

EAST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION
July 28, 2020 (virtual)
MEETING NOTES

1. Call to Order & Housekeeping – 7:00pm: (5 minutes)
 - a. **Board in Attendance:** Barbara-Ann Thav, Carol Rapp, Kristin Thomas, Chuck Barbera, Gail Keyes
Staff in Attendance: Steve Brown, Donna Wikert
Supervisors in Attendance: Scott Lambert
MOMS Club attendee – Erin Tedesco
 - b. **Board Unable to Attend:** Tim Phelps, Tom O’Neill
 - c. **Approval of the June 2020 meeting minutes** – Minutes approved with minor typos corrected.
2. Business to Discuss: (35 minutes)
 - a. **COVID signage in the parks** – Steve Brown has ordered permanent signs about use of facilities. He is checking with the solicitor concerning language about COVID in the facility rental agreement.
 - b. **Bacton Hill Park – Playground:**
 - Steve Brown discussed if the playground is accessible enough and gathered feedback from Erin Tedesco with the Mom’s Club and the Open Space consultants.
 - The MOMS Club feels that the playground is both accessible and inclusive enough for the community. They did request a high back accessible swing be added. The MOMS Club will aim to raise \$50,000-\$100,000.
 - The MOMS Club would like a splash pad. Water would need to be brought in, but maintenance and cost is high. The plot does not currently have public water.
 - Barbara-Ann Thav reminded everyone that Phase 1 was supposed to be a simple way to get residents on and using the property: a gravel lot, a bench or two, maybe a trash can, a mowed path, and a trail connection.
 - Chuck Barbera asked if, at this point in the year, should we wait until next year to start Phase 1 and the playground at the same time.
 - Scott Lambert added that the storm water management permit is still held up.
 - Chuck Barbera is suggesting getting the total cost for the entire plan and then for the Parks & Rec board to agree to the entire plan.
 - Scott Lambert suggests the Supervisors would want to see an a-la-carte menu of what is to go in the park and the cost for each and does not have budget guidelines to provide Parks & Rec. Then we can chose what’s included in Phase 1 and in future Phases. The cost estimate has gone over what was originally estimated. Total cost exceeds \$900k. The playground proposed is approximately \$300k over what was budgeted. Scott Lambert shares that there should be another county grant on the horizon.
 - Barbara-Ann Thav would like to move forward with our original Phase 1 and better communicate the plans for the park.

- Gail Keyes suggested mowing a place to park and not wait or invest in the gravel lot.
- All agree that a communication plan is necessary. The township has hired a new communications coordinator, Monique Williams, that can possibly help,
- Barbara-Ann Thav, Gail Keyes, and Kristin Thomas (sub-committee) will schedule time to meet with Steve Brown and begin to pull together a phased proposal for this committee to review next month including elements of the park, costs, and timeline. They will also begin to discuss what is needed for drawings to assist MOMS Club fundraising and what can be done with communication. High-level elements of the phases are potentially:
 1. Original Phase 1: parking, mowed path, a couple benches, trash can, paved connection to the trail
 2. Phase 2: gravel lot, paved path, landscaping, playground, bathrooms, adult fitness
 3. Phase 3: paved lot, 2 pickle ball courts, potentially basketball, pump track, or skatepark (following input we have already received from residents). Barbara-Ann Thav suggests that Steve Brown asks Scott Lean, Kompan, and Rick Trailles, Natural Lands, if they can develop a graphic that builds the different phases of the playground and/or the park.

3. **Requested Business Use of the Parks** – The township received a request from a local business to use our parks in order to host their yoga business. The business has chosen not to open due to COVID and wants to offer outdoor yoga classes to the community. They need a flat hard service. Power Yoga Works, 81 Lancaster Avenue. They are hoping to use Valley Creek Park Thursdays at 5:30 pm and Sundays at 4:30pm, twice a week. Classes are about 75 minutes. The Amphitheater or tennis courts would be ideal due to the flat surfaces. They estimate 15-20 attendees from the studio would attend, but any community members are welcome to join. They would charge a fee for their attendees, offer to clean up, and have attendees to sign a waiver. Our rental fees are very reasonable, but business use of the amphitheater is \$150 for four hours. The Parks & Rec board prefers not to grant the use of the tennis courts because they are actively being used, but would consider the Amphitheater for rental at a discounted rate during COVID-19.

Scott Lambert suggested not charging them and feels that we, as a township, should promote health, safety, and outdoor fitness during these hard times of social distancing. Scott Lambert would like them to offer their first class for free to residents or a discounted rate to residents. Carol Rapp and Barbara-Ann Thav both expressed concern over setting a precedent for one business. Chuck Barbera suggests paying her a fee to offer it to residents for free. Several ideas were discussed for how to make this happen for the business at a discounted rate using the Amphitheatre, which is the most practical. The Parks & Rec board motioned and approved offering them a monthly, COVID-19 discount, fee of \$120 to rent the Valley Creek amphitheater twice a week for 75 minutes at a time for the rest of 2020. The business will be asked to provide a COVID plan to ensure social distancing.

Barbara-Ann Thav asked that Steve Brown let her know that there are no lights down there as the summer progresses. It will become dark earlier and earlier and she may need to adjust her class times.

4. **Update on other projects:** Bryn Erin connection is complete and paved – it still needs the fine work completed. They will put a fence in next. The Patriot’s Path from Atwater to Valley Creek park is completed. The connector work into Valley Creek park from the office park starts first week in August. Sidley/Mill project is in the request for qualifications (RFQ) process in order to pick a consultant. Kristin Thomas asked that next month we discuss the status of current trail connection projects and the priority of future trail connection projects for 2021.
5. **Public Comment:** (10 minutes): None
6. **Meeting Adjournment at 8:31pm-** Next meeting planned for Tuesday, August 25, 2020 –7pm start time. It is not decided when we will be able to meet in person and more than likely the August meeting will be virtual.

Notes compiled by Kristin Thomas & Barbara-Ann Thav
Minutes approved at the 8/25/20 Parks & Recreation Board Meeting