

**Park and Recreation Board
Public Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2020**

The Regular Bi-monthly Meeting of the Whitemarsh Township Park and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM, a virtual ZOOM meeting, due to COVID-19 pandemic.

In Attendance: Joanne Crawford (Chair), Tom Manley (Vice-Chair), Jim Convey, Kevin Kissling, Megan O'Rourke, Laura Boyle Nester (BOS Liaison), Dan Zuena (WAC Liaison), Tom Blomstrom (Director of P&R), Mike Lannutti (P&R – Zoom/Minutes)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Joanne Crawford.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Park & Recreation Board Chair, Joanne Crawford, opened the meeting by asking attendees to join in a moment of silence, in support of all those affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I. August 4, 2020 PR Board Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Kevin Kissling, seconded by Megan O'Rourke (Vote 5-0), the Park & Recreation Board unanimously approved the August 4th, 2020 meeting minutes.

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORTS

No additional liaison-committee reports were submitted.

WHITEMARSH ART CENTER REPORT

Whitemarsh Art Center (WAC) Board President, Dan Zuena, gave a brief overview of the Whitemarsh Art Center Report, as submitted. Mr. Zuena began by mentioning that the WAC has recently enjoyed an increased level of participation in WAC class offerings. P&R Board Chair, Joanne Crawford, asked if the WAC had been in contact with local Catholic Schools, to promote their programs, since they began meeting in-person again, recently. Mr. Zuena mentioned that he was not sure if the schools had been contacted lately, but would check with the WAC Director, Hadley Yates, regarding the idea. He concluded the report by mentioning that the WAC website had been updated, and that they have been pleased with the results.

On a motion by Kevin Kissling, seconded by Tom Manley (Vote 5-0), the Parks & Recreation Board unanimously accepted the Whitemarsh Art Center Report.

DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Parks & Recreation Director, Tom Blomstrom, began by acknowledging the extraordinary efforts of so many throughout the community, and thanked the Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors, Parks & Recreation Board, and Department Staff for their continued support throughout these difficult times. Mr. Blomstrom then proceeded to give an overview of his report, as submitted.

Mr. Blomstrom opened his report by giving an update on the *Fall 2020 Recreator*. He mentioned that the program brochure was made available online on Wednesday, September 2nd. He acknowledged Park & Recreation Department Program Coordinator, Mike Lannutti, for his efforts with the design & publishing of the *Fall 2020 Recreator*.

Mr. Blomstrom continued his report, mentioning that the department has been diligently working through the 2021 budget-planning process. He noted that the preliminary planning had been completed, and that he was scheduled to present the proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors on Monday, October 19th.

Mr. Blomstrom shared that Boy Scout Troop 12 will be holding their annual camping trip at Wells Street Open Space Park, on the weekend of October 9th – 11th. The group was given permission to hold the annual event, so long as they adhere to all CDC guidance, relating to COVID-19.

It was announced that Militia Hill Security generously donated \$1,000.00 to support Parks & Recreation programs & other activities. He also noted that the Department applied for, and received, funding through the CARES Act, totaling \$39,200.00 across two rounds. The Township was able to receive this funding because of the Child Care Facility License that the Cedar Grove Barn currently holds through the Department of Human Services & Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Mr. Blomstrom also shared that the Department received a \$298.40 donation from Kona Ice of King of Prussia, and that Colonial Soccer Club has committed a \$3,000.00 donation, which will be for maintenance of the Miles Park Lower Soccer Fields in 2021. Mr. Blomstrom thanked all of the organizations for their continued support of the department.

Mr. Blomstrom moved on to general program & event updates, from his report. The Connecting Exceptional People program, which is offered in partnership with the William Jeanes Memorial Library, has continued running well, virtually. The department has also enjoyed the success of programs like the Moore Brothers Basketball Camps, Storytime with Cookiemonster, Virtual Chess Classes, and other similar programs. Not all programs, however, have seen success. Every scheduled "Parent's Morning Out", had to be cancelled due to low registration, and the annual Radio City Christmas Spectacular Trip, was also cancelled. Mr. Blomstrom highlighted the difficulty of creating & planning for programs and events, without knowing what will, or will not, be permissible once they come around. He acknowledged the hard work & dedication of the Parks & Recreation Department staff, throughout this difficult time. Lastly, Mr. Blomstrom shared that a new special event, Chalk It Up, will be held at Miles Park on Saturday, October 17th.

In addition to program & event updates, Mr. Blomstrom provided updates on several ongoing projects, connected to the department. He noted that the Miles Park Grant Project has officially come to a close, with the final inspection taking place on October 1st, 2020. He graciously acknowledged the efforts of Jack Fields & the entire Public Works team, as well as Township Engineer, Krista Heinrich. He also thanked the Park Board and Board of Supervisors for all of their support throughout the lengthy project. Tom Manley asked how long the project took in the end, from start to finish. Mr. Blomstrom shared that the project was completed within the original 4-year window, and that field access was only limited for a single sport “season”, which was the goal. He also shared an update on the Miracle Nature Trail project, which has received grant funding from DCNR & DVRPC. He noted that the project is progressing, with key person interviews being conducted, and steering committee members being lined up. To conclude his report, Mr. Blomstrom shared updates on some smaller department projects, like the installation of dugouts at Miles Park, smoke detector certification and rubber floor installation at the Cedar Grove Barn, and the replacement of windows at Koontz Park. At the conclusion of the report, Mr. Blomstrom fielded questions from the P&R Board members.

Jim Convey wanted to know if the Parks & Recreation Department had any involvement in an upcoming event being held at the Highlands Mansion. Mr. Blomstrom noted that the event was being run directly by the Highlands Mansion, and that the P&R Department is simply supporting it as a community partner. Mr. Convey also inquired about whom from the department was responsible for creating the publications/graphics, because he was impressed by them. Mr. Blomstrom shared that, while everyone from the department plays a part in their creation, Mike Lannutti has had the most input, and echoed his sentiment.

Tom Manley followed up with a question regarding the Highlands Mansion, asking if their operating budget was known. Mr. Blomstrom responded that he did not have information about their organization’s budget, but that it should be available through the online resource, Guidestar.

Kevin Kissling asked a question about the Veterans Memorial project. He wanted to know if the Township would be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the memorial, once it was completed. Mr. Blomstrom mentioned that he was under the impression that the Township would be maintaining the space, but that he was unsure of the specifics surrounding the memorial, and would have to check with the Township Manager. Kevin Kissling also inquired about any effects that COVID-19 has had on the department’s operating budget. Mr. Blomstrom shared that the department would not be requesting any increase in the general fund transfer from last year, and aims to maintain the same level of operations moving forward. He also shared that he was awaiting feedback from the Township Manager on submitted capital budget requests, and will share that information once it is available.

On a motion by Tom Manley, seconded by Jim Convey (Vote 5-0), the Parks & Recreation Board unanimously accepted the Director’s Report.

NEW BUSINESS

I. Announcement of DHS Certification at Cedar Grove Barn through 9/28/21 for youth child care programming

On Thursday, August 6th, 2020, Teresa Kulp-Weber from DHS/OCDEL visited Cedar Grove Camp to conduct a renewal inspection for the Child Care Center License. The inspection concluded without issue, and the license was renewed through 2021.

II. Announcement of “Recreator” Fall Brochure (On-Line)

The fall Whitmarsh Parks and Recreation brochure – the Recreator – has been completed by staff and is available on-line (only) as of Wednesday, September 2nd. The fall brochure line-up is a combination of outdoor social distance in-person activities, programs and a camp, mini-special events, and also virtual opportunities.

III. Announcement of Chalk-It-Up Contest on Saturday, October 17th at Miles Park Walking Path

Join the Parks & Recreation Department on Saturday, October 17th, 2020, from 10:00am-12:00pm, on the exercise track of Miles Park, for the first ever Chalk-It-Up Event.

IV. Announcement of Teenie Halloweenie on Tuesday, October 20th at 10am/2pm at Cedar Grove Barn (outside)

Teenie Halloweenie will be held completely outside and have two sessions, this year. We look forward to a simple and safe twist on a favorite tiny tot Halloween event.

V. Announcement of *NEW* Witches Hayride on October 27th and 29th from 5:30pm-9:00pm at Cedar Grove Park (outside)

Take a Hayride to visit the Witch of Whitmarsh at Cedar Grove Park. The friendly Witch of Whitmarsh will share some Halloween stories and candy-corn jokes, before sending you on your way with a special treat! This Hayride is not a haunted hayride, and is perfect for younger children. Spots are filling up for this event!

VI. Announcement of Gingerbread House Decorating Contest – December (Materials Pick-Up at Koontz Park)

Join us for the first annual Gingerbread House **Contest!** Cost to enter is \$25.00, and includes one preassembled gingerbread house. Gingerbread house pick-up will be held at Koontz Park on December 14th, 2020, between 8:30am-4:30pm. Winners will be announced December 21st.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was addressed.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Whitmarsh Resident, Debra Harris, asked Tom Blomstrom about any potential involvement for any residents on the Miracle Nature Trail Steering Feasibility Study, as she was interested in possibly

volunteering. Mr. Blomstrom responded to Ms. Harris, stating that he would be happy to discuss the opportunity with her, and would plan to follow up with her the next day.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No additional board member comments.

The next Park & Recreation Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on December 1st, 2020, beginning at 7:00pm. Meeting Format To Be Determined.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Kevin Kissling, seconded by Tom Manley (Vote 5-0), the Park & Recreation Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Lannutti
Program Coordinator