

**UPPER MORELAND TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

*July 9, 2007*

**CALL TO ORDER** – Comm. Crilly called a meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:05 p.m.

**A MOMENT OF SILENCE WAS FOLLOWED BY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

There were none.

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE:**

**CALL TO ORDER** - Comm. Efkowitz called a meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Board of Commissioners of Upper Moreland Township to order at 7:06 p.m.

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

Others: David Dodies, Township Manager, Robert Kerns, Township Solicitor, and Patrick Stasio, Director of Parks & Recreation Dept.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Comm. Efkowitz noted that a court reporter took the minutes of the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting and there are some things incorrect. Mr. Scull's name was spelled incorrectly and needs to be changed throughout the minutes. Page 11, Line 20 – Comm. Efkowitz said so if you have the opportunity to drop by the library on *June 15<sup>th</sup>* between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Page 14, Line 23 – should say *Commissioner's* act.

Comm. Efkowitz submitted the minutes of the June 11, 2007 into the record as amended.

**REPORTS:**

There was no report of the Parks & Recreation Monthly Dept., and no minutes of the PRAC as there was no meeting in June.

Library Board Report:

Comm. Booth said we met on June 13<sup>th</sup>, and the new Library Director indicated that she attended the Tri-County workshop and realized the duties and responsibilities of her staff and made some changes in administration. Two of her staff members are out due to serious illness. The Board discussed replacing a photo copier and will interview companies and will also be interviewing for a new cleaning company for the library. Two months of bills were approved, and they had a Fund Raiser at Kremp's Florist where 15-16 people attended and learned how to arrange flowers. The Finance Committee discussed the 2008 budget and their preliminary budget has been completed.

Friends of Boileau:

Comm. Romaniello said the Friends of Boileau has received their 501C3. They are set up as a corporation with a President and Vice President for accounting purposes and have decided they will need two signatures for every check.

Mr. Stasio said the Board approved some repairs to the Boileau structures and we did the chimney sweeping and chimney capping. A lot of debris has been removed and the Plexiglas over the windows was done; however, the ventilation was not sufficient so we contacted a contractor who gave us a price and we approved him to do the work. The windows will now have a louver system with a screen behind it to allow air flow and will be completed by the end of July or early August. We will be getting quotes for the roof of the barn because there has been some damage to it.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Final Plan:

Comm. Efkowitz said that Brian Stych of Simone Collins will give a presentation on the plan this evening. She does not intend to move this for action at our August Board meeting because we need time to review it and think about the impact it will have on our community, and hopefully move it for adoption in September.

Mr. Stasio said last fall, the Board of Commissioners put together a Steering Committee to consider a Comprehensive Plan. This is our 4<sup>th</sup> Comprehensive Plan for Parks & Recreation. The Steering Committee met on several occasions to conduct public meetings to review all of the information. Surveys were done by phone and mail and the draft plan is available at the library, Township building and online for 45 days. There are no master park improvements in the plan. Several parks have their own master plans. This is a comprehensive look at what Upper Moreland Township has to offer to the residents. He introduced Brian Stych, of Simone Collins.

Mr. Stych said we started this process nine months ago. We met with the Steering Committee, who had several public meetings with various youth groups, etc. We did a mail survey and phone survey and a needs assessment. The Township is in need of six more active recreation fields. We put together short term and long term recommendations. The short-term is for one to five years and long term is five to ten years. The short-term recommendations are as follows: one multi-purpose synthetic-turf field, which requires less space; for the Township to do a feasibility study for a community center; conduct a trail and greenway master plan with walking/hiking facilities; blue trails be installed in some of the larger parks such as Boileau, War Memorial and Millcreek; help with the maintenance and staffing of the Parks & Recreation Dept.

Long-term recommendations are installing lights at the fields; a skateboard park; another multi-purpose athletic field; and eventually three more athletic fields. Within the report is the topic on synthetic fields and how much use can be obtained from it. The ratio is one synthetic-turf field equals approximately three natural turf fields.

Mr. Stasio said regarding the mail survey versus the phone survey; we mailed 700 surveys and received 6% back. A 200-person phone survey was conducted as well, and the mail survey matched the phone survey. The Steering Committee identified 25 key people in our community and Simone Collins interviewed them. Those results are included in the report. In addition, we held three public meetings and asked every group in Upper Moreland to send us their wish list for the Township. Through all of that information; Simone Collins was able to make their recommendations.

Comm. Booth said the amount of money required for this is a lot, and he is not sure the citizens of Upper Moreland would be interested in spending that kind of money. He asked about the sequence of recommendations in the report and applying for grants for those items.

Mr. Stasio replied the priorities are not in any particular order. We will need this plan to apply for grants. If we want to build a synthetic field, there is money available and supported by the public, which would gain points during the grant application. One of the recommendations was to do a feasibility study for a community center and we could apply for a grant for that study.

Comm. Efkowitz said we need these plans in place to apply for grant money and, whether we implement all or some of it; it is still a road map to where we want our Parks & Recreation Dept. to head in the next 10 years.

Comm. Romaniello said she has reviewed the entire plan and the formula is to determine the supply and demand and best level of service for Upper Moreland Township. Is that correct?

Mr. Stasio replied yes, the formula was developed by the NRPA (National Parks & Recreation Association). Through research that was obtained in the study, Simone Collins plugged the numbers listed in the report into the formula.

Comm. Romaniello said the report indicates that the top two activities in our Township are walking/running/hiking and the use of the tot lots/playground. The recommendations are geared to the construction and number of fields.

Mr. Stych replied we identified the deficiency in the local service of active sports. Each one of the activities was covered in the survey, which was addressed in this formula individually.

Comm. Efkowitz said the level of service improvements that they are recommending do not necessarily focus on active sports fields use. That is just one of the items in the short-term recommendations. All of the rest are about a community center, trails, greenways connecting the parks, etc. The long-term recommendations are about improvements to the fields. The level of service calculations that they used and the response from the community reflects where we need improvement.

Comm. Romaniello said one of the comments in the survey was about a place for teenagers so do we need to do a feasibility study to accommodate that small portion of the public.

Mr. Stych replied yes, the feasibility study would cost about \$30-50,000 and more details are needed to determine whether or not the Township should have a community center.

Mr. Stasio said there are eight short-term recommendations that are inexpensive propositions, but the more expensive project would be the synthetic fields. He would like to develop a trail system next year in our Township so there is an immediate response to this plan.

Comm. Romaniello said the residents want a dog park, which is something we can do now rather than waiting.

Mr. Stasio said this plan does not address the regulatory budget items or regular improvements that he makes to the Board every year. This is a broad spectrum of needs that the community has found in addition to our normal improvements.

Comm. Booth asked about the 2009 capital improvement plan to construct a natural turf multi-purpose field at Millcreek Park in the amount of \$340,000.

Mr. Stasio replied that is a natural field.

Comm. Booth said we are not supposed to build that field until we do the road work.

Comm. Efkowitz said this item will remain on the agenda until next month.

Comm. Romaniello asked that we follow through with the plans that we already have on the table. We have four master plans and that should be the priority.

Mr. Stasio thanked the Steering Committee members for their participation and assistance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Comments:

Kevin Spearing, 2504 Broadway Road, said there is drainage underneath a synthetic field; can drainage be put under a natural field?

Mr. Stych replied we could, but there has to be a storage basin.

Mr. Spearing asked has any consideration been given to something regional, for example a skateboard park.

Comm. Efkowitz replied if an opportunity came up, we would consider it.

Denis Hurley complimented Mr. Stasio and Mr. Stych on a great presentation and complimented Comm. Efkowitz for trying to stay on line that this plan is a blueprint.

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

Comm. Efkowitz said this matter will be continued pending receipt of additional information from PERT and will remain on the agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Comm. Booth asked Mr. Stasio to look into the situation at War Memorial Park with graffiti on buildings along the railroad tracks. He suggested starting a mural project just for War Memorial Park that involves the high school.

Mr. Stasio replied the security cameras that the Township installed in War Memorial Park had done a good job as we have not had any vandalism in the park. He will look into the mural project and report back next month.

Comm. Efkowitz asked for that item to be placed on the agenda next month.

**OTHER PARKS & RECREATION ITEMS:**

Comm. Efkwitz said she had calls about the supervised playgrounds and excessive heat, and she asked Mr. Stasio to comment on it.

Mr. Stasio replied we make sure the kids are safe. We rotate the kids in the air-conditioned middle school on really hot days. We provide tents, shade trees and the Fire Company does a wet down where they soak water on the kids and we plan extra trips at our cost. We also have ice water available, freeze pops, water balloons, etc. So we do many things to keep them cool.

**VISITOR COMMENTS:**

Kevin Spearing provided copies of letters written by Comm. Efkwitz and himself to the Board. Referring to the letter written by Comm. Efkwitz, he read, "At that time, we did omit North Willow Grove Park from the discussion since there was a possibility we might shift the park to a larger, more convenient site." It talks about taking the park off of the list.

Comm. Efkwitz replied no, that is incorrect. We simply left it off of the list to have the zoning maps changed. The North Willow Grove Park is and has been zoned Recreation/Conservation for many years. It is simply not noted as such on the maps. As her letter states, "The park might shift." One of the problems with North Willow Grove Park is that it is small and there is a large piece of open space in that park used for field space that is actually on Abington's property. A need was identified that we might want to have a larger park with more amenities for the residents of Sycamore Village and Upper Moreland Township.

Mr. Spearing asked about the public hearings we had last year.

Comm. Efkwitz said they had nothing to do with changing the park just the maps.

Mr. Spearing asked will there be another hearing on August 6<sup>th</sup>?

Comm. Efkwitz replied she does not know why we need another hearing on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Solicitor Kerns replied it is a two-step process. The first step is to change the zoning and then change the Pennsylvania map.

Mr. Dodies added first we have to pass the ordinance then amend the map. Six other parks were addressed last year.

Mr. Spearing referred to Comm. Efkowitz' letter stating a comment as, "Larger more convenient site." He checked the public record and found the discussion about a larger more convenient site.

Comm. Efkowitz replied it is a real estate matter. She will not comment on a real estate matter.

Mr. Spearing said after reviewing the minutes from the public hearings last year, the impression was given to the public at the time that North Willow Grove Park had been omitted.

Comm. Romaniello said last year, we had two public hearings and she has just learned that the North Willow Grove Park was not zoned institutional, but has been zoned RC since 1984.

Comm. Efkowitz said she knew the park and other parks in the Township were zoned RC. The maps haven't changed. If we would like to make sure the maps at the County and the Township are noted as RC for the North Willow Grove parcel, we can do that.

Mr. Dodies said the County will print new zoning maps following the hearing and no further action is required.

Comm. Efkowitz commented she is a little put off that Mr. Spearing alarmed the neighbors of Sycamore Village about something that was unfounded.

Charlie Acker, 492 Grant Avenue suggested limiting public comments to 15 minutes.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Comm. Booth commented the first two concerts at Masons Mill Park were really good and had a good turn out.

**ADJOURNMENT:** 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Elizabeth Vile