



WILLISTOWN TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION

MEETING MINUTES 7-21-2020 7 PM

MEETING VIA ZOOM

MEMBERS PRESENT: KEN LEHR, CHAIRMAN; BRAD DEHART, BERNADETTE DOWNEY, BOB KACERGIS, BILL UNRATH, DENISE VANVALKENBURGH

STAFF PRESENT: MARY HUNDT, PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

Administration

Approval of Meeting Minutes 6-16-2020 (Held via Zoom due to COVID 19)

Brad motioned to approve the minutes; Bernadette seconded; all were in favor.

COVID 19 Update

All parks, preserves, and trails are open to the public in the Yellow Phase. Restrooms are closed because the Township does not have the staff to maintain and the structures do not meet the guidance of the CDC and other governing entities.

Board Officer Election, Vacancy Appointment, and Update

Vice Chair appointment: Ken nominated Brad as Vice Chair; Denise seconded; all in favor.

Bob Kacergis was appointed as a “new” member by the Supervisors at their June 29th public meeting. Bob will remain a Parks & Recreation Board representative to the OSRB. Bernadette inquired as to what Bob’s focus was on the OSRB, and he replied that he was encouraging the OSRB to locate properties for neighborhood pocket parks. Pocket parks are very small parks that offer gathering spaces in walkable distance within neighborhoods.

Mary explained that the OSRB follows the guidance of the Comprehensive Plan and the Official Map which identifies potential future parkland and open space. She will recommend an update of the Official Map through the Comprehensive Plan Update process. Updates to the map will include the Norbertine Abbey, Fox Hollow Trail Connections via Devon Road properties; Paoli Pike trail connection to East Goshen Township section, etc.

Board Member Vacancy Outreach: In Great Valley Magazine; Online; Enews; Social Media Parks & Rec, memo board, etc.

Programming

Bernadette proposed the Township offer yoga classes in the park. Mary reported that she had yoga on her agenda as well, as she had received inquiries about offering classes. Mary informed Bernadette that she was certified and insured to teach yoga, and that yoga programming had been formally recommended to the Supervisors in January of 2019 and denied. Mary reported that this could have been because she was encouraged to request reimbursement for her yoga teacher training along with the recommendation for the program. Mary was also told the Supervisors didn’t want the Township yoga program to compete with other local programs. Mary had pre-vetted the Township

program with the local organizations who were enthusiastic about another yoga program and saw no conflict.

The general consensus of the Board was that the more programs the merrier and the better served the public would be, especially considering the pandemic and the importance of offering program for people's mental and physical health. The programming could be offered at Greentree Park, and Mary could start with an adult yoga program and send a survey seeking input for other types of programs including family and teen classes.

Bob motioned to recommend park yoga programming to the Supervisors for approval; Brad seconded; all were in favor.

GO WilMa! 2020 Update

GO WilMa! registrations are low compared to years past. Mary reported approximately 250 children are registered compared to over 800 in the past couple of years. The Board was not surprised citing parent fatigue and burn out from enduring COVID-19 and having to home school their kids. Many parents are likely dreading the fall and further pressures of living through the pandemic.

Passive Park Programming

Brad suggested informational signage in the parks similar to what can be seen in Natural Lands' Willisbrook Preserve. A conversation about cost ensued. Mary informed the Board about the Self Guided Tour map and narrative that she worked on with the Okehocking Nature Center group when it was still in existence. Updating the tour is on Mary's to do list. Bernadette will look into historic information about the history of native people at Okehocking Preserve and will provide it to Mary as a QR Code informational flier.

Camp Update

Mary reported that although the school districts opened their properties to use; there would be no end of summer camps as the logistics of running a camp without indoor facility use was prohibitive and safely conducting the camp following the recommendations of governing bodies was unattainable. Weekly fall sports camps registration has begun. The offering will be reconsidered pending pandemic status when the camps are slated to begin.

Park Management

Spotted Lantern Fly

Mary review the Park Ambassador park, trail, and preserve assignments and asked the Ambassadors to walk the properties and mark trees where they found lantern flies. She will provide marking tape and spray for this purpose.

Tree work

Mary gave an update on the extensive hazard and storm clean up tree work being done on Township owned lands.

Communications

Kiosk Materials

The Board discussed the inclusion of QR codes in the kiosks for people to access fliers and information. Mary will note this as a future practice to link to such things like park maps, etc.

Old Business

Planning: Comprehensive Plan Survey Update

Mary reported that to date the Township received: 732 online responses, 1,333 paper surveys via return mail, and 36 paper surveys dropped at the Township building.

Public Comment

Zachary Leahan, a southern Willistown Resident, volunteered to 2d camera video virtual nature walks in the Township properties to show the public what each property has to offer. In the future he would like to purchase a 3d camera to document the properties and be able to offer people the ability to experience the parks through VR headsets. Mary will follow up with Zach.

Adjournment: Brad motioned to adjourn; Bernadette seconded; all in favor.

Next meeting: Third Tuesday of the month, 7PM, location TBD.

All meetings are open to the public via request on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary N. Hundt, Recording Secretary