



Upper Allen Township
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**PARK & RECREATION
REGULAR MEETING**

May 25, 2022

PRESENT: JEFF WILLIAMS, CHRISTINA DRYDEN, NICK CHRISTIE, JASON SAPOSNEK, DANIEL HARRISON – MEMBERS; James Cochran, Township Commissioner; Richard Castranio, Township Commissioner; Kelly Palmer, Assistant Township Manager; Chad Krebs, Parks Director; Eddie Mera-Aguilar, Parks & Facilities Coordinator.

VISITORS

Eric Fairchild- 1224 McCormick Road
Jim Salter- Upper Allen Mechanicsburg Softball
Doug Marsico- Upper Allen Mechanicsburg Baseball Association
Sean Cochran- Keystone FCU
Bob Melphis- 430 Diehl Road

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Williams called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

All present introduced themselves.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Christie to approve the meeting minutes from the April 27, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dryden and passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Williams mentioned that the last Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan was created in 2016. He added that DCNR likes to see a plan every seven to eight years. Mr. Williams stated

that if the township would apply for a grant for the plan, then it would need to be submitted in the Spring of 2023 and awarded in the Fall of 2023 for the work to be done in 2024.

CHAIRMAN'S RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

1. *Township Commissioners – Jim Cochran, Richard Castranio*

Commissioner Cochran mentioned that he was out driving around looking at the parks. He added that a youth development program was taking place at Friendship Park and there were cars parked in the grass. Commissioner Cochran added that he went to Winding Hills Park South and there were lacrosse games going on and again cars parked in the grass. He stated that no baseball games were taking place at Fisher Park so the parking was fine there. Commissioner Cochran mentioned that he spoke with Mr. Krebs and the Police Chief and asked the chief how he felt about the police officers ticketing for parking on the grass at the parks. The chief stated that it was not one of their favorite things to do and not a good use of their time. Commissioner Cochran mentioned the idea of removing the boulders and gate at the end of Winding Hills Park South by the development and making it one way traffic with parallel parking on the right-hand side. He added that would create ten to fifteen more parking spaces. Commissioner Cochran stated that the chief liked that idea as it would also give quick access if there was an emergency. He also added that he would propose to install more of the cement curbs like at Fisher Park to prevent people from driving on the grass areas. Commissioner Cochran stated that there is money budgeted this year to install a solar powered crosswalk that will connect the entrance to Winding Hills Park South to Winding Hills Park North.

Mr. Christie added that the idea sounds like a win-win all around. Ms. Dryden mentioned that since the parking issue at Winding Hills South Park is mainly when you first enter, what about putting in a split rail fence to prevent cars from accessing that area. Commissioner Cochran stated that split rail fencing could be installed but cement curbs would be easier, and they work well at Fisher Park. Mr. Williams mentioned that a shortage in parking is not an isolated issue, and he has seen this issue at other parks outside of Upper Allen Township.

2. *Assistant Township Manager – Kelly Palmer*

None

3. *Parks Director – Chad Krebs*

Mr. Krebs stated that they have been working on installing the Story Trail at Winding Hills Park South and that will be launching at noon on June 1st. He added that representatives from the library are invited and will be in attendance for that. Mr. Krebs mentioned that in the next month or two, developers will have enough dirt placed in the open space in front of the Winding Hills building to fill that area. He added that the creek restoration at Spring Run Park is now complete but the landscaping along it will be completed in the next week or two. Mr. Krebs stated that the stream restoration at McCormick Park starts next week.

4. *Parks & Facilities Coordinator- Eddie Mera-Aguilar*

None

5. *Mechanicsburg Recreation Department – Absent*

None

PARK ASSIGNMENTS

Mr. Christie stated that Center Square Park and Simpson Park look great and the grass was freshly cut. He added that he likes the disc golf course at Simpson Park.

Mr. Williams mentioned that Country Estates Park was normal as always and he checked the porta john and it was good. He added that he checked out McCormick Park a couple of times and they have all the equipment staged for the stream restoration. Mr. Williams mentioned that the grass was high around one of the benches. He added that when he stopped in at the Dog Park before the meeting, the attendance wasn't as high as it normally is but he talked to a gentleman there who had nothing but praises for the park. Mr. Williams mentioned that on June 20th it will be the fourth anniversary of the dog park and an open house will be set up from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm.

Ms. Dryden stated that Friendship Park looked great and the new misters there will be a welcomed addition. She added that Rosegarden Park looked nice also and there were a few people there on the weekend.

Mr. Saposnek stated that there was graffiti on the pavilion near the teeners field at Fisher Park and one of the basketball nets is missing. He mentioned that the weed barrier at the slide at Miller's Crest Park is getting pulled back.

Mr. Harrison mentioned that the grass was getting high around the soccer nets at the Winding Hills Park, but the parks were very heavily used and looked nice. He mentioned the drainage issue coming off the parking lot at Grantham Park that blocks off the path. Mr. Harrison also added that while at Grantham Park he saw a wounded goose in the pond that looks like it was attacked. He stated that he called a wildlife hotline but was told that they would only treat animals that are brought to them. Mr. Harrison asked what the Township has done in that case and Ms. Palmer stated that she hasn't heard of any calls for that but it's really sad to hear about.

PUBLIC INPUT

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Banners, Signs, Scoreboards in Public Parks Policy

Ms. Palmer provided a suggested policy for banners, signs, and scoreboards in public spaces. She mentioned the highlights of the policy include the conditions for handling the banners, signs, and scoreboards and the authority and approval process which are different depending on if it is a permanent fixture in the park and then the maintenance rules for those items. Mr. Christie mentioned that he feels this is to make sure that the Township is keeping the integrity of the park and thinks the policy is fine. Ms. Palmer stated that since scoreboards would be a permanent fixture in the parks, that approval process would first go to the Park and Recreation Board and then to the Board of Commissioners. She added that she plans to take this policy to the Board of Commissioners and then will make sure that each group gets a copy of the policy.

2. Municipal Finance & Parks Funds Presentation

Ms. Palmer mentioned that at the March Park and Recreation meeting, it was discussed to do a presentation on the park funds. She added that when she got further along in creating that presentation, she decided to create a broad presentation of all township funds as well. Ms. Palmer stated that the intention is that all board members will be on the same page with the same understanding of how the budget works, what the local government does, and how the budget translates into services. She explained that a budget is a set of activities that encompass the development, implementation, and evaluation of a plan for the provision of services and assets. Ms. Palmer added that the budget must be balanced and approved by December 31st which is in compliance with the State Law. She stated that balanced means we can not spend more than what we have for the year. Ms. Palmer

mentioned that a copy of the budget is online on the website as well as the audit and there is a hard copy at the township office with staff always available to assist the public with any questions they may have. She stated that the main sources of revenue are taxes, user fees/special fees, intergovernmental, grants, and other things. In local government, most expenses are related to delivery of services, capital projects, payroll, and personnel expenses. The general fund is one of the more diverse funds and its right over the 10-million-dollar mark for 2022 with earned income tax taking up most of that. Ms. Palmer stated that for the general fund expenditures for Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, it takes up about seven percent of that fund but keep in mind that there are other funds related to the parks. She stated that operating expenses are the day-to-day service operations of the Township, personnel and insurance utilities, and technology infrastructure and maintenance. Ms. Palmer added that the capital expenses are big ticket purchases that have an impact on years to come. They include the community infrastructure improvements, roadway upgrades, facility upgrades, purchasing land for municipal uses, purchase or replacement of equipment, and machinery or motor vehicles. She stated that the fiscal year starts January 1 and runs through December 31 and the staff are engaged in municipal finance activities year-round. Ms. Palmer mentioned that financial reporting is done monthly at public meetings to ensure that the funds are being managed appropriately.

Ms. Palmer stated that the Township census in 2010 was 18,059 residents and the 2020 census was 23,183 residents which represents a 28% increase. There are 7,893 households in Upper Allen Township and a majority of that population falls in the 18-65 age range. The majority of the land is residential use with an average of 20.8 minute drive to work. She added that this information is relevant in the decision-making process.

Ms. Palmer stated that funds are a pull of money that is allocated to serve a specific purpose. A specific revenue may be legally restricted, so it's reported in a corresponding fund to demonstrate that revenue was spent for the intended purpose. All funds are monitored and analyzed regularly. Individual funds are created because of laws, grants or pass-through requirements, or the desires of the governing body. She stated that all 14 funds are audited every year. Ms. Palmer mentioned that municipal services include public infrastructure, which is roadway construction and maintenance, paving, salting, plowing, bridges, sewer system wastewater treatment plant, stormwater infrastructure, fire hydrants, streetlights. Public safety municipal services are police services, fire services, building inspections and code enforcement. Quality of life municipal services are parks and recreation, support of the Joseph T. Simpson Library, Meals on Wheels and the Mechanicsburg Parade. Community Development municipal services are permitting, planning, economic development, and environmental services. Ms. Palmer stated that the main points to this are that local government is relevant to everyone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Services such as public infrastructure, roads, bridges, sewer, and public safety never get time off. Municipal finance is nuanced and complex with many financial principles as well as legislation that must be complied with. There are many restrictions on how the money is spent and, in her opinion, the balanced budget is the most important financial planning tool that the township has. Ms. Palmer stated that this is where they shape the direction the township should go in.

Mr. Krebs mentioned that the Parks Department makes up the maintenance of the current parks and planning for the future park development in a manner that meets the expectations of the users. He stated that the park and public works departments work closely together to serve the residents of the township, especially with regard to snow removal operations. Mr. Mera-Aguilar mentioned that there are over two hundred acres

of park property operated and maintained by the Township. Currently, there are 16 parks, 2 inclusive playgrounds, 6 pickleball courts which are highly used every day, 1 dog park, 11 rentable pavilions, 8 basketball courts, 10 baseball/softball fields, 11 open athletic fields, 1 sand volleyball court, 2 parks with creek access, 7 parks with trails, and 26,150 linear feet of trails. He added that park inspections started last week and they are trying to inspect the larger parks on a weekly rotation and the smaller parks on a bi-weekly rotation. Ms. Palmer stated that they are very blessed to have the support of the Board of Commissioners as well as the Park and Recreation Board. She added that as of December 2013, the Township owned and collectively occupied 153 acres of parks. As of today, May 2022, the township owns around 239 acres of park land. The general fund for parks accounts is for personnel expenses, day to day operating expenses and general maintenance for buildings, pavilions, playgrounds, and equipment. The capital reserve fund was established by ordinance and the largest source of money is a transfer from the general fund with other small sources such as sale/divestiture of fixed assets, miscellaneous and interest earnings. Ms. Palmer stated that the money is spent on items like maintenance and supporting equipment, the storage building and park master planning. Mr. Krebs mentioned that he has a replacement plan for items in the parks from vehicles to benches, to playground equipment. Ms. Palmer stated that the next two funds are one hundred percent park dedicated. The park improvement fund funds capital improvements and assets but it is funded by the .1 mil park improvement on the resident's tax bills. Ms. Palmer added that historically the Township collects right around \$200,000 in revenues. The 2022 projects that this money will be paying for is rotating field 4 at Winding Hill Park North, fencing upgrades at Fisher West outfield, installation of the Story Walk at Winding Hill Park South, baseball and basketball court improvements, pavement repairs and path extensions at Fisher Park and the Dog Park, benches, trees, and poured in place replacements. The park & recreation development fund is authorized by the Municipalities Planned Code and established by Upper Allen Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance to act as a repository for funds contributed by developers for future development of parks and recreation facilities. Ms. Palmer stated that this is the hardest fund to predict. There are numerous in-depth guidelines and provisions on how this can be used, and it is not intended to finance routine and necessary maintenance and upkeep for the township's recreational areas. Grant matching is spent out of this fund. For 2022, ADA water fountains and inclusive misters at Friendship Park will be purchased from this fund along with the playground equipment for Fisher Park to be installed next year. Ms. Palmer added that she would be happy to answer anyone's questions.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be held on June 22, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. With no further business to discuss, Chairman Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Roth
Recording Secretary