

Lower Pottsgrove Township
Parks and Recreation Meeting
October 25, 2010 7:00pm

The regularly scheduled Parks and Recreation meeting was held on Monday, October 25, 2010 and was called to order at 7:00pm. The following were in attendance:

Patty Abdalla, Vice Chair
Tom Troutman
Dennis Cimino
Rich Wood

Alyson Elliott, Assistant Manager
Jennifer Corley

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Mr. Troutman made a motion to approve the October Parks and Recreation report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cimino and carried with a 4 – 0 vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Girl Scout Troop 7354 - Troop Leader, April M. Taylor and Troop member Erica Piechota presented a slide show and answered questions on the troop's Bronze Award Project. The project was a clean up at Ringing Rocks Park. The girls raked leaves and cleared invasive plant species from around the pond. They unearthed some brick trails that were in the area and cleared those. They lined a trail with downed trees. The old Well house roof was reconstructed and shingled with asphalt shingles. They also replanted some rose bushes across the street at the parking area, *Shaner's Grove at Ringing Rocks Park* and created and installed a sign for this area.

The project, which the group expected to take one year, took them almost two years. With the help of siblings and parents the girls had an average of 15 hours of work dedicated to the project.

Gerald Richards Park / Pleasantview Park - Ms. Elliott informed the Board that the steering committee meetings are beginning on Tuesday, October 26, 2010. She listed the six dates of the public meetings; 11/10; 12/15; 1/25; 2/23; 3/23; and 4/26. She explained that we are going to look at Gerald Richards Park to see how it can operate more efficiently and then look at Pleasantview Park in conjunction with Gerald Richards Park to see what community needs must be met when designing that park. A steering committee has been chosen and neighbors to each park will be invited to the public meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

2011 Goals and Objectives

Ms. Elliott reported on two PRPS workshop sessions that she and Ms. Corley attended and the ideas each inspired. She gave a brief overview of the session she attended and then Ms. Corley did the same.

Ms. Corley expanded on the Goals and Objectives. A 2000 census statistic was distributed which identifies a real need for the Parks and Recreation programming to address. Ms. Corley suggested the board break out specific demographics and do target surveys to identify the needs and wants of the community.

The first group would be lower income and the target area would be Rolling Hills and Walnut Ridge. The second group would be senior citizens and the target area would be the Hallman Retirement Developments. The final group would be targeting families with school aged children.

Ms. Corley introduced the Park Program Self Assessment that she requested the Board and Staff complete. This could provide groundwork for discussion on what types of programming the Board will support or what type of programming the Board feels would be successful in this community. She also discussed with the Board the separate entities she has contacted in an effort to gain knowledge that will assist in the development of new programs. Ms. Corley has contacted the Rolling Hills management office, the Walnut Ridge Estates management office, and the Pottsgrove School District Parent Teacher Organization. Rolling Hills management office provided the information that they are in the process of hiring a full time Social Services employee and this person would be the liaison with the Township for future programming needs. In the interim, the administrative assistant, Helen will work with us. The management office also volunteered to get the future survey to each resident of the property via door to door delivery. Board members asked Ms. Corley if Rolling Hills has a Community Center or Meeting Room on the property. Ms. Corley will investigate.

Ms. Corley indicated that 2011 will be used as a year of planning for future programs offered by this Parks and Recreation department. Using the targeted surveys and reaching out to other community groups such as the schools, PTO and management offices of housing communities, we can define the needs and wants of the residents to provide programming that will be both successful and sustainable. She stated that she has left a message at Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School for the president of the PTO to find if the organization has success with its evening programs such as babysitting night or family fun night.

Ms. Elliott added that Coventry Christian School has offered to partner with the Township on some programs. Mr. Niehls has enthusiastically offered some suggestions for programs that target the residents of Rolling Hills and Walnut Ridge.

Ms. Abdalla added that we need to be conscious of the special needs of the community in order to run a successful program. She indicated that the Lower Pottsgrove Elementary School principal Ellen Segal is working with the community to provide services that will enable the success of the parents & students. Ms. Abdalla also indicated that if we create a program according to the needs and wants of the community, that promotes a sense of ownership of the facilities and therefore less vandalism or destruction. Ms. Abdalla said she believes the principal would be amenable to a partnership for our future programs.

Mr. Cimino indicated that regarding the lower income population, the highest hurdle would be getting cooperation from within the community. He indicated past boards have made some effort, but it has met with resistance over the years. He is hopeful that future efforts will produce successful results. He has concern that at present all programs are financed with sponsorship funds and that the expense of an additional program would put a strain on that sponsorship fund balance.

Mr. Troutman commented that in the past there was a social worker on site at Rolling Hills who suggested the basketball court that was later installed. Once the court was installed, it was vandalized almost immediately. He would like to know if we could talk to the police to see if there is a community leader that would assist with programs and if Rolling Hills has a community room.

Mr. Wood asked if our goal was from a programming standpoint or from a sports and facility base. Ms. Corley responded that we were strictly looking at programs for Parks and Recreation to develop. Sports organizations are a separate entity and we would like that to remain unchanged. Mr. Wood commented that the lower income population is mostly concentrated in the Rolling Hills and Walnut Ridge Estates communities. The board should look to locating any programming within walking distance of those communities. In the past Pottsgrove Soccer Club has offered free registration to those residents, but there was not a high success rate. He felt that soccer may not have been a desirable activity for the residents. He believes that we should poll other communities that have low income populations within a suburban community that have had success. He would like to see if there is a person or people within the community that will work with the Township to develop programs that will be successful. He feels that even though we have not been successful in the past, we should still focus our attentions there until we do have success. Mr. Wood suggested that we should focus on the children ages 10 and under so they may promote these township functions as they grow through the community. He thinks this is a 10 year project.

Ms. Elliott summarized the consensus is that we look at like Townships and their successful programs. We should plan diligently and see what it will take to get something up and running. We also need to find contacts and support within the community and any others that may be able to assist with the organization. Ms. Elliott has also spoken to Coventry Christian School regarding their offer of two leaders for the Steering Committee. These members would also like to partner with the Township on programs within the community. Board members also suggested that maybe our

corporate sponsors would be interested in increasing their donations if a portion of said donation was dedicated to funding these flagship programs. Ms. Elliott said it seems that our biggest fear is that we run a program and no one shows. We will want to make sure we do our homework before making a decision on a specific program.

Ms. Corley said that the first thing we have to do is the survey. At the most we waste a little time and paper, but if we do not ask questions, we will never get the answers. Mr. Wood commented that we want to be careful not to give false impressions on our survey. Ms. Elliott commented that a survey will be presented to the Board for their review prior to distribution and that this project is at least a year long process.

Ms. Elliott also reintroduced the issue of outfield / field fence signage to the Board. Discussion was whether to allow the sports organizations the full responsibility and benefits of selling the signs to sponsors or whether the Township will regulate the signage. Ms. Corley polled neighboring Townships to and found that Townships and Boroughs that allow the sports organizations to administer the policy and receive the reward do not maintain the facilities; the sports organization maintains them, year round. Other townships and boroughs that do not allow signage, are maintaining the facilities themselves. Northampton Township does have a policy in place that the Township administers the program and the Township and sports organizations split any revenue that is received 50/50.

Santa Calls – Ms. Corley requested a change to the Santa program. Specifically she requested the change from phone calls to letters.

Speed bumps – Ms. Elliott addressed the speeding issue at Sanatoga Park. Since the gates have been opened, several vehicles a day go speeding through the park. Ms. Elliott requested the Board to approve a \$1500 expenditure for speed bumps to be installed at Sanatoga Park. They would be removable during the winter months so plows would be able to maintain the road.

Mr. Wood made a motion to approve \$1500 to be used for speed bumps and speed limit signs. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cimino and carried with a 4 – 0 vote.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Troutman inquired as to whether we own the barn at the Pruss Hill Dam and if that can be used by organizations such as Scouts in the fair weather months. Ms. Elliott replied that the Township still owns the barn. However, it is not heated or cooled and would be unsuitable for a meeting space. Mr. Wood commented he would not want to allow any organization to use it as the access is at a dangerous intersection.

Mr. Wood inquired on the status of opening Sanatoga Park and if the fields were ready to use yet. Ms. Elliott responded that there has been no formal ribbon cutting yet, but the field use was offered to Pottsgrove Soccer. PGS declined because they are concerned that if a ball is overshot it will end up going over the cliff and will be

permanently lost. He also inquired on the status of Snell and Norton Park. Ms. Elliott replied that we are just waiting for funding to progress with the park. She said the budget committee is doing a good job. They are creating a 5 – 10 year plan so there is direction of what to fund. Lastly, he inquired about the Sprogel's Run Trail and it's progress. Ms. Elliott commented that we are trying to tighten the purse strings without cutting any services. In the past two years no funding has come in for Parks & Recreation because of the stall in development.

Mr. Troutman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cimino and carried with a vote of 4 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer J. Corley

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, November 22, 2010 at 7:00pm.