

STRABAN TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Peter Sontheimer, Deb Kammerer, John Colgan, James Dunlop and Mike Flaherty

MEETING OF: MARCH 20, 2023

The Straban Township Parks & Recreation Advisory Board met this date, as publicly advertised, at 7:00 p.m. at the Straban Township meeting room, 1745 Granite Station Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Those in attendance: Peter Sontheimer, Chair; John Colgan, Treasurer; James Dunlop, Secretary; Mike Flaherty, Member and Office Manager Robin Crushong. Deb Kammerer, Vice-Chair was not present.

Others in attendance: John Hartzell, Chair of the Planning Commission; and Tony Sanders.

Board Chair Peter Sontheimer brought the meeting to order.

Minutes:

Mr. Colgan moved, seconded by Mr. Flaherty, to approve the January 17, 2023 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Reports:

Treasurer:

The beginning balance as of January 17, 2023 was \$343,733.78. There were expenses totaling \$1,807.66. There was interest earned in the months of January and February in the amount of \$54.31. There were no deposits. The balance in the Recreation Account is currently \$341,980.43. **Mr. Dunlop moved, seconded by Mr. Flaherty to approve the Treasurer Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

Appearances:

None.

Old Business:

Recreation Park Status and Scheduling: The park fields are full. The pavilion is being scheduled a lot this year too. The Board mentioned that it may need to think about installing a pavilion at the lower field in the near future.

Park Improvement Plan:

Water/Sewer Hook-Up by Gettysburg Municipal Authority (GMA) – Ms. Crushong spoke to Mark Guise at Gettysburg Municipal Authority. The costs that GMA would charge would be the easement agreement and connection fees which would be in the neighborhood of \$10,000.00-\$15,000.00. Not sure what the monthly cost would be but the Board did not think that this cost would be more than a hundred or so dollars. The expense will be Wm. F. Hill & Assoc. designing and putting the work out to bid. Someone like C.E. Williams would perform the work. The Board decided that it needed concrete numbers in order to make a decision on this issue. **Mr. Flaherty moved, seconded by Mr. Dunlop to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to request Wm. F. Hill & Assoc. design and prepare for bidding the work to be done to bring water/sewer to the Straban Park to be shown as separate costs. Motion carried unanimously.**

New Business:

Review/Revise Recreation Plan – Mr. Hartzell, Chair of the Planning Commission was present to discuss what should be in the recreation plan to ensure the plan is sufficiently broad and updated so that newer developments, and new phases of existing developments, are considered as being included in recreational plan initiatives. At the authorization of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Hartzell posed some questions to the Township Solicitor Sam Wiser. The Board reviewed the questions/answers as follows:

- How much detail needs to be provided in the recreation plan? *The plan should explain the goals and standards of the township regarding its parks and recreation areas. These goals and standards should be based on data, analysis, and studies that are discussed in the plan. Where possible, the plan's discussion of park/recreation guidelines should include items like size, location, proximity to new developments, and accessibility. It was suggested to identify more specific desired locations for park/recreation development. They can be as simple as passive open space or as substantial as high intensity recreational uses. It was also suggested that the fee in lieu of dedication should be updated. Land value has changed significantly since the current fee was established; therefore, it is time to revisit the fee amount.*
- If recreational fees are collected from developers, should the plan include recreational facilities in close proximity to the development? "Reasonable distance" *Many municipalities operate a "primary" recreational facility, and they have made the determination that such an arrangement is to the benefit of the residents. The Municipalities Planning Code ("MPC") requires that the park and recreational facilities be reasonably accessible to the new development, however, the MPC does not offer a definition for "reasonably accessible".*

The Board discussed the need to propose things near existing developments such as trails, playgrounds, etc. Should these be complimentary to what is already existing in these developments or not? The plan needs to indicate who they are to serve and where the parks are to be located in the future.

- Recreational fees are to be expended for the costs of maintenance of recreational facilities. Can recreational fees be earmarked or invested so as to create future income that will fund recreational maintenance costs? *Funds should only be used as authorized by the MPC. MPC permits the fees to be used "only" for the purpose of providing, acquiring, operating or maintaining park or recreational facilities. There is no caselaw that suggests that the fees can be invested in a manner that generates future income (except the MPC does require the funds to be placed in an interest-bearing account, and the interest earned becomes part of the funds). A municipality runs the risk of being required to refund to a developer any fees (plus interest) that are used for purposes other than those authorized by the MPC. This concern arises because the MPC permits any person who has paid a recreational fee to request a refund from the municipality if the fees are used for unauthorized purposes. The MPC does not state what specific circumstances might trigger a refund – though using funds for anything other than providing, acquiring, operating, or maintaining park/recreational facilities would likely qualify as grounds for a refund.*
- Other recommended guidelines? *Consideration of open space needs, and open space often goes hand in hand with recreation. It would be a good idea to consider open space needs along with its recreational needs. The open space act was recently amended to allow for open space revenue to be allocated to the maintenance and development of facilities not acquired under the open space act (capped at 25% of open space revenue). Open space funding is a potential revenue source for recreation.*

The Board discussed open space and Mr. Hartzell will look into this more and get back to the Board on this.

Public Comment:

None.

Other Matters:

Tony Sanders –

Lights for Soccer Field – the office has encountered issues with the lights that come in around the Fall. There was an incident wherein the technician that came to service the lights on the field drove his vehicle on the walking trail and onto the grass. He was told twice not to drive on the walking trail or the grass. Mr. Sanders suggested the Recreation Board purchase permanent lights. The Board was not in favor of this suggestion. The soccer teams will need more direction or will not be able to bring the lights in anymore.

Maintenance Shed – Mr. Sanders would like to see the Recreation Board go back out for bids on this. **Mr. Colgan moved, seconded by Mr. Dunlop to recommend that the Board of Supervisors go out to bid on this project this year. Motion carried unanimously.**

Trailer to haul – The road crew would like to purchase a trailer, double axel, open tilt top for about \$14,000.00 to \$17,000.00 to haul the mowers and other road machinery. **Mr. Flaherty moved, seconded by Mr. Colgan to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to purchase a trailer up to \$18,000.00. Motion carried unanimously.**

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Flaherty moved, seconded by Mr. Colgan to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. this date.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin K. Crushong
Office Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

NEXT MEETING:

SUPERVISORS: April 3, 2023
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD: May 15, 2023