

**Pocono Township Parks & Recreation Committee
Mountain View Park Budget Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2015**

Members: Charlie Trapasso, President; Alex Grum, Vice President; Denise Herbert, Secretary; Bobby Felins; and Andrea Learn.

1. Call to Order: President, Charlie Trapasso, 7:35am

Present: Charlie Trapasso, Denise Herbert, Bobby Felins, Jim Olizsarowicz and Andrea Learn.

Absent: Alex Grum

Also Present: Dean Hartshorn, Parks Director; Pocono Township Commissioner Gerald (Jerry) Lastowski; Gregg Schuster, Pocono Township Manager; HJP's Harold Ernsberger

2. Determination of Quorum: yes.

3. Approval of the Following Minutes:

With the revisions to the October and November minutes completed, Charlie made a motion to approve the October minutes, with Jim seconding. The November minutes were motioned to approval by Charlie and seconded by Andrea.

4. Pocono Township Manager

a. *Re-appointment of Jim's 5 year term on the Recreation Committee was approved by the PT Board of Commissioners. Gregg indicated that Jim should receive a letter to this effect.*

b. *The HJP Contract is on the BOC meeting agenda of 1/20/2015. Gregg had sent out a survey and will present the results to the Commissioners during the 1/20 meeting. HJP members are awaiting feedback of proposed contract changes. AS other townships have not reported their intentions, Gregg indicated that he did not know whether or not the other townships are willing to apply funds to the construction of a new park. If they will not, the HJP contract may need to be ended.*

c. *The Township has still not hired a Public Works Director; however, interviews continue. The position would be responsible for the oversight of roads, vehicles, and personnel. The position is needed because of the growth in the Township's infrastructure, especially the sewer system. Gregg also indicated that any demolition projects will be on hold until a PWD is hired, as there is too much involved in the day to day to take on such a project.*

d. *The stockpile and proposed dumping site on Elgers Avenue in the Township is underway. The homes on Elger will be demolished. The Township received a tax exemption starting in 2016 for this project. Charlie inquired as to how much property this entailed. Gregg abdicated that while there is not a tremendous amount of space, there is enough for the stockpiling needs of the Township. Bobby mentioned that there is about 1 acre of property on Elger.*

e. *The location of the septic within the Park was again discussed. Dean and Gregg discussed the need to locate it and have a company hired for cleaning the septic system, as more than 3 years has passed since the last known cleaning. Dean indicated that he has a good idea of where the actual tank is, but the perimeter of the field has yet to be*

determined. Gregg asked that this be completed as soon as possible to prevent any septic problems. Charlie reminded the group that in order to expand the Autistic Center and install a canopy, the exact location of the septic tank is needed. Gregg suggested Pocono Alliance present to the BOC a proposal to expand the Autistic Center.

f. With the resignation of Neal Gallagher from the Committee, a seat is vacant. Gregg stated he had 2 applicants, but was waiting for additional applications so all could be interviewed in a specific time frame, as opposed to interviewing one applicant here and there. This was the best time efficient method for completing the interviews. With no specific time frame as to when another Committee member had to be appointed, there are no time restrictions.

g. Gregg indicated that in 2015 the Township will celebrate its Bi-Centennial anniversary. A board is needed to coordinate the celebration, although there is no defined budget at this time. Two community members had expressed an interest, but could not be appointed because they were not Township residents.

Both Charlie and Denise had some ideas that may work for this celebration, including bands, vendors, political speeches. Denise asked if it is known if there is a time capsule, dating back 200 year ago, but Gregg stated he did not have any specific information. Andrea stated that Monroe County itself has one.

h. Criminal checks for Committee members and employees were noted as having been discussed by Gregg with Police Chief Werkheiser. This would also need review by the BOC. Gregg will again discuss the matter with the Chief for further clarification. Several Committee members expressed the need to require criminal and sexual abuse clearances from all park employees because of their interaction with children in the park. Charlie asked about cost and type of clearances being considered. Gregg stated that there also needs to be a policy developed on what type of criminal offenses would preclude someone from services or employment, and also a time frame. For instance, if someone committed a misdemeanor 20 years ago, would that exclude their service?

i. The internet connection at the Community Center is on the radar, but is not yet started. Jim asked if there was a router at the Community Center. Charlie indicated there was not. Gregg stated he is in the process of working with a company to update the Township website. The BOC needs to approve this vendor, Sundance.

j. Gregg asked the Committee to think about what it would like to accomplish in the next 2-10 years. Gregg indicated that there is \$13,000 available for projects in 2015. One of the projects that Charlie wanted to complete was to update/replace 2 playground equipment pieces. She and Andrea have looked through some catalogues, but these pieces would require professional installation. When asked, Dean stated that if his crew is not able to complete the installation, a professional company would be elicited. Charlie asked if the replacement cost fell into the category of "repair and maintenance?" Gregg stated it did. Jim wanted to know if there is a list of equipment that is to be purchased. Gregg suggested that the Committee come up with a list of equipment, with costs, and miscellaneous information and then present it to Dean. Dean will review for viability and then discuss it with Gregg. Charlie asked about the aluminum benches and who would install these. Jim offered that perhaps the company that sold them would install them. Charlie also indicated that there are 2 yellow bars on the stepping stone equipment that need to be replaced as well as the re-paving of Pavilion 3 estimated to cost around \$4000. Both of which should fall under maintenance and repairs.

Charlie added that a special Committee meeting will be called, and a list gathered of projects over the next 2-10 years. This will include specific equipment, dates for possible installation, and price. It will then be presented to Dean.

Charlie expressed concern that some projects may have to be placed on hold because the HJP contract is not settled. Gregg disagreed and stated that Park projects should not be weighed against the HJP contract. Ideas should be organized and presented, and if needed, Gregg will present to the BOC. Also, even if the HJP contract is not renewed, the \$60,000 paid by Pocono for recreational services would most likely not be applied towards MVP projects. The budget is fluid and projects may come and go, so the budget has to be able to bend with this. Gregg indicated that in the past when the Township had second rate status, they completed a budget based on the mil rate in the county, 1.25 mil. Now that the Township has 1st class status, a general rate will be submitted. There are no caps on the revenue rates.

Gregg added that a suggestion he has for capital projects is to put aside 20% of the budget, and then in 5 years' time, growth would permit additional project completion.

5. Park Director

- a. Dean indicated that that he and his crew are preparing for and should be ready to open the Park by April 1. Most staff will be retained from last year.
- b. A new mower was purchased with a trade in of the old one.
- c. Charlie asked Dean if the 4-seater replacement equipment needs to be installed using the existing post. Dean stated that whether 1 or 2 posts, the old post would have to be removed and configured for the new equipment.
- d. Charlie then inquired about the installation of the *Caterpillar* and slide. Dean stated that he could acquire bids on this work and then discuss it with Gregg.

6. Zones

The park is closed and consequently, examination of Zones was not completed by Committee meetings.

7. New Business

a. Neal Gallagher will be presented with the Recognition Award for his dedication to the Township, especially *Crossing Abilities*, at the 1/20 BOC meeting.

b. Charlie discussed a musician, Michael Cabot, who is interested in presenting a benefit concert at the Park. Charlie was wondering about the budget for advertising such an event, but Gregg indicated that this should not be an issue.

c. Gregg reiterated that the purpose of the Committee is recreation and all venues within the Township should be considered, such as *Northampton Community College's* (NCC) campus. Jim indicated that a relationship could be built with NCC to partner with them on various projects. Gregg mentioned that there have been several meetings with campus administrators. They have been supportive of partnering with the Township to offer community/recreational activities.

Gregg stated that NCC has a flat field that would be great for various events, especially a concert. Jim asked what the next step in this process would be. Gregg asked that the Committee gather a list of recreational events they want to offer; he would then review it with the Committee and then meet with NCC to determine what was possible. Charlie and Jim asked to be a part of that meeting and Charlie agreed to develop a list of ideas/events that can be used as discussion points in the meeting with NCC.

Jim indicated that a relationship should also be bolstered with the Township library; he has been asked about what the library might offer.

Jerry, Commissioner, reminded the Committee that the fire house/Township field is available, with plenty of parking. Charlie suggested we inquire about renting an

amphitheater to host movie nights, concerts and events. All agreed; parking at this site is accessible and convenient.

Jim mentioned that during Community Day in September, the Committee should have a booth to provide information to the public. Andrea, Charlie, and Denise thought this would be a great way to inform the public of The Committee's works.

d. Gregg informed the Committee that per a Township ordinance, overnight parking and commercial vehicles will be banned from the TLC parking lot. This will be presented to the public at the 1/20 BOC meeting. Charlie asked if the TLC land would be lost with proposed PennDot reconstruction between Routes 611 and 715. Gregg reported that one ballfield will be lost. PennDot still needs to work around the ponds, and the gas station's future is not now settled. Jerry mentioned that the bank will likely be demolished. There will be 3 lanes created, one to 80West, one onto Sullivan Trail, and one to the Crossings. To make up for the loss of the TLC field, Charlie suggested we invest in expanding the existing "Softball Field" at MVP to meet the dimensions of an official Little League field.

8. Old Business

a. Andrea indicated that an Eagle Scout (ES), John Beatty, was interested in building/installing bat and bird houses. Dean stated that he was okay with the installation of the bird houses, but thought there should be some ecological information on the bat houses. He had spoken with an *ESU* professor who provided some information, but it might be wise for the *Eagle Scout* to discuss where to put the houses, when to build them, and how to maintain them.

Charlie asked about the process in which *Eagle Scout* projects should be reviewed. Gregg stated that he believed the best thing to do was at the conclusion of an E.S. project, the E.S. would then present to the BOC.

Charlie asked Dean to develop 3-5 projects that he might want to have E.S. complete. Dean agreed to discuss it with Harold and present it at the next meeting.

b. The African American Juneteen celebration wanted to hold their event at the Park, however due to a lack of accessibility to water and electrical hookup for vendor booths, the organization went elsewhere.

Charlie wondered if the Township or Park could host events like this, offering space to vendors. Jim asked if *NCC* could also be a partner in this. Gregg agreed that it could be presented to *NCC*.

c. To determine whether fields and pavilions were being used to their capacity, Andrea collected the Township's handwritten ledger, receipts and applications forms; including pavilion and field rentals. The Committee is recommending the township convert from manual accounting to an electronic accounting system however Dee, the Township secretary, stated she is too busy to convert to an electronic system. Gregg mentioned he currently was in the process of pursuing website & software for the township which would include online registrations and computer generated accounting.

Andrea's findings indicated the paper work often contradicts itself with duplications of pavilion rentals for the same period. Verification of usage or length of time of usage is unknown. Andrea indicated that the majority of pavilion rental income reflects Pocono Township residents; followed by a few church or non-profit groups at \$200 and non-resident fees of \$100. A handful of residents are using the *Community Center*. Charlie noted it is common knowledge that non-residents will have residents rent the pavilions on their behalf to avoid paying the non-resident fee. To circumvent this, Charlie suggested the rental fee be based on the number of attendees and not resident versus non-resident. Charlie and Denise suggested that partial day rentals in increments of 2-4 hours also be considered.

Andrea recommended collecting a deposit from the renter, which can be returned following a sign-off of a clear inspection.

Andrea noted leagues with players 17 years of age and under are not required to pay a field usage fee. Adult leagues are required to pay \$250 for usage, whether for a weekend or a day however based on the 2014 compiled data for the baseball, softball and soccer field; only 2 field usage fees were collected; one being the soccer field. It was evident, the ball fields are underused. Dean did not dispute this fact and stated the fields aren't that busy anymore.

Andrea also noted that the Township pavilion applications are not completed in full, therefore the data is incomplete. Jim suggested that the form be revised to include required data. Gregg recommended that there be a single electronic intake form. It should include the charge and who is renting the fields or pavilions.

Dean stated that if there are less than 35 people who want to rent out a pavilion, it is unlikely they will pay \$200.

Charlie indicated that seasonal workers can certainly monitor the pavilion activity by utilizing a simple check list and signature of applicant on the day of the event thereby reducing the number of fraudulent applications. All agreed the actual pavilion rentals should be reconciled with the actual revenue. To outline a revised pavilion and field rental proposal, Charlie suggested this be included in the proposed Special Meeting. Before presenting to the BOC, the proposal will first be reviewed by Gregg for comment and suggestions. It was noted, a change in the fee schedule would require BOC approval.

9. HJP

Harold indicated that on February 5, 2015, between 6-8:30pm, a father/daughter dance will be held at *Pocono Manor Inn*. Light refreshments are to be served. The fee is \$17 pp.

Motion to close meeting by Charlie, seconded by Bobby. Meeting adjourned at 9:01am.

Next regular Committee meeting is February 10, 2015 at the Pocono Township Municipal Building.

Meeting Minutes approved

Submitted by:

Denise Herbert
Secretary
Recreation Committee

