

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP  
PARKS & RECREATION  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2008 MEETING MINUTES**

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**1. Call to Order:**

A. Chairman Heisner called the Parks & Recreation meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

**2. Roll Call:**

A. The following Parks & Recreation members were present: Mr. Brooke, Mr. Dell Angelo, Ms. Eckman, Mr. Gambone, Mr. Heisner, Mrs. Mazza, and Mr. Wurtz.

B. Additional attendees included: Mr. Chris DiPaolo, Board of Supervisors Liaison, Mr. Matthew Jones, Student Representative, Mr. Joseph Dunbar, Township Manager, and Ms. Angela Johnson, Parks & Recreation Program Coordinator.

**3. Monthly Meeting:**

A. Review/Approve meeting minutes of August 19, 2008:

1. **MOTION** – Mr. Gambone made a motion to approve the August 19, 2008 meeting minutes. Mrs. Mazza seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 7-0.

**4. Old Business:**

A. Evansburg Point Park Master Plan:

1. Ms. Johnson reviewed the two minor changes on the Evansburg Point Park (EPP) master plan, including the removal of a few new parking spaces and a change in the direction of the walking path. The walking path is on page two of the plan, and where it previously traveled behind the visitor's bench, it now runs around the home team side of the field. Ms. Johnson noted that staff is facilitating a meeting between the Warriors and Suburban Lighting to discuss any necessary changes to the lighting plan. DCNR would like lighting on the football field and multi-purpose field to be consistent, however the Warriors have already purchased lamps for the football field and are not sure they can match these on the multi-purpose field.
2. Mr. Dunbar noted that this project has been ongoing for well over two years. Ms. Donohue indicated that it was underway prior to her arrival in 2003. The plan has continued to change since its inception, previously including layout variations with tennis courts, baseball and softball fields, and the now present multi-purpose field. The original football field suffered damage when also used for practice by the Warriors and Cougars, and has been repaired at great expense. The Warriors were encouraged to practice on the other field area which they now refer to as their practice field (the multi-purpose field.) Whatever the Park Board determines as the final use of this field will determine the level of lighting needed. The Park Board needs to restate or refine their recommendations regarding this plan so that the project can move forward. DCNR wants uniformity between the lighting on the two fields.
3. Chairman Heisner stated that a multi-purpose field has been proposed for the area in question. He asked if the poles need to be the same on both fields? Mr. Dunbar noted that DCNR's direction has been to have the same lighting on both fields.
4. Mr. Gambone suggested recommending this revised plan with the walking path.
  - a) Mr. Dunbar questioned if they wanted this to be an exclusive compound for the Warriors? He noted that for the field in front of the Township building, the Wolverines only have a ground lease.
  - b) Mr. Heisner remarked that the Warriors have always had the attitude that this was their field and facility. Mr. Dunbar noted that the Warriors organization is different from in the

past, and they are working with Mr. DiPaolo to try to meet with neighbors to create a plan that meets everyone's needs.

5. Mr. Brooke suggested getting the Warriors to fix the lights on the football field, finish the walking trail, and creating a multi-purpose field with no lights.
  - a) Mr. Dell Angelo asked when the lights were added? Mr. Brooke noted they were originally included on the plan for baseball.
  - b) Mrs. Mazza expressed the need to create a field that can be used for a variety of sports and events moving into the future. She sees the need for a lighted field.
  - c) Mr. Dunbar discussed the problems with temporary lighting, and noted they must also consider the neighbors concerns regarding when and how the lights will be used.
  - d) Mr. Brooke does not think they should consider lights for the multi-purpose field until the football field lighting has been resolved.
  - e) Mr. Gambone is in favor of lights for the multi-purpose field.
  - f) Mr. Dell Angelo questioned who would pay for them? Mr. Dunbar explained that lights are currently budgeted for installation on the multi-purpose field.
6. Mr. Gambone asked Mr. DiPaolo what complaints he has received about this field?
  - a) Mr. DiPaolo indicated that people want a swing set or play area similar to those found in other Township parks, as there are none on that side of the Township. They are concerned with curbs and sidewalks as they relate to parking issues, and are concerned with the lighted use of this park year-round because it is State owned.
  - b) Mr. Brooke asked what sport would use this park year-round? Mr. DiPaolo explained that different sports may want to use the lights, and they can't say no to them because it is State land. The Wolverines are different in that they have a recorded lease with the Township.
  - c) Mrs. Mazza indicated they would still have to go through the Township or State to obtain permission for use of the field.
  - d) Mr. Gambone questioned why they don't value youth programs?
  - e) Mr. DiPaolo commented that they do value youth programs. The neighbors do not have issues with the Warriors, but are concerned with the year-round lighted use of that field, and also feel this is being set up exclusively for the Warriors. Play sets were recommended for this park in 1993 and 2002 but never installed.
  - f) There was a general discussion of how and when the field would be used.
7. Mr. Brooke again put out his suggestion to install the trail and multi-purpose field with no lights, and also add the swing set.
8. Ms. Eckman commented that she likes the lights on the football field, however she does not think they are necessary. They can play games on the weekends during the day. She sees a greater need for lights on the practice field. She questioned why the Warriors purchased lights that didn't fit?
  - a) Mr. Dunbar explained that when the Warriors submitted their application for the lights, the Township offered to help them with input on what they should install. The Warriors did not take the Township up on that offer. The permit was issued, DCNR told the Warriors to change the heads only, and when the Code Enforcement Officer reviewed the installation it did not meet the Township's lighting standards.
  - b) Ms. Eckman questioned how this could occur? Mr. Dunbar explained the Township is not dictating the manufacturer to be used for the lighting heads, but what must be done to meet the Township's standards. The Warriors left the meeting with a different understanding than the Township, which is why staff is meeting with Mr. Chambers and Mr. Smith this week to determine what needs to be done to correct the lighting. The Township will then

send a letter to the Warriors outlining the requirements, copying the Park Board and the Board of Supervisors so everyone will be updated on the situation.

- c) Mr. Heisner questioned what would determine the lights to be used? Mr. Dunbar noted there must be continuity between the two fields. The Warriors purchased lights without consulting with the Township as offered. The look of the lights on both fields needs to be the same.
  - d) Mr. Heisner noted they have wood telephone poles on the football field, and he doesn't think they want this on the multi-purpose field. Mr. Dunbar noted they currently have 6-8 poles, but only four may be needed. They may need taller poles. This still has to be decided.
  - e) Mr. Dunbar was not sure if they could create a separate lighting ordinance for this field that would limit use of lights to a specific timeframe such as July thru September. At the last Board of Supervisor's business meeting they permitted the temporary use of lighting for practice. He noted this field is also now getting more use as the school district is using it as well.
9. Mr. DiPaolo commented that the Board wants resolution on this matter. Unfortunately the meeting with the Warriors and neighbors has to be rescheduled.
10. Mr. Wurtz asked if they would be able to use the field for football practice if there were no lights? They probably would not be able to practice.
- a) Ms. Eckman indicated that she would want to see some type of guarantee regarding light spillage and impact on the neighbors.
  - b) Mr. Dell Angelo thinks they should concentrate on correcting the lights on the football field first and not worry about the practice field.
  - c) Mr. Gambone noted that it would soon be dark at 5 p.m. so you would be preventing the Warriors from practicing if lights are not permitted.
  - d) Mrs. Mazza commented on the problems with temporary lighting and is in favor of the lighted practice field. She would also want specifics to ensure the lights are installed to code, and thinks they need to get the lights on the football field corrected.
11. Public Comment:
- a) Mr. James Nutt, Level Road, noted that he was a coach for 16 years for the Audubon Soccer Association. They had weekend games and practiced during the week on a non-lighted field. He thinks is a scheduling problem and does not see the need for lights. Mr. Nutt commented that he thought the DCNR required a consensus from the neighbors on this problem.
    - (1) Mr. Dunbar reviewed the process that plan changes go through. A public hearing is required, however consensus is not. They are trying to work with the neighbors.
    - (2) Mr. Nutt commented that they need more parking and should also have sidewalks because it is dangerous to have children cross that road in the evening.
    - (3) Mr. Dunbar explained that the new plan includes expanded parking. He also explained that this particular part of Level Road is owned by the State, and the State does not want them to have sidewalks in Evansburg Park.
    - (4) Mr. Nutt commented that they were only concerned with lighting, but other uses such as the walking trail and swing set were not addressed. Parking problems were not addressed.
    - (5) Mr. Dunbar explained that the Township Police Department had recommend restricting parking in that area when they originally held the master plan public hearing. The public was opposed to the restrictions so the plans were tabled. Once this plan is

approved they will revisit parking along the main road. The trail will also be included with the master plan. This is being handled as one complete package. There are site distance problems at the park, and the Lower Providence Police Department is installing temporary no parking signs tomorrow to help resolve them.

- (6) Mr. Nutt commented that the neighbors do support youth sports, but this is an accident waiting to happen with regard to parking and crossing the road. He is concerned with the children's safety; he is not opposed to the Warriors.
  - (7) Mr. Gambone commented that the youth population has increased significantly since Mr. Nutt used to coach. More varieties of sports programs are being offered and there are fewer fields available for use.
  - (8) Mr. Nutt commented that the Township failed to acquire open space and now they are suffering. Mr. Dunbar noted that Lower Providence Township has the largest holding of open space out of all the municipalities in the County. They are also holding funds for the installation of sidewalks along Level Road, however the State needs to agree on the sidewalk installation.
  - (9) Mr. Nutt commented that he would contact the State to request support for sidewalks.
  - b) Mrs. Marge Martinez, Lewis Road, sees no reason to install extra lights in this park. If it is lit, people will come and use the field. Her children were involved in sports and she supports youth programs. This is a multi-purpose field not just for football.
    - (1) Mrs. Martinez took pictures tonight on Level Road to show the 50 cars that were parked there just for practice. Mrs. Martinez commented that the Wyeth employees use Level Road at the same time people head to football practice. Children are walking and riding bikes on that road, it is not safe. The road is not wide enough to permit parking and two lanes of traffic. Mrs. Martinez stated that she has been waiting since 2002 for passive recreation at this park. The park is minimally used during the day and she would like to see the walking trail installed.
    - (2) Chairman Heisner noted that the walking trail is in the plans for this park. Mrs. Martinez remarked that the lights come first and the trail is not in the plans for this year. There is nothing on it for little kids. She urged the Board not to put lights on the multi-purpose field.
  - c) Mr. Tom White, 3007 Fairhill Drive, commented that he also coaches in the Township. It is hard for him to get off work early to get to practice. He requested that the lights be permitted on the practice field, but suggested they be on a timer. Using lights from 6 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. might be a good timeframe.
  - d) Mrs. Barbara Kowalchek, 508 Winthrop, commented that she is not against use of the lights for the fall (Sept.-Oct.), but is opposed to their use in the summer.
  - e) Mr. Ray Martinez, Lewis Road, is not in favor of the lights. This is a community park and the lights will turn it into a sport complex being used every night through January. And, no matter what the Park Board says, if someone wants to use the field they will have to let them use it. Mr. Martinez questioned where cars would go once no parking signs are put on Level Road? He reiterated the lights should not be installed because the residents will suffer.
12. Mrs. Mazza noted that the Park Board is very aware of the parking and safety issues, and are also concerned with them. However, parents must be parents and watch out for their children.
  13. Mr. Dunbar noted that staff is frustrated with this project. They have set up the meeting with the Township Engineer and Lighting Consultant to see what must be done.
  14. Mr. DiPaolo indicated that the most disappointing thing is that they did not yet hold the meeting with the Wolverines and neighbors, and they must arrange for this to happen.

- a) Mrs. Martinez noted the neighbors have had to attend so many meetings in the past. She asked if they really all need to come out for the meeting that Mr. DiPaolo is trying to arrange? She does not want to submit them to that.
  - b) Mrs. Mazza expressed an interest in herself and other Park Board members also participating in that meeting.
  - c) Mr. Gambone asked if Mr. White or other in support of the lights could also be included?
  - d) Mr. Dunbar explained that the meeting was an action item from the last Board of Supervisors meeting for Al Vagnozzi, Mr. DiPaolo and the neighbors to meet and discuss the lights on the practice field.
  - e) Mr. DiPaolo does not think the two groups are that far apart on this issue.
15. Mr. Brooke commented that this was the first time he recalls anyone asking for a play set. Mr. Dunbar noted it needed to be added to the five-year plan. Mr. DiPaolo commented that Mr. Vagnozzi was in favor of the play set too.
  16. Mr. Heisner asked if this plan was shown to the Board of Supervisors? Mr. Dunbar explained that was removed from their last agenda because the Park Board had not reviewed page 2 of the plans.
  17. Mr. Nutt asked if there were several Warriors teams and if they practiced together? It was explained that there are teams broken down by weight classes, plus cheerleaders. They practice on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Mr. Nutt suggested spreading practice over several days to help the problem.
  18. **MOTION** – Mr. Gambone made a motion to table action on this item until staff reports back to the Board in October. Mrs. Mazza seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 7-0.
- B. 5-Year Capital Plan:
1. Ms. Johnson has provided a document with the Parks & Recreation capital projects history from 2003 to 2007. Corresponding statements of revenues and expenditures compared to budget were also provided.
  2. The 2003 acquisition of open space was questioned. Mr. Dunbar explained that this is the rental property next to the Sewer Authority. This generates \$3,000 to \$5,000 into the P&R budget each year.
  3. Mr. Dunbar noted that at the last meeting the Board requested this historical data. Perhaps this will help them determine what to do with Evansburg and the 5-year-plan.
  4. Ms. Eckman asked if the County open space funding would expire? Mr. Dunbar indicated it would expire in April 2009. They do have several properties being considered for acquisition.
    - a) Ms. Eckman asked if the Park Board had any say with regard to open space acquisition? Mr. Dunbar explained that the Park Board doesn't handle this; a separate committee was previously set up to address open space planning.
    - b) With regard to open space, Mr. Dunbar noted that acquisitions are typically funded from the General Fund, but maintenance is a Parks & Recreation responsibility. There is an 80% County match on the acquisitions. The Township tries to acquire parcels or own the development rights. The open space plan identifies the priority properties.
- C. Updates on Capital Projects:
1. Brant Road Park – Ms. Johnson commented that this park should be done by the end of September. Weather issues have delayed completion. They still need to plant a few trees and do the wearing course.
    - a) Ms. Johnson asked if they would like to do the dedication ceremony this year or wait until spring?

- b) Mr. Heisner asked how the grass was? Ms. Johnson indicated that it was still seed. Mr. Heisner suggested the dedication be put off until spring.
- c) Mr. Dunbar suggested holding a dedication after the spring Park Board tour of all parks.
- 2. Hoy Park Fishing Pier – Ms. Johnson noted that weather setbacks have also affected completion of the pier.
  - a) Mr. Dunbar explained how construction of the pier was being done with PVC pipes set into the foundation. The pipes are then filled with cement, and they are leaving the PVC in place. The pier will go on top of these supports. This must be completed by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - b) Mr. Wurtz asked what the status of the Indian Head Dam was? Mr. Dunbar noted that it is private and is not slated to come out.

## 5. New Business:

### A. Brant Road Park Dedication Ceremony:

- 1. This item was previously addressed.

### B. Community Survey Preliminary Data:

- 1. Ms. Johnson provided draft survey results for the Board to review.
- 2. Mr. Dunbar explained that Mrs. Walsh is meeting with ICMA to analyze the survey in more detail. A final survey presentation will be provided to the Board of Supervisors on October 2, 2008. A representative from ICMA will present the data.
- 3. Mr. Dunbar noted that the survey was done via direct mail, and they had a 29% response rate. If you read the entire report, the Township falls below the national average on street lighting, however this is a Township and not a city. The survey was performed to make sure the Township is not missing the mark on services etc.

### C. Sherwood & Eskie Park Neighborhood Survey:

- 1. Ms. Johnson noted that the Park Board had suggested reaching out to residents to see if the sand volleyball courts at Sherwood, and the smaller play structure at Eskie Parks were something the community really wanted.
- 2. Ms. Johnson has proposed setting up a meeting with residents to discuss these items, and suggested holding the meeting on a Saturday.
- 3. Mr. Gambone suggested holding these meetings just prior to the regularly scheduled Park Board meeting, beginning at 6 p.m. It was decided that they would invite residents near Eskie Park to come to the October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, and Sherwood residents to the November 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- 4. **ACTION ITEM** – Park Board members should forward questions for these meetings to Angela. Staff will invite the residents to these meetings.
- 5. Mr. Dunbar suggested putting off the 5-year-plan until the December meeting.

### D. Fall Festival – September 27, 2008:

- 1. Ms. Johnson reviewed the outline of events for the Fall Festival. Booths and activities will be set up from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. From 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. there will be live music. Fireworks will be held at 8:30 p.m.
- 2. The fireworks will be basically the same show given on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Rain date is Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.
- 3. Ms. Johnson needs volunteers to help with this event.
- 4. **ACTION ITEM** – Park Board members should let Ms. Johnson know if/when they can help or if there are any other groups that can help with this event.

5. Ms. Eckman asked if help was needed the day prior to the event? Ms. Johnson may need help that day too.
6. Mr. Dunbar commented on problems at past Fall Festivals with overt political activity. He has visited similar events at other municipalities, and they do not permit such activity. Letters were sent to the County and Township political party headquarters to let them know they can set up a booth if they want to be represented. A reminder letter to that effect has already been sent.

**6. Comments from Board:**

- A. Mr. Gambone asked if the Turkey Shoot was being held this year? Ms. Johnson indicated that it was and she already has ARA down as a sponsor.
- B. Ms. Johnson thanked everyone who helped with the car show.
- C. Mr. Gambone commented that the World Series held at ARA was a great event, bringing \$1.8 million into the Township and County. He has applied for consideration to have the 2010 World Series to be held at ARA.
- D. Mr. DiPaolo suggested that the problems at Evansburg Point Park are a symptom of Township growth. He opened a discussion regarding to how people would feel about creating a consolidated site with multiple fields in one location? The Board likes this concept, however issues of funding and location would need to be addressed. Mr. Dunbar suggested the possible use of the Montgomery County Planning Commission to perform a needs assessment and see how much space would be required.
- E. Mr. Dunbar noted that for Wolverine Field the parking lot was to be completed by September 9<sup>th</sup>. It is not done so they will contact the Wolverines tomorrow for an update. Mr. Horrocks was not in attendance at this evening's meeting. They are close to a go / no go time regarding changes to the field. Dr. Quinn at Methacton is working on a facilities assessment and will get back to the Township regarding possible changes to the field.

**7. Comments from Residents:**

- A. None

**8. Adjourn:**

- A. **MOTION** – Mr. Gambone made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dell Angelo seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0. The meeting ended at 9:53 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** October 14, 2008