

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

*February 25, 2008*

**CALL TO ORDER** – Comm. Spearing called a meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 8:41 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Comm. Spearing, Chairman, took roll call. Present: Commissioner Lisa Romaniello. Absent: Sam Valenza

Others: John Crawford, Assistant Township Manager; Catherine Harper, Township Solicitor; and Patrick Stasio, Director of Parks & Recreation Dept.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Comm. Spearing noted under the Library Board Report, he made comment that Richard Booth had been appointed a trustee and the Library Board discussed housekeeping issues pertaining to building and grounds and they would be submitted to David Dodies, which was missing from the minutes. The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting of January 22, 2008 were accepted into the record as amended.

**REPORTS:**

Parks & Recreation Monthly Dept.:

Mr. Stasio said in January, our maintenance crew rented a stump grinder to remove stumps in the parks. Katie Kohler, Recreation Program Coordinator has scheduled all of our summer programs and our summer flyer will be out soon.

Comm. Romaniello said \$20,000 was raised for security lighting for Boileau Park. Why hasn't that money been spent?

Mr. Stasio replied when the Historical Association provided that money to the Township; they submitted a plan, which did not meet Township code; however, the plan has been changed. He will ask permission to move forward with creating a bid package and advertisement of bids for that project.

Library Board:

Comm. Spearing reported that their Strategic Planning meeting was cancelled due to snow. The contractor did a good job with the demolition of properties behind the library.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Boileau Barn Repair Bid Specification:

Mr. Stasio said Arthur Adams, who is working with the Friends of Boileau, has put together a bid packet for review. They are looking for approval from the Township to go out for bid for the work contained in this packet.

Comm. Spearing said the committee approves advertising the bid specifications for this project.

Mr. Stasio said once the bids are received, he will review them and give his recommendation on who should be awarded the contract.

Solicitor Harper asked Mr. Adams, are the bid specs written in such a way that the Board could not do all of the work if it came in too expensive?

Mr. Adams replied no.

Nick Scull, 507 Inman Terrace, President of Friends of Boileau, said this item was to be decided whether it was an emergency repair or not; however, the shed portion of the barn is in danger of falling down and, as a result, we should not use the building. He still has not heard why this is not being considered as an emergency repair.

Comm. Spearing replied it was identified that there were too many risks involved for the Township to not go out to bid. The definition of “emergency” was vague.

Solicitor Harper added that the Township could be sued by people who want to bid and not given the opportunity. If the Board of Commissioners does not go out to bid as they are required by law; they are liable for criminal penalties.

Comm. Spearing said we will advertise the bid specifications for this project and this item should be removed from the agenda.

Rehabilitation of Cottage at Boileau Park:

Comm. Spearing asked about a lease for residential use, insurance, zoning, etc.

Solicitor Harper replied some municipalities rent out historic buildings for nominal rent if they promise to restore it. If the rent is taxable, the lease could say the tenant is responsible for an increase in taxes.

Comm. Spearing said the park is zoned RC-Recreational Conservancy and does not allow tenants.

Solicitor Harper said the Township could get zoning relief from the ZHB or add “caretaker” as a use to the RC zoning district as a permissible use.

Denis Hurley said it was discussed that it would take a sum of money to restore it and have it paid back in rent by a caretaker.

Comm. Spearing said the intent was to rehab the carriage house so it could generate income, and that is why these questions came up about whether it was permitted in the RC zoning.

Mr. Crawford said the insurance company, DVIT indicated from a risk management standpoint that they feel the building should be brought up to code and a written agreement with the tenant be entered into. If those two requirements are met, then it fulfills the risk management obligations.

Comm. Spearing asked what happens to the tenant on a “Community Day” in Boileau Park.

Mr. Scull replied they would have to be part of the event.

Comm. Romaniello said we need to know what the market rates are for renting a property like that.

Comm. Spearing said to move forward, we need some evaluation of value and we need to know how much work needs to be done and a value of income comparison.

Mr. Stasio suggested the Historical Association make a presentation to the Board.

Comm. Spearing said this item will remain on the agenda.

Dog Park Project:

Mr. Stasio said the Paw Prints Group approached the Board a few years ago to consider a dog park in Upper Moreland. At that time, the Board directed them to come up with about half of the cost for the project, which is about \$20,000, and they would consider it. They have about \$16,000 in their account and they have in writing that they will receive another \$5,000 so they have \$21,000.

Judy Lamb, Paw Prints Dog Owners Group, asked the Township to consider a dog park in War Memorial Park. This location would be big enough for a large and small dog park and this park has ample parking located away from the major thoroughfare of Mill Road, therefore, making it a less intrusive environment for dogs and their owners. The increase of people using the park will decrease vandalism that has occurred in this park.

Comm. Spearing agreed to move for action the consideration of a dog park at War Memorial Park, but we cannot do that without a plan.

Mr. Stasio said McCloskey & Faber could design the dog park plan.

Mr. Crawford said when a proposal is completed by the consultant, it should then be moved to the full Board for action.

Comm. Spearing asked where would the dog park be placed in that park?

Mr. Stasio replied the current plan for War Memorial Park has a driveway that passes the roller hockey rink and turnaround loop and the dog park would go in that area or north of that area.

Comm. Spearing asked for any public comments.

Charlie Acker asked would the location for the dog park be past the skating rink?

Mr. Stasio replied yes.

Mr. Acker said the Township, County and the War Memorial Park Association need to agree on a dog park.

Permission to Prepare and Proceed to Bid for Security Lighting at Boileau Park:

Mr. Stasio said the cost to prepare the bid specs will be about \$1,000, and he asked the committee for permission to meet with our electrical engineer to develop those specs.

Comm. Spearing said we will move for action to authorize Mr. Stasio to have the bid specs prepared in an amount of \$1,000 at the next Regular Board meeting.

Army Request to Use Mill Creek Park for Staging Area in an Emergency:

Comm. Spearing said he was concerned how we would put all of the emergency needs for the Naval Air Station at one location. It was determined that it is a request for a insignificant amount of people to meet there and there are other locations that surround the complex so that in the event of an emergency this would be one of many satellite locations.

Mr. Stasio said the Army asked that we consider this for emergency use only and he recommends approval.

PRAC attendance and recommendation:

Comm. Spearing said the PRAC will meet and discuss the bylaws of the PRAC and consider amending them. This item will be continued until the April Parks & Recreation Committee meeting because the PRAC does not meet until March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Parks & Recreation Advisory Council Restructuring:

Comm. Spearing said this item will be continued until the April Parks & Recreation Committee meeting.

**OTHER PARKS & RECREATION ITEMS:**

Director requesting permission to begin the process for Capital Improvements for:

Picnic Pavillion replacement at Masons Mill Park –

Mr. Stasio said the picnic pavilion at Masons Mill Park will be about \$25,000 (budget was \$35,000), and the construction will be about \$8,000, which are preliminary estimates. He asked the committee to move for action by the full Board for permission to proceed with that project.

Convert Masons Mill Park to Public Water and Sewer –

Mr. Stasio said that Mr. Chambers indicated that it will cost about \$10,000 for the plan and survey of this project. He asked for permission to direct Mr. Chambers to develop the plan, survey the area and prepare the bid specs. This is an \$85,000 project.

Comm. Spearing said it was discussed that the Township will get a free sewer hookup with the Bryn Athens' interceptor.

Mr. Stasio replied he does not know for sure, but we are hoping for it. He will not discuss it with members of Bryn Athens until the Board approves the project, but he believes there will be a sewer tie-in fee.

Additional Parking Lot at Mason Mill Park –

Mr. Stasio said this was an approved project for \$45,000, and we will do it in-house. McCloskey & Faber will do the plan for a cost of \$5,000, and this project will not have to go out for bid.

Light the Second Softball Field at Masons Mill Park –

Mr. Stasio asked for permission from the Board to move forward with the approved project for Masons Mill Park to light the second softball field. Ron Smith indicated his work on this project will cost between \$3,000-\$5,000 to prepare the bid specs, determine where the lights go and the level of lighting, etc. This is a budgeted project for \$50,000, and there are grant opportunities that would help fund this project.

Comm. Romaniello said we will move these items for action by the full Board at the next Regular meeting.

**VISITOR COMMENTS:**

David Robertson, Executive Director of the Pennypack Trust, said this evening he is representing the Pennypack Greenway Partnership, which is an organization working to expand and improve the greenway that exists along the Pennypack Creek corridor.

We are proposing a trail as part of the War Memorial Park that would connect with the County's trail and the Pennypack greenway. He provided maps to the Board. The County has plans for trails in the southeastern part of the county including Upper Moreland Township. There is another trail proposed that would link downtown Willow Grove with the cross-county trail.

The reason that the Pennypack Greenway Partnership got involved in this is that we are an organization that was approached by the National Park Service and they have a trail-planning unit that helps municipalities with trail planning. The National Park Service offered to provide two weeks worth of service to help with trail planning to link the cross-county trail with downtown Willow Grove through War Memorial Park.

Comm. Spearing asked would the consultant make recommendations about the surface as well as the layout of the path?

Mr. Robertson replied no, the consultant would make suggestions as to where to place the trail and work with the community to gain their support.

Comm. Spearing asked how was the concept of the trail to be across the school's property?

Mr. Robertson replied Mr. Stasio spoke to the School District, and they are willing to consider a trail across school property.

Comm. Spearing said the timing is perfect as the school property is under construction now and War Memorial Park Drive will be under construction. This is a win-win for the community. Is there a timing issue in working with this consultant?

Mr. Robertson replied she has two weeks that she can devote to this project so the money has to be spent by the end of the current Federal fiscal year so until the end of the September.

Comm. Romaniello said she is in favor of it as well.

Solicitor Harper asked for a resolution from Mr. Robertson for the Board of Commissioners to endorse.

Mr. Robertson replied he does not have a resolution; however, he would like a letter of support that endorses this concept from the Board of Commissioners.

Kip McFtridge, said he is representing the Willow Grove Chamber of Commerce this evening and presented photos and a plan by McCloskey & Faber. We have two contractors that are willing to, at their cost, bring in equipment to rake out the area for the Township. There is a tree company who is willing to help as well. We want to present a proposal to the Parks & Recreation Dept. for War Memorial Park to have an agreement of a pricing schedule. We can do all the site work and excavation and the Township would be responsible for stone and blacktop. There is grant money available that we can apply for. We are willing to clean up the area and work with the Parks & Recreation Dept. to help the Township with this pathway.

Comm. Spearing said our open space allotment allows the Township to use it for land development and trails. He wants to be sure there are available funds because the Township allocated our balance towards the acquisition of property on Masons Mill Road and, any money in excess, could be used towards this project.

Mr. Robertson replied he does not anticipate that the Pennypack Trust will need all of the remaining funds that the County has allocated to the Township for that acquisition. There may be \$200,000 left that could be contributed towards this project.

Comm. Romaniello thanked Mr. Robertson for this opportunity.

Comm. Spearing asked for any public comments.

Jonathan deJonge, commented that the Township should not delay on this issue as it is an excellent idea.

Nick Scull said in 2002, the Board adopted a plan for Boileau Park, which includes walkways, bridges, etc. If there is an extra \$200,000, he asked for some of it to be considered for Boileau.

Comm. Romaniello asked Mr. Stasio for a list of trails that were already planned and construction costs associated with them.

Mr. Stasio replied it costs \$30,000 to do a comprehensive trail study which would connect all of our parks and add trails to them.

Comm. Spearing said we will move for action a letter of support for the trail concept to the full Board at the next Regular meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Elizabeth Vile

