

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

*May 21, 2007*

**CALL TO ORDER** – Comm. Crilly, President of the Board of Commissioners called a meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**A MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION WAS FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

There were no presentations or announcements at this time.

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE:**

**CALL TO ORDER** – Comm. Efkwitz called the meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee to order at 7:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL** – Comm. Efkwitz, Chairperson took roll call. Present: Commissioners Lisa Romaniello and Richard Booth.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Correction:

Page 3, Paragraph 7, should read as follows: He invited all of the Commissioners to come out on April 26<sup>th</sup> when Senator Greenleaf will present us with a check for \$5,000 for the festival.

Comm. Efkwitz accepted the minutes of the April 9, 2007 Parks & Recreation Committee meeting into the record as amended.

**REPORTS:**

There were no reports of the Parks & Recreation Monthly Dept., PRAC, and the Library Board.

Comm. Romaniello asked for a list of attendance by the PRAC members for the meetings of the past 12 months.

Mr. Stasio said he will forward it tomorrow.

Friends of Bolieau:

Nick Scull said we had a successful festival on May 5<sup>th</sup> with about 300-500 people in attendance. We sold 38 T-shirts, 44 booklets and we received 22 new members, which brings our total to 58. Overall it was a success.

Comm. Efkowitz asked how much money was raised that day?

Mr. Scull replied close to \$1,000.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan:

Comm. Efkowitz said we received a copy of the draft of the Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan. Pages 37- 44 include the suggested timeline and the costs to implement it. Will there be any changes to the draft?

Mr. Stasio replied he feels there will be some minor changes.

Comm. Efkowitz said there is a Steering Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. that is open to the public to discuss this draft.

Mr. Stasio noted that meeting was changed to Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> because there was a conflict with our consultant, and that meeting will be held upstairs in our Township building.

Comm. Efkowitz asked for it to be on TV1.

Mr. Stasio agreed.

Comm. Romaniello said in the back of the plan are the key findings that provide insight to the needs of areas of the community where we haven't met. 83% of the residents, who live in Upper Moreland walk and jog and the walking trails are the least expensive to implement, but one of the most appreciated uses in our parks.

Mr. Stasio said several of our parks have walking trails, but we don't have connections from park to park. One of the recommendations is to do a trails master plan study from park to park.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Request to eliminate pathway from Brooks to Warren Street:

Comm. Efkowitz said we have a request from some neighbors to eliminate the pathway, which tends to attract a lot of garbage and unwanted behavior. The idea is to give the neighbors the pathway as part of their property, and how that will be done will be up to the Board.

Scott Toth, 210 Brooks Street, said he put the initial request in. It is a pathway for the children to get to school. When he moved in, it was unclear to him who was responsible for maintaining the property; however, the neighbors maintain it. He has learned that the Township has some responsibility to maintain it as well, and it is not being kept up. After the school closed, we have seen less positive activity happening on the pathway. Two of his neighbors installed 6 ft. fences because they do not want to deal with the pathway.

Comm. Efkowitz said it has turned into a cut-through through neighbors' backyards.

Comm. Booth said we need to decide whether to get rid of the path or maintain it.

Mr. Stasio said he spoke with the representatives of the School District and they want to keep the pathway because it is used for a bus stop at Cold Spring. We do maintain it in the winter to remove ice/snow from it; however, in the summer, there has been an unwritten agreement that the neighbors maintain it. He would be happy to send a crew there once a week to clean it up as well as mow the grass on each side. If we can preserve and maintain it for the neighbors possibly that would be a good first step.

Comm. Efkowitz asked with the demolition of Cold Spring Elementary School coming this summer; will it still be used for a bus stop?

Lt. Levy replied right now the path is used by the middle school kids and the high school kids. The bus stop will remain and we will increase patrol in that area. We would rather have kids walk down that path than under a bridge.

Comm. Booth asked will the Cold Spring playground remain?

Mr. Stasio replied there are two playgrounds at Cold Spring. There is one to the right of the school from Brooks Street, which will be removed and the one behind the school will remain.

Comm. Booth said possibly kids will walk that path to get to the playground too.

Comm. Romaniello said Mr. Toth indicated there is not much activity on the pathway since they closed Cold Spring.

Mr. Toth said there is not much activity from the younger kids, but he sees a lot of the older kids hanging out there.

Mr. Stasio recommended that Mr. Toth call him when there is any debris that needs to be cleaned up and call the police when he sees unwanted activity going on. He also suggested that he and Mr. Snyder meet with the neighbors to discuss solutions.

Comm. Efkowitz removed this item from the agenda.

Boileau Field Expansion Award:

Mr. Stasio said we received bids for the Phase I construction, which includes parking area improvements, expanded fields, landscaping improvements, roadway modifications and a detention basin. We received 10 general contract bids and four irrigation bids. He recommends proceeding with Bedrock Construction for an amount of 234,880.00 and with Jones Turf Management for the irrigation contract in the amount of 19,465.00, for a total project cost of \$254,345. This amount is \$54,345 higher than the budgeted amount.

Comm. Romaniello said she has concerns about this. The construction drawings cost \$13,000-\$14,000 so we are really looking at \$269,000 and \$70,000 over budget. She asked what items can be done this year and put the rest of it in next year's budget.

Mr. Stasio replied he added more landscaping to the original plan so headlights will not affect the neighbors.

Comm. Romaniello asked how many parking spaces will be in the front parking lot?

Mr. Stasio replied 68 parking spaces. We added one-third more parking than what the original plan had.

Comm. Romaniello suggested putting reserved parking spaces in next year's budget.

Mr. Stasio replied the Friends of Boileau asked for enough parking to hold large events.

Comm. Romaniello said the parking belongs behind the building and on the other side of the soccer field.

Mr. Stasio said it will difficult to put parking on the other side of the soccer field because of the wetlands and flood plain. Since bids have been received, can the amount of parking be changed at this point?

Solicitor Kerns replied yes, a change order is required for jobs that were bid out as long as they are not substantial.

Comm. Romaniello said this should be brought back to committee so we can discuss getting closer to the true budget of what was allocated for this project.

Comm. Booth asked Mr. Stasio if he spoke to Mr. Dodies about the budget overage.

Mr. Stasio replied yes, and he said to bring it before the Board.

Mr. Crawford said the money will come from the Capital Reserve fund. We don't want to re-bid this project. If the Board agrees that this project has merit, the budget problems can be worked out. It will be \$70,000 over this year and possibly more next year. There are undesignated funds in the capital reserve that can be used for this project.

Comm. Booth suggested working on getting these amounts decreased, but we don't want to delay this project. He asked about landscaping.

Mr. Stasio said we removed landscaped islands in the parking lot and we removed bollards; however, we feel we can do that work in-house. We also altered the paving of the parking lot.

Comm. Romaniello asked is that pervious or impervious?

Mr. Stasio replied asphalt is an impervious surface.

Comm. Romaniello asked about stone.

Mr. Stasio replied stone tends to migrate under fields and grass areas where we mow. We want to pave the parking lot, which we can do in-house.

Comm. Romaniello asked by using asphalt are we contributing to stormwater?

Mr. Stasio replied that is the reason for the basin.

Comm. Booth said out of the \$279,980, the bollards and paved lot was deducted and the drainage under the field was added in and that totals \$234,880.

Mr. Stasio replied that amount does include the landscape islands. We are deducting #2 and #4 and adding #5 alternates to the plan.

Comm. Booth asked can \$22,000 from the escrow fund for parks be used for landscaping?

Mr. Stasio replied yes.

Comm. Romaniello said the total amount in that escrow fund is \$37,000 and she does not feel we should take half of it.

Mr. Stasio replied it is a landscaping account for companies that build and do not have enough landscaping so they make a donation.

Comm. Romaniello asked could the landscaping portion of this project be put into the 2008 budget.

Mr. Stasio replied yes. The park will not be open until fall of 2008.

Comm. Booth suggested taking \$22,000 out of the escrow fund for fees-in-lieu of open space, which that amount is \$37,500. He asked Mr. Crawford if that is feasible.

Mr. Crawford replied it can be done that way.

Comm. Romaniello said in other Townships they have Shade Tree Commissions and they use that money to plant trees along their main streets and thoroughfares.

Comm. Efkowitz said we are only cutting the fund in half, and each year a developer comes before the Board with a plan and contributes a fee-in- lieu of. She asked Comm. Romaniello if she is concerned we will not have enough for revitalization.

Comm. Romaniello replied she is concerned about taking so much out of a fund without knowing how it will impact the Township. Does a decision need to be made tonight?

Mr. Stasio replied yes, he recommends proceeding with the project and it is over budget; however, we have funds elsewhere that can be used for it.

Comm. Hotchkiss commented the landscaping should remain because we made a commitment to the residents along that tract of land.

Comm. Efkowitz said it can be delayed because the park will not be fully operational until next year.

Comm. Booth suggested moving this for action with the provision of taking \$22,000 from the in-lieu-of open space fund.

Comm. Romaniello said we should bring this back to committee and look at it further. There are pressing needs regarding the Township's situation this year and we may be getting into litigation.

Comm. Efkowitz said we are only \$34,000 over budget for this project. We have been discussing this project for most of this year and we knew that it would likely be over budget since it had been delayed.

Comm. Romaniello said she did not know that.

Comm. Efkowitz said by reducing certain items on the plan and by utilizing the money that is set aside for this purpose we can reduce the bid and we are only \$30,000 over.

Comm. Romaniello asked that 30% of the parking be put into reserve and stay true to the Master Plan.

Comm. Booth referred to Page 5 of the minutes of last month in which Mr. Stasio said, "The bids came in under general construction excluding irrigation between \$269,000 and \$486,000. To pave the parking lot, the cost will be \$50,000...." We knew last month that this project was well over budget.

Comm. Romaniello said it is our duty and responsibility to make sure we come close to budget.

Comm. Efkowitz said we should move this item to the full Board to accept the bid. If it fails in June, it will go back to committee and Mr. Stasio will have to restart the project. We knew for months that this was the Phase we wanted to complete, but we knew in 2006, that we would be over budget and went into 2007 not knowing the amount. We know now. Should we scrap the project and send it back to be re-bid?

Comm. Romaniello replied we should not scrap the project. It is an important project to our community, and this is Phase I of the entire park that will benefit all the people who live here.

Comm. Booth said move it for action and let the full Board decide.

Comm. Efkowitz moved to accept Bedrock Construction's total bid of \$279,980 less \$22,000 in landscaping, which will come from the fee-in-lieu-of fund, less \$35,500 for bollards, less the paved parking lot in the amount of \$32,600 for action at our next Regular Board meeting. She moved to accept the Jones Turf Management bid in the amount of \$19,465 for irrigation for action at our next Regular Board meeting.

Public Comments:

Charlie Acker, Grant Avenue, said if we scrutinized revitalization like we do in the recreation department maybe we would save some money. This park is a positive thing and if we don't do it now; it will only get more expensive.

Nick Scull, 507 Inmann Terrace, said he is speaking for the Friends of Boileau and he hopes the full Board will pass this because any improvement to the park will improve the preservation of the building.

Permission for use of Boileau Farmstead for a Farmer's Market:

Comm. Efkowitz noted that this fantastic idea came from Jonathan de Jonge and she asked him to speak on it.

Mr. de Jonge said this might be an opportunity to raise funds. The Board needs to decide whether it is a permitted use; however, it would be a good use for the property and benefit the farmers.

Comm. Efkowitz asked Solicitor Kerns, would the ZHB have to approve this if the Board of Commissioners agrees to it.

Solicitor Kerns said he does not know what this property is zoned, but the Board can amend the zoning code to allow it.

Comm. Efkowitz said if we do not want to amend the zoning code, just use it for a temporary use.

Solicitor Kerns said that would be a temporary use permit if it is used more than once or twice a year.

Mr. Crawford asked if this is a for-profit event, would that become a tax situation.

Solicitor Kerns replied let's start with the zoning issue first. We need to know who will operate it, why it will be operated and for whose benefit.

Comm. Booth asked would Boileau Park be able to accommodate an event like this?

Mr. Stasio replied he is sure we can find a location for it.

Comm. Efkowitz asked the Friends of Boileau to discuss with their members how it would be presented and to work out the details. The committee needs to decide whether we want to see RC properties across the Township have the ability to have a sale and add that to the zoning code or do we want to make a special exception for the Boileau Farmstead.

Comm. Booth said we will wait and see what the Friends of Boileau comes up with.

Comm. Efkowitz said this item will be removed from the agenda.

Acquisition of Open Space Application to Montgomery County Open Space Program for Grant:

Comm. Booth introduced Dr. David Robertson from the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust to discuss the Lord's New Church Protection Project.

Mr. Robertson gave out information to the Board to review along with a map of parcels that the Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust (PERT) holds a conservation easement on. They are privately owned, but protected from further development. The Lord's New Church is partially in Upper Moreland Township and Bryn Athyn Borough. Our master plan identified properties that we want to preserve in the future. We are working on an agreement with Lord's New Church about portions of that property we want to retain and portions they are willing to preserve in perpetuity. There is 36 acres they are willing to preserve in one form or the other. The first 12 acres in Upper Moreland at the corner of Mason's Mill Road and Huntingdon Road will be a conservation easement, a public access will be provided and we will create trails on that property. There are 12 acres in Bryn Athyn that will be a conservation easement with public access and trails and it will be contiguous with other property along the creek. There are another 12 acres in Bryn Athyn located on Mason's Mill Road that PERT would like to buy out right and use our own funds to purchase it with the idea that we may want to move our Visitor Center to that location.

The project benefits are as follows:

- Upper Moreland residents will have recreational access to 12 more acres in Upper Moreland; 36 more acres altogether.
- Project provides open space in Upper Moreland with no additional maintenance costs
- Project eliminates potential for additional housing; no additional burden on schools, no additional municipal services.
- Zoned Institutional; currently exempt from property taxes; project will not further reduce property tax revenues by removing land from the tax rolls.
- Pennypack makes its property available to all residents, members or not; all Upper Moreland residents can use the property free of charge.

The benefits of making a joint application are as follows:

- Joint application (Upper Moreland, Bryn Athyn, Pennypack Trust) requires only 10% matching funds and PERT will pay the 10%.
- Pennypack Trust will provide required matching funds; no funding required from Upper Moreland

Municipal Grant Details:

- Upper Moreland municipal grant allocation remaining: \$845,000
- Municipal allocation must be used by April 2008 or is forfeited

Comm. Booth asked how much open space money will we ask for?

Mr. Robertson replied the negotiations with the Lord's New Church is \$845,000 for that piece of property so we could use \$800,000 less 10% so \$720,000 or so.

Comm. Efkowitz asked when is a signature required from the Board?

Mr. Robertson replied this is just informational at this time as we have not completed the negotiations with the church yet.

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

**OTHER PARKS & RECREATION ITEMS:**

Comm. Efkowitz said we received a request from a high school senior who is working on a graduation project and would like to have a concert at Mason's Mill Park with 5-6 bands playing rock music using their own equipment and they need electricity. Also they would like to have a barbeque at this event and would supply all the food and beverages. They want to donate any proceeds to Woody's Circle of Care Foundation, which is a non-profit charity whose main focus is to help families in need.

This has come in too late in the month, and our Director of Parks & Recreation has recommended that this is not an event that we want to hold at this time.

Mr. Stasio said there are too many details to be worked out and it was asked for late in the month. It can be considered for a future date as long as the request comes in early enough.

Comm. Romaniello said the youth has a lot of wonderful energy and we should harness it. She would encourage them to come back next year.

Comm. Efkowitz said Mr. Scull had mentioned that he made a few contacts with contractors and electricians at the festival. She asked Mr. Crawford to make sure the releases are signed if anyone wants to look at the property at Boileau Park.

We will be entering our budget season soon and asked Mr. Stasio to contact representatives for the Dog Park project to see if they are interested in making a presentation to the Board of Commissioners over the summer.

**VISITOR COMMENTS:**

Charlie Acker said no one knows what is going on with redevelopment.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Comm. Romaniello asked was a meeting held between the Township and the School District over the past month.

Comm. Efkowitz replied yes, regarding field space and there is a concerted effort to coordinate the scheduling of all athletic fields and space in the Township.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Elizabeth Vile

