moffett is currently unable to complete this project, but will notify him, who in turn will notify the members, when he is able to do so.

**Update on status of Regional Recreation Coordinator through Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation** – Chairman Churach advised that the candidate for the position has been given a verbal offer and has accepted; however, until he is hired, the name will not be released. Mr. Churach also noted the person is a landscape architect by trade, has recently worked on a big project in Lower Pottsgrove and has a great deal of knowledge about grants.

**Update on favorite park contest** – Chairman Churach advised that the contest has started, and Sunset Park was in third place until today where we are now in fifth place. He noted that he is on a video on The Mercury and provided a copy of the information to the members. He encouraged the members to support the contest by voting and by getting friends and neighbors involved in voting as well. Commissioner Miller advised that someone placed a charcoal grill on the floor of the pavilion so the township installed a charcoal grill similar to the one at Heather Place Park. He also advised that washouts at the park were a problem but have been repaired.

**Update of Sunset Park utilities cost/grant** – Chairman Churach advised that the township used the maximum grant for the pavilion so it cannot be used for the installation of utilities. He further advised that the approximate costs to run electric and water would be \$11,000.00 - \$8,000.00 for electric and \$3,000.00 for water. It is his recommendation to postpone any further discussion or research on this until we can identify where the funds to cover the costs will come from.

**Update on S.A.V.E. outdoor classroom Eagle Scout project** – Chairman Churach advised that the project which included benches and a cleared meadow is now completed.

**Update on Community Day** – S. Thompson advised that Hopewell Church has confirmed their attendance and participation. Chairman Churach advised that Dallas Fries will also be in attendance. S. Thompson further advised that Kona Ice will be in attendance. S. Thompson noted she would like to have the meeting in September be devoted mostly to discussions regarding Community Day.

**Purchase of Trail Emergency Vehicle** – Fire Chief Jeff Levengood explained that the Fire Committee discussed and recommended the purchase of a trail vehicle for fire emergency or medical emergency in a park or on a trail. Mr. Levengood advised the approximate cost would be \$25,000.00, and members of the Fire Committee thought maybe funds from open space could be used to purchase the trail vehicle. Chairman Churach advised that Act 115 provides for maintenance and engineering of open space so it would not be possible to use open space funds for such a purchase. He further advised that the township may be able to get a grant through DCNR to purchase the trail vehicle; however, we missed the deadline for this year. Mr. Elliott reiterated that he is very interested in mile markers along our trails for emergency purposes.

### **New Business**

**S.A.V.E. Parking lot proposal** – Chairman Churach provided a sketch plan and noted that Ken Hamilton from S.A.V.E. will attend the next meeting to provide a final plan, if available.

**Apron paving at Fox Hill Trail and Prout Farm Park** – Chairman Church advised the Township received a quote in the total amount of \$7,300.00 to provide a 20 foot wide paved apron at Fox Hill Trail and an access drive from the street to the parking lot at Prout Farm Park and the Board of Commissioners would like a recommendation from this Board. A motion by M. Dallas seconded by D. Elliott and unanimously approved to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they move forward with the paving as outlined.

**Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan Update** – Chairman Churach advised that Montgomery County is updating their Comprehensive Plan, and the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee has asked us to identify priorities for parks, recreation and open space. After much discussion, the Board agreed their priorities are: (1) complete the planning, engineering and construction of our trail system; (2) acquire additional open space land as opportunity presents; and (3) provide for sustainability of waterways and ponds on open space. A motion by S. Thompson seconded by D. Elliott and unanimously carried to forward these priorities to the Board of Commissioners for their review and approval to send to Montgomery County.

**Create policy for memorial naming of Township properties** – Chairman Churach explained that the Board was asked to create a policy for memorial naming of Township properties. He further explained that this could be done many different ways, and there is probably a lot to think about and consider. Township Manager C. Lewis suggested creating two policies – one for names of parks and one for memorials (i.e., benches and/or pavers). The Board agreed to come up with ideas for creating policies for discussion at the next meeting.

**Reports** – Chairman Churach reported on the following:

1. Pet waste bags were installed at Sunset and Prout Farm Parks.
2. The Board of Commissioners voted to advertise for public works summer help at \$9.00 per hour, and a candidate has been identified.
3. The Board of Commissioners voted to replace a portion of fence at Heather Place Park.
4. Volunteer days for S.A.V.E. are July 19<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>.
5. The proposed Prout Farm Trail width discussion was initiated by Mr. Mingey and discussion involved Commissioners Miller and E. Taylor. The resolution was the trail needed to be 8 foot wide for maintenance and emergency purposes.
6. G. Churach would like to meet with Mr. Miller and one other Board member at Sunset Park to discuss removal of vines and several bushes.
7. Police have been notified to watch for use of Sussell Park after dark.
8. Proposed areas of spraying for vegetation control using an enviro-friendly herbicide include: (a) the bank along Gilbertsville Road at the baseball fields; (b) around all trees and signs at Hollenbach Park; (c) parking area and sign at Mocharniuk Meadows; (d) under the fence and around the sign at Fox Run Trail; and (e) under the table and benches and around the sign at Prout Farm Park. In response to a concern expressed by N. Toothaker, Chairman Churach reiterated that they will be using an enviro-friendly herbicide. In response to a concern expressed by S. Thompson, Chairman Churach advised that the herbicide should not affect the trees at Hollenbach Park.

9. Metal directional signs have been added at Fox Run Trailheads.
10. He will monitor litter accumulation at Kulp Field.
11. Eagle Scout Project updates:
  - a. Mr. Braglio will construct a table, birdhouses and vehicle bumpers at Fox Run Park. In response to a question from S. Toothaker, Commissioner Miller advised the birdhouses will be erected on open space areas. S. Toothaker expressed concern as to who will monitor the birdhouses as they need to be checked 1-2 times per week. Chairman Churach suggested we hold off on construction and erection of the birdhouses until we advertise in the newsletter and obtain some volunteers. Commissioner Miller agreed to monitor the ones at Fox Run Trail. The Board agreed to have the birdhouses constructed but only erect the ones at Fox Run Trail as Commissioner Miller has agreed to monitor them.
  - b. Mr. Maynard will construct a table for the pavilion and an enclosed bulletin board at Sunset Park. He will also create a safety rail/bench from a deadfall log to replace the vandalized fence section on the trail to Sure Catch Pond.
  - c. M. Dallas advised that the proposed Girl Scout sign project was submitted to council; however, they did not approve it as they did not feel there were enough hours. The proposal has been revised and will be submitted for approval in July.

**Public Comment** – In response to a suggestion by S. Thompson, Commissioner Miller advised that he will discuss with the public works department the possibility of installing a paved apron at the base of Fox Run Trail where it comes out onto North Hanover Street.

**Executive Session** – The Board entered into an executive session at 8:35 pm to discuss matters of real estate.

The meeting reconvened at 9:05 pm.

A motion by S. Toothaker, seconded by G. Churach, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners purchase of 35,000 square feet of the Duffy property located at 60 Snyder Road. D. Elliott advised that he did not understand why the purchase of this property, and noted that it should not take precedence over other properties that we have been discussing for several years. Nay votes: D. Elliott. Aye votes: Toothaker, Churach, Miller and Thompson. Motion carries.

A motion by N. Toothaker, seconded by S. Thompson and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they pursue purchase of the Boerner property located on Chestnut Grove Road.

**Executive Session** – At the request of Commissioner Miller, the Board agreed to go back into executive session at 9:10 pm to discuss other matters of real estate.

The meeting reconvened at 9:15 pm.

A motion by N. Toothaker seconded by M. Dallas and unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that they pursue purchase of an easement on the LeFever property and pursue purchase of a portion of the Kehl property.

**Adjournment** – A motion by S. Thompson seconded by H. Miller and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Reddick  
Planning & Zoning Administrator

**Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 7:00 pm.**