

**Park and Recreation Board  
Public Meeting Minutes  
June 2, 2020**

The Regular Bi-monthly Meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 7:00 PM, a virtual ZOOM meeting, due to COVID-19 pandemic.

**In Attendance:** Joanne Crawford (Chair), Tom Manley (Vice-Chair), James Convey, Terry Ferris, Kevin Kissling, Megan O'Rourke, Chris Epstein (CSD Liaison), Laura Boyle Nester (BOS Liaison), Tom Blomstrom (Director of P&R), Mike Lannutti (P&R – Zoom/Minutes)

**The meeting was called to order at 7:02PM by Joanne Crawford.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Moment of Silence**

Chair, Joanne Crawford, asked meeting participants to join in a moment of silence to honor the life of George Floyd and acknowledge the deep, systemic, and structural inequalities that people continue to face in America today. Chair Crawford thanked all of those who are galvanizing & turning collective frustration and heartache into courageous stands for justice.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. FEBRUARY 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (APRIL MEETING WAS CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19)**

On a motion by Tom Manley, seconded by Terry Ferris (Vote 6-0), the Park & Recreation Board unanimously approved the February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting minutes.

**PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade Committee**

The April & May meetings were cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

**2. Whitemarsh Athletic Association (WAA)**

The WAA meeting, scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, was cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

**WHITEMARSH ART CENTER REPORT**

No representative for the Whitemarsh Art Center was present at the meeting. The Whitemarsh Art Center Report is attached as submitted.

## **DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT**

Parks & Recreation Director, Tom Blomstrom, opened his report by acknowledging the extraordinary efforts of our community's first responders, and thanking the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors and Park & Recreation Board for their continued support throughout these challenging times. Mr. Blomstrom then proceeded to give an overview of the report, as submitted.

As a part of the overview of his report, Mr. Blomstrom acknowledged the phenomenal efforts of the Department staff over the course of this difficult time. The Park & Recreation Board members echoed Mr. Blomstrom's sentiment and thanked him & his staff for their continued efforts.

Mr. Blomstrom highlighted the Department's efforts to swiftly adapt to the unprecedented circumstances and create virtual engagement opportunities for the community. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Department launched the "In-Home Recreation Resources" webpage ([www.whitemarshparks.org/InHomeRec](http://www.whitemarshparks.org/InHomeRec)), which included a comprehensive list of digital resources, aimed to bring some positive cheer and stress reduction to the members of the community. Mr. Blomstrom mentioned that the "In-Home Recreation Resources" webpage received recognition in numerous industry publications, including publications from the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and MontCo Today. He also noted that website data supports the success of the new online resources, as the page was the 3<sup>rd</sup>-highest-viewed on the Township website since its launch, only exceeded by the homepage and homepage news carousel.

In addition to the "In-Home Recreation Resources" webpage, Mr. Blomstrom also recognized the Department's ability to transition many normal program offerings, to virtual offerings, which provided vital recreation opportunities for those who remained home. Mr. Blomstrom specifically recognized the efforts of Emily Labowitz, Program Coordinator, and Ashlyn Brady, Head Dance Instructor, for their work managing the dance program's transition to virtual-offerings, mid-season.

Mr. Blomstrom also provided an update on the status of Township summer camps. He shared that the Department created the "Summer Camp COVID-19 Updates" webpage to use as a communication tool for questions regarding COVID-19 & summer camps. The webpage is a resource for parents/guardians that include summer camp FAQ's, as well as the most up-to-

date information for the upcoming camp season. In connection with the webpage, Mr. Blomstrom shared that on Friday, May 22nd, the Governor, PA Department of Health, and the Pennsylvania Recreation and Parks Society, in accordance with the CDC, issued operating guidelines for Summer Camps. He shared the announcement that the Township will be holding summer camps at Miles Park and Cedar Grove Park, with modifications to be in compliance with recommended guidelines. In order to meet these requirements and provide the highest degree of safety for the participants and staff, the opening of Summer Camps has been delayed to Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, and all camp trips were cancelled. The Parks & Recreation Department continues to monitor applicable guidance and develop the necessary protocols & procedures for the camps.

Tom Blomstrom also provided an update on work being done at Miles Park. The concession stand was painted, and a new steel-letter sign was installed on the Germantown-Pike-facing side of the structure. The sign, which reads "Miles Park – Whitemarsh Township" was by Treasure Sign. Mr. Blomstrom thanked Jim Convery, & the rest of the Treasure Sign staff, for a wonderful job done, and the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors for their support.

Board of Supervisors Chair, and Liaison to the P&R Board, Laura Boyle Nester, asked about the status of the Veteran's Memorial Project at Miles Park, on the corner of Germantown Pike and Joshua Road. Tom Blomstrom informed Chair Boyle Nester that, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the project has been on hold. However, the Township has been in communication with the Veterans Memorial Committee and their contractor for the monument, as well as executives of the Green Valley Country Club. He mentioned that the Township hopes to work with GVCC to secure a location for a digital sign as a replacement for the sign being removed once the project begins. Mr. Blomstrom will provide additional updates on the project when they become available.

CSD Liaison to the P&R Board, Chris Epstein, asked Mr. Blomstrom if the Department had to adjust the number of staff members needed for summer camps, due to CDC Guidelines or other requirements. Mr. Blomstrom noted that, even though enrollment numbers were limited due to COVID-19, the Department did not reduce the total number of summer staff because of the additional requirements & responsibilities connected with COVID-19 safety & mitigation efforts. The camp directors will evaluate staffing requirements and adjust shifts, as necessary.

Park & Recreation Board Member, Kevin Kissling, asked if the Department was continuing to accept registrations for the camps. He also asked if the Department was

monitoring the effects that COVID-19 was having on the budget, and if updated budget forecasts were available. Mr. Blomstrom informed the Park & Recreation Board members that the Department is continually monitoring & evaluating the budget, and plans to continue moving forward in a fiscally responsible way, given the variables at hand.

Vice-Chair of the Park & Recreation Board, Tom Manley, shared his experience with the fluidity of the guidelines surrounding COVID-19, and the difficulty of the uncertainty. Mr. Manley expressed his gratitude to Tom Blomstrom and the Parks & Recreation staff for their diligent efforts and handling of the challenges associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

On a motion by Terry Ferris, seconded by Kevin Kissling (Vote 6-0), the Park & Recreation Board unanimously accepted the Director's Report.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was addressed.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was addressed.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No public comments.

#### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Chair, Joanne Crawford, stated that she appreciates everyone's efforts during these unprecedented times.

The next Park & Recreation Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at Koontz Park, beginning at 7:00pm.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Terry Ferris, seconded by Tom Manley (Vote 6-0), the Park & Recreation Board unanimously approved the February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting minutes.

***Respectfully Submitted,***

Mike Lannutti  
Program Coordinator