



LANSDOWNE BOROUGH

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MINUTES

AUGUST 28th, 2023

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM at the Twentieth Century Club and on Zoom.

IN ATTENDANCE: Craig Totaro (Borough Manager), William Griffin (Borough Council Liaison), attending Board Members included Mary Catherine Berner (Chair), Jack Kelly, and Jessica Pointer. Members of the public included Rich Berner, Magda Byrne, Clare Finin, Bill Horton, Ben Hover, Charlotte Hummel, Joyce Prentis, Suzanne McElroy, Joe Parsio, Dana Robinson, Paul Schmidt, and Jayne Young.

AGENDA:

https://www.lansdowneborough.com/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_08282023-277

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: No corrections suggested. July minutes will be forwarded to the Borough Manager.

DISCUSSIONS & DECISIONS

Borough Council Business

- i.** The McKinley Tot Lot's water fountain is in the process of being replaced. The current fountain (while not functioning) is still under warranty; the design is not compatible with children and sand. An alternative fountain has been chosen and an installation plan is being worked out with a contractor.
- ii.** Interboro Park is being renamed to Raphael "Rap" Curry Park: The Center. Rap Curry grew up in Lansdowne on Bartram Avenue, played basketball at St. Joseph's University, and went on to become the athletic director in the William Penn School District. Interboro Park is where Rap played basketball as a child. The Center is what residents call Interboro Park; it is unclear where the current name came from. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for October 21st.
- iii.** A mural is being proposed for Hoffman Park. The original proposal came from a Lansdowne resident, Andre Johnson, who proposed a multi-step art project to beautify Lansdowne parks. The mural in Hoffman Park would be on the large retaining walls in the basketball and tennis courts. The walls themselves are in good shape mechanically. Community Relations and Borough Council will be handling logistics and design. Concepts are still being decided and funding for the project is unclear.

Chair Update

- i. Joe Grubb has resigned as Chair. As Vice Chair, Mary Catherine Berner will be stepping up as Chair.

Events

- i. September's park cleanup is at Reservoir Park on the 9th between 10 AM – 12 PM.
- ii. The third and final installment of Summer Movie Nights could not be discussed because no one present at the meeting attended the event.

Facilities Plan

- i. Craig Totaro explained the current facilities plan proposals. Police, administration, the library, and community facilities currently occur in three locations – Borough Hall, the Lansdowne Library, and the Twentieth Century Club. The plan was brought on by the lack of space for both the police and library. Implementation would be at least two years from now. One plan proposes the library move to the Twentieth Century Club, which would impact recreation.
- ii. With no quorum, no endorsement could be made.

Recreation Programs

- i. The topic of recreation programs was tabled.

Updated Parks Pamphlet

- i. The McKinley Tot Lot, Gateway Slope, and the new bike route are missing from the park pamphlets. It was suggested they be added to the park pamphlet to ensure information is up-to-date. The suggestion will be forwarded to William Griffin and Craig Totaro.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Suzanne McElroy inquired about the Marlyn Park fence (at Willowbrook and Stratford) which was brought up in a July Borough Council meeting due to it being in poor condition and a possible safety hazard. Craig Totaro explained that estimates for a replacement fence were received and bids are lined up, a final decision should be made soon. A cedar plank fence with a gridded, vinyl-coated backing was chosen.

Dana Robinson proposed a historic marker be considered for Interboro Park/Rap Curry Park to provide some history on both Rap and The Center. Ben Hover said it was being considered but feedback from the family was necessary. There will be an oral history presentation at the ribbon cutting; the library will be participating.

Dana Robinson then encouraged the P&R Board to read Delaware County's newly published Sustainability Plan – while the plan itself is long, the last ~25 pages are a summarized action plan. Parks and green spaces are included in the plan and it could be an opportunity for the Borough to work with the County to improve the two County-owned parks in Lansdowne. There may be a possibility of County-assisted funding.

Jayne Young asked after the benches and message boards that were voted on by Council. Craig Totaro is handling the installation and estimated they would be done in the Winter of this year or Spring of 2024.

Joe Parsio questioned who would be handling the Park and Recreation Director's responsibilities in the future, specifically in reference to the Shade Tree Commission. Craig Totaro and Carol Martsof will be working directly with the Shade Tree Commission.

Jack Kelly asked why the Borough Manager was standing in for the Director of Parks and Recreation. Craig Totaro could not comment and said that personnel, real estate, and litigation could not be discussed under the Sunshine Act.

Charlotte Hummel inquired if the renaming process for Interboro Park would go through the committee process (specifically the Environment, Parks, and Recreation Committee and the Finance Committee) before being voted on by Council. Prioritizing other projects and repairs should be done before doing murals and renaming parks. There were concerns as to whether or not the Borough violated the Sunshine Act by not discussing the termination of the Director position before the public and Charlotte encouraged clarity and reconsideration, especially since current plans are not clear. The Zoom call was also lacking quality and it was very difficult to hear people talk.

Bill Horton asked if the Marlyn Park fence design and cost would go before the Environment, Parks, and Recreation Board. Craig Totaro said that repairs and maintenance fall under the Borough's responsibilities and as such, they would not go through the committee process.

Jack Kelly requested clarification as to why the Parks and Recreation Board needs permission from Council to flyer and promote the events and from the County to clean up County-owned parks. The County does no maintenance in Pennock Woods other than sanitation, Shrigley Park only gets mowed occasionally. Craig Totaro and Ben Hover explained that it was a jurisdictional issue and liability concern as Borough Council assumes a risk when the sponsor the event.

Joe Parsio had a follow up question regarding on the Shade Tree Commission and their Free Street Tree program with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, specifically who would be handling the work related to the program. Craig Totaro said there is currently no plan in place to handle the Free Street Tree program.

Dana Robinson encouraged the Borough take advantage of the Sustainability Plan and contact Delaware County Parks and Recreation to discuss maintenance of County parks within the Borough.

Magda Byrne acknowledged that there are a lot of uncertainties currently, but thanked everyone for their service and expressed appreciation for the work everyone does.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

The next Parks and Recreation Board meeting is scheduled to take place on September 19th at 7:00 PM at the Twentieth Century Club (84 S. Lansdowne Ave) and via Zoom.