

ORANGE TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY PARK BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 18, 2010, 7:00PM

Meeting was called to order by Chair Jennifer Christian at 7:10 PM.

Roll Call:

Jennifer Christian, Park Board President - Present
Chris Masciola, Park Board member - Present
Len Fisher Park Board member - Absent
Michelle Eckels, Park Board Vice President - Present
Michael Couvreur, Park Board Secretary - Present

Also Attending: Robert Quigley, Trustee Liaison, Beth Hugh, Maintenance and Parks Director, Gail Messmer, Township Administrator, Robert Barbosky, Parks, Facilities and Grounds Manager, Scott Overturf, Owners' Representative, Bob Ruhlman, Township resident of 1830 Whites Court.

Minutes were taken by Michael Couvreur

Approval of Minutes:

Chairperson Jennifer Christian presented the January 20, 2010 meeting minutes. Robert Barbosky was not present at the meeting and the minutes shall be updated by Jennifer Christian.

Public Comments:

Bob Ruhlman had several questions for the Board regarding how current levy funds had been spent and which projects had been completed. Maintenance and Parks Director Beth Hugh explained that the Township could provide a list of projects currently underway or completed. However, some funds were set aside for projects scheduled in the future according to the implementation schedule.

Mr. Ruhlman followed up with a question asking if the levy were not renewed, what projects would not get done? Owners' Representative Scott Overturf explained that any projects scheduled 2011 or beyond would not get built. Projects scheduled for construction in 2010 would proceed under funding from the current levy. The levy money not only funds the construction of parks and trails, but also provides funding for the operations, existing facilities, and salary costs of the Parks Department. Trustee Robert Quigley noted that should the levy fail, the Township trustees would need to identify which costs to absorb through the general fund.

Mr. Ruhlman further inquired about how a community center would get funded. It is currently listed last on the implementation schedule in Master Plan. Mr. Quigley clarified that the current levy and renewal levy are intended to fund trails and parks. Construction of a community center would likely require other funding.

The question of whether a water spray park would be installed was also posed by Mr. Ruhlman. Mr. Overturf responded while construction of such a facility is not currently scheduled, the Township is constantly evaluating locations for a place that is appropriate. Ms. Hugh explained that although the facility is not currently scheduled for construction, projects can often change priority based on available grant funding opportunities.

Mr. Ruhlman expressed a desire for the Township to offer a better clarification to residents of what the renewal levy would fund and to define a timeline for the construction of a community center. Jennifer Christian wanted to remind everyone that the Township will be hosting a public meeting with residents on April 1st, 2010 and April 8th, 2010 at 7:00pm at Township Hall. The meetings shall be an opportunity for residents to provide input regarding future projects and to learn what projects have been completed or are underway. Chairperson Jennifer Christian thanked Mr. Ruhlman for his questions and encouraged him to help involve more residents.

Additional agenda items: None were proposed.

Preservation Parks/Big Run Preserve:

Jennifer Christian relayed information collected from Len Fisher's meeting with Ted Miller of Preservation Parks regarding the Big Run Preserve in Liberty Township. A map was distributed showing the park location. The park is scheduled to open in 2011.

Updates From MORPC Meeting:

Jennifer Christian passed along additional information that Len Fisher has continued meeting with neighboring municipalities such as Genoa Township, Galena, and Westerville. Dialogue is ongoing with these municipalities so that current and planned projects can be coordinated to develop a comprehensive trail system.

Discussion On Maintenance Level Of Trails (Plowing):

Beth Hugh reported that the Township had an inordinate amount of snow plowing in February that resulted in several trails being prioritized based on accessibility for plow equipment and estimated use by the public. Trails around Township Hall, North Orange Park, Ro Park, and Glen Oak Park were identified by Ms. Hugh as facilities that would see a Level 1 priority for plowing next year. Other facilities would be plowed after the completion of the Level 1 trails.

Michelle Eckels asked if the Township is currently planning on using a Gator to plow the trails or if a truck could be accommodated. Mr. Overturf responded that the pavement section of the trails are designed to accommodate trucks and emergency vehicles. Currently the Township uses Gators for plowing the trails.

Jennifer Christian relayed information from former Park Board member Brent Culver that Liberty Township currently does not have a policy regarding trail plowing. She also mentioned that Len Fisher suggested partial plowing of trails to allow for cross country skiing. Jennifer Christian asked if the Township could provide a statement regarding the plowing philosophy on the website. Michelle Eckels further inquired if status updates of plowing activities could be posted to the website. Currently, timeframes for plowing depend on the amount of snow and staff availability as trails are plowed only during regular shifts.

Discussion On Trail Markers:

Ms. Hugh had asked the Board to consider what type of trail markers or designations would be appropriate for the trail system. The Fire Department has expressed a desire to develop markings that would assist in emergency response situations. Jennifer Christian suggested having signs at main trail entrances detailing distances of trails to the next major trail intersection or park, and then marking each mile or half mile along the trail with some type of post or marker. Having sections of the trail system completed makes implementing a system difficult until the full system is built out.

Robert Quigley suggested looking at the full buildout of the trail system to develop a coherent, comprehensive system. Chris Masciola recommended using a color or shape system to help identify trails. Michael Couvreur stated that perhaps a combination of shapes and colors could be considered due to the large number of trails.

Ms. Hugh stated the Township would like to have such trail markers included in the costs of any new construction projects so that the Township does not have to install at a future time. Mr. Quigley suggested that removable plates could be considered for markers so that entire posts or other markers would not need removed or replaced as additional trails are constructed. Beth Hugh will look at an overall map and present suggestions for a system at a future meeting.

HOA Presentations:

Jennifer Christian prepared a handout for the upcoming public meetings on April 1st and April 8th. The meetings are intended to update residents on what is currently happening with the parks and trails in the system and to gather input for future projects. Each member of the Park Board will contact a handful of HOAs within the Township to help advertise the meeting and encourage the public to attend. If meetings with individual HOAs are needed, they can be scheduled separately. Chris Masciola requested an updated HOA contact list from Township staff and some type of formal invitation for distribution. Jennifer Christian agreed to assemble information for each Board member.

Any Operating Levy Fact Questions:

Michelle Eckels asked what would be the final cost for the renewal levy to property owners. Robert Quigley responded that according to the County Auditor's office, it would be \$45.80 per \$100,000 valuation per year. Mr. Quigley mentioned there might have been some discrepancy with what was printed in the newspaper at \$0.15 per \$100 valuation. Mr. Quigley will seek clarification of the costs for the Board.

Trustee Liaison Introduction & Report:

Robert Quigley updated the Board members that negotiations are ongoing with Suburban Natural Gas and with the Villages of Oak Creek to resolve impediments to further trail construction. The trustees have approved Phase II of Glen Oak Park to be advertised for bidding. Contracts for a pool management company and grass cutting services are still being examined. An evaluation study of a bridge crossing US 23 has recently been approved by the trustees as well.

Maintenance and Parks Director Report:

Beth Hugh reported that some tweaks are still occurring with the Glen Oak Park facilities. The Township would like to have a larger shelter area for more picnic tables on the rear of the restroom building and to accommodate more storage. Lawn care contracts and beverage contracts are slated to be finalized around April 2nd, 2010. The Township has been in negotiations with OYAA and hope to sign an agreement soon.

The pool will open on Saturday, May 29th, 2010. Some input has been received asking whether the pool could be opened on Friday, May 28th, 2010 but there are concerns about having available staff for an earlier opening.

Owners' Representative Report:

Scott Overturf was pleased to announce that the East Orange Road project will be advertised March 23rd, 2010. The bike trail alongside the road will be included as an alternate. Phase II of the Glen Oak Park project is going ahead as scheduled. Phase I is currently proceeding with construction. The Township is expecting to proceed on the rail trail from Orange Road to Lewis Center Road and Northpointe as soon as a couple of legal issues are cleared up with property owners and Suburban Natural Gas.

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. A motion to adjourn was made.
Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Jennifer Christian, Chairperson

Michelle Eckels, Vice-Chairman

Michael Couvreur, Secretary

Chris Masciola, Member

Len Fisher, Member

Attest: _____
_____, Secretary