

Pocono Township Parks & Recreation Committee
Mountain View Park Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2015

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

1. Call to Order: President, Charlie Trapasso, 7:32am

Present: Charlie Trapasso, Denise Herbert, and Andrea Learn, Mary R. Frantz, and Jim
Olizsarowicz

Absent: Bobby Fellins, Harold Ernsberger, and Alex Grum

Also Present: Dean Hartshorn; Pocono Township Commissioner Gerald (Jerry) Lastowski;
Gregg Schuster; Public Works Director Jeff Clapper

2. Approval of the Following Minutes:

With a quorum, February meetings were approved by a motion from Jim, seconded by Andrea, with no dissension from other Committee members.

3. Public Works Director

A new PWD was hired, Jeff Clapper. Jeff was the Director of Public Works in Emmaus, which has a population in Lehigh County of 11,296. He comes to Pocono Township, a population of 11,061, with a wealth of experience in PW and sewer systems. One of his responsibilities will be the oversight/maintenance of about 20 miles of roadway within the Township.

4. New Recreation Committee Member: Mary Riley Frantz was introduced to the group. Mary will be formally appointed through a resolution by the Board of Commissioners (BOC); her appointment will end on December 31, 2015, as this was the term of the resigned Neal Gallagher of whom Mary assumed the position.

5. Pocono Township Manager, Gregg Schuster

a. HJP: Gregg indicated that the BOC were interested in building a park, but was not interested in assuming debt and paying out \$60,000/year. They requested a response as to the intentions of the other two Townships, Hamilton and Jackson. Jackson did not formally respond, but Hamilton indicated that they would be willing to commit to \$40,000/year. Should Pocono contribute \$20,000/year over 5 years this would equate to \$300,000, which would not be enough for the building of a park. Pocono provided a letter indicating they would withdraw from the HJP agreement as of December 31, 2015, which is when the agreement ends. There would be an opportunity to form an agreement in the future should the Township want HJP services again. Charlie inquired as to whether the money committed to HJP could then be used for park development. Gregg indicated that all funding came from tax dollars. The \$63,000 now used for HJP activities was not in the 2016 budget. The overall budget was based on Township needs, and this dictated where the money in the budget would be spent. When the township transformed their status to 1st class, tax and collections were changed as well. Jim mentioned that a case needs to be made as to what the recreational needs are over the next year. Gregg noted that needs may change from one year to another and the budget should be based on these needs.

b. Based on a Committee recommendation, criminal checks and clearances will be completed for park employees and seasonal workers at the Township's expense. Gregg indicated

that while the Township is not legally bound to complete such checks, they will complete them in line with the Committee's suggestion because it is prudent and ethical to do so. Mary questioned the validity of the checks for those employees who are under 18 years old, as juvenile offenses would not be available. Jeff indicated that extensive checks are available at an additional expense, and it all depends on what information is needed. Gregg agreed, indicating that two new police officers were being hired within the Township and a detailed investigation and background check was being completed for them at the expense of \$1600 per officer.

c. Stockpile and dumpsite: Gregg stated that the Township is working with a contractor to ensure that prior to destruction of the Elger Avenue homes, a contractor is assessing if any of them contain asbestos. There will also need to be a plan for barriers or buffers to shield the residents from noise. Currently, one of the homes is being used by the Township firefighters for training purposes.

Jeff mentioned that the dumping site now being used in the park is for run off, and this has been the practice because it would be too cumbersome or high risk to transport some materials through travelled roads, such as Rt 611. Jerry wanted to know if the Elger Avenue residents had been informed of the re-purposing of those homes/area. Gregg indicated he is working on a presentation to them. Gregg reiterated that Elger Avenue is designated a commercial zone.

d. The septic, which is located under or near the sand box in the *Crossing Abilities* area, will soon be cleaned. Dean is working on setting this up in the near future; he could not be certain when the last cleaning of the pump had been completed. Charlie indicated that *Pocono Alliance* would also like to make a formal proposal to extend the Autism center in this area. A canopy requiring 4 posts would also be beneficial.

e. Charlie asked about a grant writer. Gregg stated that there would be one of two ways to go with obtaining the services of a writer. One would be hiring one who charges a flat fee no matter if the grant is obtained or not, and the other is to hire someone who is paid a commission. The last grant writer, Joyce, was paid a 10% commission. Charlie mentioned the grant available for remodeling and adaptations, which has a deadline of April 1. Gregg stated that this could not occur this year because a lot of planning needed to go into submitting the grant, and there were no such plans as of this meeting. Planning could include hiring an architect and having substantial and concrete ideas as to what project was to be undertaken and its purpose.

f. Community Center. Charlie noted that she had a verbal from an architect she knew that would provide some initial sketches of what the Community Center could be in the next year or two. Jim wanted to know the purpose of having an architect develop plans for a building or expanding the parking lot when there was no plan as to the purpose of the Community Center. Gregg indicated that for a project like this to be successful, a concrete plan needed to be designed and then presented to an architect who could say what was physically feasible and not. Charlie stated that she had completed a comprehensive plan that detailed some aspects of the plan, and believed that the Committee had a plan for the Community Center. This included installing Wi-Fi, extending the parking lot to the rear of the building, and making it disability accessible. Jim and Charlie debated what should be completed first—the plan for what programs would be offered within the building or the development of a blueprint as to what could be developed. Gregg suggested that the Committee members complete some field trips and see what was being offered in other communities. An architect could then develop a plan around the needs or activities proposed.

Charlie made note of the comprehensive plan she had created and reiterated that she had requested from the Committee input on priority projects. Jim stated that the Plan was an overview of activities or projects and did not provide details as to what could be or should be undertaken. Charlie stated that the 2017 budget proposal contained the hiring of a Parks Director who would oversee activities; the 2016 plan had an architect developing a plan, but the PD would be responsible for all activities or programs. Denise made note that it was the responsibility of the Committee to recommend recreational programs. Gregg stated that any program the Township

offered should be able to break even or make a small profit; the Township was responsible for any overhead of projects. A Parks Director would be responsible for directing projects or hiring staff who would oversee them. Gregg also mentioned that should a partnership with *Northampton Community College (NCC)* be developed then this could be yet another resource where activities could be provided. However, the Committee itself should develop what programs it is interested in offering to the community. Dean stated that Harold and Kim Ernsberger could be available to run programs. Andrea indicated that there were a host of programs that could be offered, such as arts and crafts and square dancing. Gregg again stated that the capabilities of the Center needed to be discussed in detail. Charlie offered that after school programs, workshops, group activities could all be offered within the Center, and that the building itself needed to be expanded, the kitchen moved, the parking lot enlarged. Charlie asked that a walkthrough be completed when spring comes. Jim stated that continuing to wait only delays the process and may interfere with obtaining grants over the next year. Gregg mentioned that trying to build something without an assessment as to what you want to use the building for can prove problematic as the building may not be appropriate for those programs. Jerry asked about the *Pocono Elementary Center* building being used for a Community center. Gregg stated that every town was required to have a recreational plan. At this time, ours includes HJP. However, a new plan will need to be completed before the calendar year expires, so funding is not lost. Gregg also mentioned that PennDot has indicated that they may renovate Route 715, which could run through the PEC/TLC property; however, they have no formal plans, and any work would not be undertaken until 2019 or 2020. On the other hand, if PennDot took the TLC property, it would compensate the Township and this money could possibly be used for recreational programs, although it would be dependent on the Township's needs at that time. Charlie indicated that the TLC property would also be a great location to expand the library, with an attachment to the Community Center. Gregg has asked that a task force be assembled to address municipal facility needs. One opportunity could be the old NCC campus, which might allow for a library, Community Center, and police station to be located. Charlie asked Jerry if an engineer could complete a walk through. Jim answered that a lot of time is being wasted with these activities when a plan for what recreational programs will be offered is not even developed. The issue of handicap adaptations and accessibility came up, with Gregg indicated that a building already in existence is grandfathered in with no obligation to make such adaptations. However, should the building expand or make structural changes, it may very well have to build accessibility functions.

g. Bi-Centennial Celebration: Gregg noted that 5 Committee members have been chosen (Denise Herbert; Charlie Trapasso; Lonnie Mareno; Alysse Toye; and Jenifer Fisher). Only two more are needed for the committee to be at capacity. The Committee's focus is limited to what activities might take place in the Township's Bi-Centennial of 2016.

6. Park Director

a. Dean stated that most of his staff will return for 2015.

b. Equipment installation (caterpillar and slide): Dean is waiting on the representative from Little Tykes, Paul Grim to instruct on the best placement.

c. A power washer will be purchased for building & playground equipment cleaning and misc. maintenance needs.

d. Eagle Scout projects: Dean wondered if the bat houses will be built. Andrea indicated that the Boy Scout who was supposed to complete this as an Eagle Scout would not be able to because of time restraints. However, she will be attending an Eagle Scout this evening and other Scouts may be interested. Dean stated that a bat house would be needed this year. Dean agreed to compile a project list that Scouts could complete within the Park.

e. There was a discussion with Dean, Gregg, and Charlie regarding alcohol consumption within the Park. Dean noted that there were no issues of alcohol within the pavilions, but should there be some, neither he nor his crew stopped the usage. Gregg stated he wanted to investigate this

further, including whether there was a policy and what the potential liability could be for the Township. Gregg indicated that perhaps the BOC could develop a policy for alcohol consumption. The pavilion rental application indicates that alcohol is not permitted.

6. HJP

Harold did not attend this meeting and no update could be offered.

6. Old Business

a. Pavilion and Field rentals: Charlie mentioned she had continued her talks with ESU to obtain an intern who could assist with pavilion rentals, and managing this system. This could include the maintenance of an electronic system by which residents reserved pavilions or fields. Charlie noted that a park manager could be helpful in developing facilities and offering them to the community. An electronic system by which reservations and follow-up occurred would be great, as right now there was no way to determine if those who rented the pavilions or fields were actually using them. Andrea had to assemble a spreadsheet in which data was recorded. Jim stated that when speaking with other Townships in NY, NJ, and PA he learned that no matter what system used, there was consistency throughout so things could be accurately tracked. Charlie mentioned that there were times when a non-resident used a resident's information to obtain a lower rate. She suggested that sign off when they arrive at the pavilion or field be required. Dean asked how this would help as the person is already at the pavilion to use it. He also asked how identity and insurance would be collected in an electronic system, as right now Dee, the Township receptionist, records such things.

b. Playground Equipment: Charlie stated that there was \$13,000 available for the purchase of new equipment, but this did not include the cost of paving pavilion 3. She stated that equipment will not be installed until a walk-through occurs with the Little Tykes representative, herself, and the PWD, so a professional judgment can be made as to what will be needed in the installation. Equipment being considered for installation includes a 4-seater, 4 posts installed as part of the tree hut replacement (replaced by a more updated, age appropriate "house"), and tiered, aluminum, portable bleachers. Jeff cautioned that anything above 3 tiers would also require fencing around them.

c. Pocono Alliance is still willing to expand the Autism center, and will present a formal proposal to the BOC. The sandbox located near the Autism Center may need to be moved to accommodate the expansion.

d. A preliminary Comprehensive Plan developed by Charlie and discussed. Jim and Denise indicated that a special meeting should be held to discuss recommendations for projects, especially the Community Center. Charlie indicated that a special meeting would be organized and she would send out possible dates.

e. Charlie showed a "no smoking" sign that she thought was friendly enough to place in the park. Dean stated he may have some signs and will look to see what is available. Gregg stated that there are a number of different "no smoking" signs and they should be looked at to see what would be the most appropriate.

f. Charlie asked if MVP was classified as a Township or Community Park. There was not a clear definitive answer provided.

9. Motion to close meeting by Andrea at 9:05am; Mary seconded.

Next regular Board meeting will be at 7:30 a.m. on April 14, 2015 @ Mountain View Community Center