

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

April 28, 2008

CALL TO ORDER – Commissioner Spearing called a meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 9:51 p.m.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS HELD FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

ROLL CALL – Commissioner Spearing, Chairman took roll call. Present: Commissioners Samuel Valenza and Lisa Romaniello.

Others: David A. Dodies, Township Manager, and Patrick Stasio, Director of Parks & Recreation Department.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Spearing accepted the minutes of the March 17, 2008 Parks & Recreation Committee meeting into the record as submitted.

REPORTS:

Parks & Recreation Monthly Department Report:

Mr. Stasio commented that Katie Kohler, Recreation Coordinator, has been working hard planning all of the summer activities. Camp registration has already taken place.

Commissioner Spearing asked about the Parks & Recreation Advisory Minutes. Mr. Stasio reminded Commissioner Spearing that all of the Commissioners receive a tentative copy of minutes until they are ratified by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Council at their next meeting which is scheduled in May.

Library Board Report:

Commissioner Spearing noted that the Library Board has been quite active. There was a legislative breakfast last Friday which was well attended and they are going to secure funding for libraries across the state. They are also working on a strategic plan. The last plan has not been updated for ten years and it is time to renew it. Also, there was a Library Board Convention which Commissioner Spearing is awaiting a report.

The Friends of the Library are selling bricks and Commissioner Spearing encourages everyone to support their library by purchasing a brick.

OLD BUSINESS:

Boileau Barn Repair Bid

The Bid for Stabilization is out for bid and will be opened on May 13. Patrick Stasio noted that seven contractors picked up the bid specifications.

Friends Carriage House Restoration Proposal

Nick Scull, President of the Friends of Boileau, reported that he spoke to Bob Mathers, Broker, RHM Real Estate Inc. regarding his estimation of how much income a two-bedroom apartment, such as the Boileau Farmstead Carriage House, may generate. His estimation was \$1,000 a month.

Nick Scull added that there have been some changes. Earlier in the year, he received a verbal commitment from the Board to match a preservation grant. After exploring the grant and talking with Pat Stasio, he realized that he needed more advice from the Historical Commission as to how to write the grant. He also discovered that a historic structure report must be submitted first. Mr. Scull has been pursuing Representative Tom Murt and Senator Greenleaf for grant money. Senator Greenleaf has encouraged Mr. Scull to apply for \$10,000.00 and Representative Murt has encouraged Mr. Scull to apply for \$15,000.00. He is hopeful that this October-November he will have \$25,000 in the pipeline for this project.

The next step would be to get the historic structure report done. Under the circumstances, Mr. Skull would like to withdraw this proposal from the agenda until the historic structure report has been completed.

He believes that he needs professional help in order to write this grant and he would like the Township to pursue these grants.

Mr. Stasio noted that he had spoken with Nick Scull about the grant opportunities and they must be individually submitted. The historical report must be done first in order to move forward for some bigger money, however, it was not discussed as to who would be applying for the grant. Mr. Stasio has written grants for various groups in the past. He also stated that he will work with Mr. Scull to complete this grant application. The deadline is December 1, 2008.

The planning grants are in the maximum amount of \$15,000 and Friends would have to match half of that. Mr. Scull hopes that the contributions from DCED will be more than the Township's match and he intends to apply that money to stabilize the barn. What

they do not put into matching the planning grant, he will put towards getting the oil tanks out of the building and other important items.

Mr. Scull will have an update at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Valenza asked what dollar amount Mr. Scull is seeking from the Township. Mr. Scull replied that at this point he is withdrawing his request of earlier this year for money to match a preservation grant since that will not happen this year.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Efkwitz asked whether the planning grant was to show the state that the property is historical. Nicholas Scull replied that that was not the case. The state already recognizes that the property is historical and it is numbered as such on a state list of historical properties. Commissioner Efkwitz commented that she was a little disappointed after she read the letters that went out to Senator Greenleaf and State Representative Tom Murt. How many times can we go back to that well and ask for money to rehabilitate, renovate and save these failing structures. Last November the discussion in Committee was if the Friends of Boileau could raise a certain amount of dollars, the Township would match that money. Commissioner Efkwitz' thought was if the Friends could raise \$50,000 that would show her that the community was behind saving, renovating and reusing these buildings. She was not including requesting these amounts of money from government. She was under the impression that money would be raised from the members and community as in the sports clubs, PAW prints, etc. She did not know that it would be to go back to the same well to ask for money. Although she sees it as very commendable for Senator Greenleaf and State Representative Murt to find ways to provide monies for this cause, she would personally like to see it come from the community as a true and vested interest in wanting to see these buildings rehabilitated. Commissioner Efkwitz does not believe that anything that we do there will have a financial return for the community.

Mr. Scull responded that Senator Greenleaf and Representative Murt have given us over \$38,000 in the last year. Some of that money came from the Historical Association but most of it was through the efforts of the Boileau organization.

Commissioner Efkwitz reminded the Friends of Boileau that the structures would have been gone long ago if the Friends of Boileau and the Historic Association did not gather together and ask that the opportunity be given them to raise the money necessary to save these buildings and the Board of Commissioners have done that. The buildings were only saved because they were begged to do so and promised that the bulk of the work would be done by Friends and the Historical Association, however, year after year it gets bigger and bigger and additional money is asked for.

Commissioner Romaniello stated that this is a long-term project and she appreciates the help from our state leadership who recognizes the big hurdles in getting projects like this off the ground and are willing to help organizations that they believe in.

Dog Park Project:

Pat Stasio, Director of Parks & Recreation stated that funds are in place for dog park. The only question that remains is the location. There are three viable locations, two of which are at Mill Creek Park, 1) where the existing play ground is; and 2) across the creek on the far side which would be nearest the turnpike property where there are very few trees to clear, and permission would have to be gained to build a bridge to cross the creek. The third place is at War Memorial Park. He is waiting for a decision as to where to locate dog park.

Commissioner Spearing asked if dog park were to go in at Mill Creek, do the plans include moving the playground equipment to Bonnet Lane. Pat Stasio confirmed. Commissioner Spearing also asked if it were to go in at War Memorial Park, would there be expensive tree clearing. Pat Stasio confirmed. Commissioner Spearing said that he was in favor of the alternative site in Mill Creek Park closer to the turnpike.

Commissioner Romaniello asked what the cost difference would be. Pat Stasio said that if it were to be moved to War Memorial Park, new plans would have to be drawn up but he did not foresee it being a lot more costly. PAW prints would like the Board to consider War Memorial Park. Commissioner Romaniello stated that she would then be in favor of War Memorial Park. Commissioner Spearing visited a few other dog parks and they intentional chose to be on the outskirts of town, not in the middle of town.

Commissioner Romaniello said there are dog parks in the center of town, for example in Manhattan. People can then walk to the dog park with their dogs rather than put their dog in a car and drive them to a park. More people would then use the park.

Pat Stasio said if it were to go into Mill Creek Park, trees would not have to be removed. There is a nice natural buffer away from houses but visible from the road to attract visitors. Both locations would be nice, however, the easier location would be opposite creek side at Mill Creek Park.

Commissioner Hotchkiss said some of the concerns he heard from residents of Ward 5 are the safety of the cars pulling in and out of the lot at Mill Creek Park. There is not much parking. Pat Stasio commented that part of the plan is to improve parking at the entrance and exit and making the existing basket ball court the parking lot. There will be enough parking for 15-20 cars, however, it is still a high speed road around a curved area.

Commissioner Spearing said he will put it on the agenda for the full Board to approve for Mill Creek Park. Commissioner Spearing added that there could be a problem getting a DEP permit. Pat Stasio said if the Board approves the location, then they can go forward with a granting process and if there are any hiccups, he will report them.

Public Comments

Dennis Hurley, a resident, said either location is dangerous to walk to.

Commissioner McKenna commented that he thought that the project was budgeted at \$15,000. He wants to know when it went from \$15,000 to \$40,000. David Dodies, Township Manager, responded that it was 20/20, \$20,000 from the Township and a \$20,000 grant from PAW's.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Council Restructuring

Pat Stasio commented that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Council discussed their membership regarding their attendance, specifically, maintaining a quorum. The recommendation of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Council is that each Commissioner appoint one representative to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Council for a total of seven (7) and then appoint eight (8) at-large members which would keep the membership at fifteen (15). Mr. Stasio also commented that they have a quorum issue because there are several members who do not participate fully. It would be those people who would be replaced.

Commissioner Spearing said he would move this recommendation to the full Board. The Solicitor, Kate Harper, will check whether it is an ordinance or resolution that is needed.

Commissioner Romaniello asked whether there was a clear line with the number of volunteers compared to the number of members. Pat Stasio replied that there are twelve members who attend pretty consistently. Out of those twelve members, three or four may not be able to make it on any particular night. There are three members who do not attend the meetings.

Public Comments

There were none.

War Memorial Park Trail

Pat Stasio commented that they were unsuccessful in their attempt to receive a grant for a national park and recreational planner to do the trail. Pat Stasio asked Jim Faber from McCloskey and Faber to get some numbers together to put a plan together. Between his efforts and John Chambers' surveying work, including other drainage issues that need to

be in place, the tentative number is upwards of \$20,000 to do the plan. After a plan is in place, you may apply to the county for bricks and mortar work in the amount of \$150,000, or more, and is a recommendation that he suggests. This requested money is not budgeted. The information came from Mr. McFatridge in February or thereabouts. The County will not assist us in planning the trail, however, they will assist with building the trail.

Commissioner Spearing asked whether this trail was in conjunction with the trail across the high school property down to Terwood Road. Pat Stasio responded that there were two issues at the same time; Mr. McFatridge coming forward with the War Memorial Park Trail and, at the same time, a cross county connection trail. This trail is specifically within Upper Moreland Township, has the support of the police department, will serve as a security access for the police maintenance access for the Township and it will be a walking trail for the residents. It will connect down town Willow Grove out to Brook Street.

Commissioner Romaniello asked how much is the overall Township trail that you want to do at the end of the year. Pat Stasio replied that it looks like it will be in the \$35,000 range to do an overall trail plan. The overall trail plan will be a blueprint to where trails can go through the Township but there will be no construction documents with that.

Commissioner Romaniello asked Pat Stasio if he could shift projects around in order that we could take this project on now. Pat Stasio said that all of the budgeted projects have already been started.

David Dodies suggested that Pat Stasio get the details and bring them back to the committee next month so that the committee can see where the funding is coming from, what is needed and time length, etc.

Commissioner Valenza said he does not want to lose the volunteers who are able to do this work on their off time and does not want to lose the \$100,000 worth of free services.

Kip McFatridge commented that you are spending 2.5 million dollars to go nowhere with a road into War Memorial Park. His goal is to clean up War Memorial Park. After speaking with several people from the Willow Grove Chamber, volunteers offered to help clean up at their cost. The police would like a road to cut through to travel on to police the park. Two contractors from the chamber offered to help. One is Ed Dudlik from Dudlik construction.

Commissioner Romaniello commented that if they are going to spend \$20,000, they need some assurances as to what services will be provided.

Kip McFatridge will ask the contractors if they would put in writing as to what they are willing to do. Commissioner Valenza asked what amount would the Township have to

pay? Kip McFatridge said the labor, grading, etc. but it would not include the product, such as black top, limestone or whatever is chosen. Pat Stasio added that the product would be applied to the county funding.

Pat Stasio will get all of this information to the Board for discussion at the next committee meeting.

Boileau Security Lighting Bid Project

Pat Stasio commented that there were six bid specs given out for the security lighting project.

Consideration of Movement of Play Equipment in Mill Creek Park

Commissioner Spearing stated that that item was already discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Kip McFatridge commented that Sunday, May 4, 2008 is Willow Grove Community Day and he would like to invite everyone from the Township. It is from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at Mason Mills Park.

Commissioner Spearing added that Boileau Festival Day is Saturday, May 3, 2008 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

OTHER PARKS & RECREATION ITEMS:

Summer Registration

Pat Stasio commented that the summer programs and supervised playground are sessions B and C which are grades 4 and 5 and that program is full. The 6th through 8th grade program is full. The only openings are for 2nd and 3rd grade programs. The new teen camp that was started this year is doing very well with registrations, which is consistently the toughest group to get involved in activities.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Romaniello commented that earlier it was mentioned whether we would ever get any money back from Boileau. There are lots of investments made in the Township for the good of the community. She also commented that there are a lot of homes in Ward 3 along 263 in tight neighborhoods that would have access to War Memorial Park by foot. It was discussed earlier that it would be too dangerous to cross 263. If people were to drive to the parks, there would be physically more room at War Memorial Park.

Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting

April 28, 2008

ADJOURNMENT: 10:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Heinemann