



## Board of Parks and Recreation

South Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania  
May 8, 2023

### BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Katrina Idleman, Mark Ackerman, Terry Horn, Matthew Peterson, Jessica Beller (online)

### BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

William Glose, Keisha Champagne

### STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Tom Petrucci – Township Manager, Herb Bender – Director of Operations/Public Works, Lynn Matula – Park and Recreation Manager, Chris Stroehler – Long-Range Planner

### PUBLIC:

Chris Peischl, Steve Walck – Parkland School District

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## Minutes – May 8, 2023

### **AGENDA ITEM # 1 - CALL TO ORDER**

A. Mark called the meeting to order at 6:59 P.M and introduced the newest Parks & Recreation Board Member, Matthew Peterson. A moment of silence was given for Carole Derricott, the former Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation for South Whitehall who has recently passed.

### **AGENDA ITEM # 2 – COUTESY OF THE FLOOR**

- A. Mark moved Courtesy of the Floor to the top of the agenda to allow Chris Peischl time to speak before the rest of the agenda.
- a. Mr. Peischl explained that while he was campaigning for a Board of Commissioner position, several residents mentioned Pickleball. Mr. Peischl wanted to relay the interest of residents to install Pickleball Courts at Covered Bridge Park. His suggestion was to look at the area on the eastern side of Covered Bridge Park where there are less homes nearby since Pickleball can be rather loud. The Board pointed out that that most of that area is periodically wet and could be difficult to install. Herb mentioned that the Township will be repaving and dual striping the Courts at Winchester Heights and installing two courts as part of the improvements to The Vistas park.

### **AGENDA ITEM # 3 – ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

- B. Acceptance of the February 13, 2023 - Meeting Minutes
- b. Katrina made a motion to accept the minutes. Mathew seconded. All in favor.

### **AGENDA ITEM # 4 – CORRESPONDENCE**

- A. No correspondence for this month.

### **AGENDA ITEM # 5 – OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Projects Update

- i. **Vistas Park** – Lynn shared the updated design concept recently prepared by The Pidcock Company. The focus of this updated design is to move all of the planned amenities to the northern portion of the park in a more compact layout that would be easier to construct pathways that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The parking lot will be expanded, two pickleball courts will be installed, and the nature play area will be located between the basketball court and soccer field. Mark mentioned there had been previous discussions about connecting the parking lot from the residential development between Clauser Road and Chapmans Road to the proposed walking path. Herb pointed out that the sanitary sewer line runs right through that area, and it would be very difficult to construct a pathway. Terry asked if a pavilion was part of this scope of work. Staff explained that while a pavilion was not part of this scope, they would look into shade structures that could be installed in-house later on.
- ii. **Kohler Ridge Park** – Staff shared that the Master Site Plan has been completed, but there is not any designated funding in the budget to pursue development of this new park. Tom pointed out that we are investigating how new parks can impact staffing and maintenance as part of the Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan. Herb shared that the other concern with this park is that the Township needs to dump several million gallons of water in this location once or twice a year to clean the reservoir.
- iii. **Jordan Creek Greenway** – Chris shared that the one-mile section of trail in Covered Bridge Park from Wehr Mill Road to Lapp Road has secured \$1,000,000 for construction through the PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) program and will go out to bid in October of this year. Construction is anticipated to be complete by the end of summer 2024. Downstream there is another one-mile section of trail that will connect Lapp Road with Parkland High School at Cedar Crest Boulevard. This is currently undergoing design, engineering, and required investigative study (environmental, cultural resource, etc.). Once design plans are further along, the Township will review with the three private landowners that the Township holds easements with, including Parkland School District. Once engineering is finalized, the Township will look for construction funding for this section. Chris also shared that on a higher level, the Township is working with the five municipalities involved in the Greenway on a *Strategic Management Plan* to identify how we can work cooperatively on this regional trail. Katrina asked if there was any opportunity to pursue funding together with other municipalities as a region. Chris explained that a lot of the planning and coordination is done cooperatively, but construction funding tends to go to the landowner who specifically build and maintain that section of trail. Katrina asked about coordinated funding for more shared resources such as signage. Chris agreed that this would be a great opportunity to work more closely with our neighboring municipalities and is part of the intent of the *Strategic Management Plan*. Chris shared that there is a great benefit for our trail to be recognized as part of a larger regional network in order to raise awareness and priority for funding from the state.
- iv. **Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan** – Chris shared again that the open space and trails aspect of this plan have purposefully been shifted to other planning efforts including the Township Landscape Preservation Plan and Active Transportation Plan to focus more attention to these topics beyond how they relate to parks and recreation. As part of the Landscape Preservation Plan, the Township will look to define “open space” into categories that can better relate to intent of the land and management needs. The Active Transportation Plan will still focus on trail connections but also include tie-ins to the rest of the Township’s transportation infrastructure. Chris explained that part of the reason the Township is still working on the Parks & Recreation Plan is to further investigate the Recreation Impact Fees and how those should be updated based on current real estate values. Mark asked if we had looked at what surrounding municipalities are charging in fees, such as Upper Macungie. Chris said

yes, the team investigated surrounding municipalities and will include that breakdown in the plan. North Whitehall has not updated their fees since the joint parks and recreation plan was completed between the Township in 2009, but Chris believes they are interested in updating their fees soon. Upper Macungie is charging twice the amount of South Whitehall and other municipalities of similar sizes are charging more as well. Chris explained that it is certainly justified for South Whitehall to increase the fees, but the staff just wants to be thorough in that research and justification. Tom shared that the staff is looking at retooling the baseline work completed by Barry Isett & Associates for this Parks & Recreation Plan, to be more consistent with the current direction of Township. Chris added that it is more appropriate now to adopt the Parks & Recreation Plan as a supplemental component of the recently adopted Township Comprehensive Plan.

- v. **South Whitehall Chase** – Staff shared that the playground equipment has been installed and Public Works will be adding more mulch to level the playground area better. The additional equipment has been delivered and will be installed soon. Public Works will fix the pathways soon and wrap up the rest of the work. There is not a scheduled date for a ribbon cutting.
- vi. **South Whitehall Chase/Jacoby Park Basketball Courts** – Herb shared that these both have been completed.
- vii. **Winchester Heights Tennis Courts** – Herb shared that this is on the paving and maintenance schedule for the end of May/early June. The Township has funding in the budget for the sound damping barriers but wants to wait and see how loud the Pickleball use is first.
- viii. **Covered Bridge Park Phase C (Amphitheatre/pavilion)** – Tom shared that the Township has a grant from DCNR for this project to construct an amphitheater/pavilion and related ADA access for the Concerts in the Park. The grant will cover 50% of the construction cost, but the engineering required is all out of pocket. Tom shared that the staff visited the site and has realigned the location of the amphitheater to be in line with the proposed Jordan Creek Greenway construction, avoid major flooding issues, and not impact the parking area for Concerts in the Park. These location challenges prompted the Township to put out an RFP for an engineering consultant to help lay this out appropriately. Terry asked if this would be a permanent structure. Tom shared that this would be a permanent, fixed structure and that we would potentially look at solar paneling on the structure for power.

B. Open Space Funding Report

- i. Chris shared there have not been any projects that have required fees since the last time the Board reviewed this account, and the total balance is \$413,261.46.

**AGENDA ITEM # 6 – NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Recreation Program Update- Please refer to Lynn’s Report
- B. Fall DCNR Grant Application
  - i. Tom shared the grant the Township submitted in the Fall 2022 round was not awarded, likely because there were so many applications submitted for a smaller pot of money.
- C. Spring DCNR Grant Application

- i. Staff shared that the Township applied for \$200,000 to PA DCNR this spring to help with the construction and onsite inspection costs for the Jordan Creek Greenway. Chris shared a table of the active Park & Recreation grants totaling \$2,221,966.
- D. Steve Walck shared that the Parklands School District facility rental charge is increasing from \$40.00 to \$46.62 for the new year.

**AGENDA ITEM #7 – ADJOURNMENT**

- A. Matt made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Katrina seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 P.M.