

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP
PARK & RECREATION BOARD MEETING
VIRTUAL MEETING – ZOOM
TUESDAY, APRIL 6TH, 2021 AT 7:00 PM**

The Whitemarsh Township Park & Recreation Board Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 6th, 2021 at 7:00 PM. The meeting was held virtually, via Zoom, due to COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jim Convey, Joanne Crawford, Tom Manley

LIAISONS PRESENT:

Laura Boyle Nester (BOS), Joy O'Brien (WAC)

TWP. STAFF PRESENT:

Tom Blomstrom (*P&R Director*), Robert Vandegrift (*P&R – Minutes*)

ALSO PRESENT:

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. The Whitemarsh Township Park & Recreation Board Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, April 6th, 2021, at 7:01pm, by Joanne Crawford.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 2ND, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

- a. Tabled until next Whitemarsh Township Park & Recreation Board Meeting due to the meeting not having quorum.

4. PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD LIAISON – COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Miracle-Nature Trail (MNT) Steering Committee (Liaisons: Joanne Crawford & Jim Convey)
 - i. Joanne Crawford shared that there will be a public presentation and listening session on April 15th, 2021 via Zoom.
 - ii. Tom Blomstrom added that the public survey was completed after being available for four weeks and that a landing page was created to include information regarding the Miracle-Nature Trail on the Whitemarsh Township website. Also noted that there is a planning session set for April 8th to organize how the meeting will run.
- b. Whitemarsh Athletic Association (WAA) (Liaison: Tom Manley)
 - i. Tom Manley shared that the WAA got together on Zoom the week prior and had a special guest, Kate Nematollahi. Kate discussed mental health and pressures on young athletes. Tom emphasized that it was a really positive meeting that had a lot in it for coaches.
- c. 4th of July Parade Committee (Liaison: Joanne Crawford)
 - i. Joanne Crawford asked Tom Blomstrom for confirmation that the 4th of July Parade is currently on hold. Tom Blomstrom shared that there have not been any meetings yet, but that there will

be discussions in the near future regarding the opportunity amidst current COVID-19 restrictions.

- d. Spring Mill Study Steering Committee (Representative: Kevin Kissling)
 - i. Since Kevin was not available for the meeting, Tom Blomstrom announced that the new committee has been formed and that the liaison from the township is Charlie Guttenplan.
 - ii. Tom Blomstrom continued to announce that there are other committees in the township currently. A zoning committee that is currently being formed that is essentially a spin-off of the comprehensive plan committee. This zoning committee will have an objective to examine different areas where zoning can assist the township with development objectives and the like. The Park and Recreation Board will not have a direct representative.

5. WHITEMARSH ART CENTER REPORT – Joy O’Brien

- a. Joy O’Brien presented the Whitemarsh Art Center (WAC) report and highlighted the following items from the report:
 - i. She announced that the board formed a committee to develop a new strategic plan as it needs to be updated. The new plan will be used to apply for various grants that require strategic plans.
 - ii. Joy shared that the WAC also submitted their application for the second round of the Payment Protection Program loan. Hoping to have good news at their board meeting the following week.
 - iii. Joy noted that the spring classes have begun. The ceramics and some of the painting classes have been extremely popular. They are currently looking into outdoor classes, for example, a summer flower arranging class.
 - iv. Joy mentioned that the Big Tiny Art show will take place on May 22nd. It will be online, have a gallery and will have an artist speaking. Artwork will be for sale during the show.

6. PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR’S REPORT

- a. Whitemarsh Township Parks & Recreation Director, Tom Blomstrom, presented the report, as submitted.
 - i. Tom began the report by welcoming Rob Vandegrift to the team, as he has filled the Recreation Services Associate position vacated by Jackie Bender. Announced that Rob will be the zoom-minutes person behind the scenes during the Park and Recreation Board meetings.
 - ii. The Parks & Recreation Department has continued with In-Home Recreation efforts. The Staycation, Health Hub and Nature’s Touch weekly virtual engagement opportunity e-blasts were highlighted and had the following topics: Winter Sledding Locations, Best Spots for Cheesesteaks, St. Patrick’s Day, Cold/Flu & COVID-19 News and Prevention, COVID-19 Vaccine News, Healthy Snacks, Climate Change, Dealing with Snow, Sustainability and Spotted Lanternfly. Other notable emails sent were in regards to Black History Month and Women’s History Month.
 - iii. Tom announced that the Montgomery County Senior Games are slated to be held from May 10th – May 14th. They will be downsized, but Whitemarsh Township will be hosting our first event ever. The even will be Darts at the Miles Park Pavilion.
 - iv. The Spring edition of the Recreator was highlighted and a program discussed was the dance program, which has moved inside to the Miles Park Building.
 - v. The State Southern Spotted Lanternfly Task Force met on Monday, March 22nd. Tom Blomstrom is a member of the committee and announced that eight new counties have been added to the quarantined county list, raising the number to 34. There’s concern regarding the wine regions in NY and down in Virginia along the I-80 corridor. A solution is still being pursued for the new invasive species akin to the spray for mosquitos.

- vi. Connecting Exceptional People has continued with monthly meetings and socials to engage the clientele.
- vii. Tom mentioned that the Department has been partnering/connecting with local like-minded neighbors and recreation folks. One of the connections is with the Schuylkill Center. Partnered on promoting their events, such as the Rise and Fall of Forests webinar. Paired with Upper Dublin Parks and Rec, by promoting their Garden Temple Talks and their Master Gardener Series.
- viii. Tom shared the Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation small community events as follows:
 - (a) Recently completed Shamrocks in the Parks that had good community engagement.
 - (b) April's community engagement is Random Acts of Kindness in the Parks, where little toys and trinkets are dispersed in our parks throughout the month to put a smile on the faces of children.
 - (c) May is set to start Poker in the Park, where cards will be hidden throughout the parks and community members will be tasked with creating the best hand they can find in the parks to win.
- ix. Tom Blomstrom continued his report by reviewing the upcoming summer camps for 2021:
 - (a) Cedar Grove Park Summer Camp has been filled, even after an increase to capacity within CDC guidelines and has a waitlist of those hoping to join. Miles Park Summer Camp is also doing well with summer camp registrations following increases to the registration numbers.
 - (b) Some new camps and i9sports camps are also lined up for this summer season.
- x. Tom then went back to review some recent Township-held events including:
 - (a) Revealing numbers from the Martin Luther King Jr. Clothing Drive, which resulted in 1,414 bags of clothing donated and that they totaled 14,352 pounds of clothing were donated and totaled the township in receiving \$2,173.92, a portion of which was presented to the Colonial Neighborhood Council and the remainder will support Township Day.
 - (b) Valentine's Day was held on a frosty Friday and had 70 attendees celebrating with Frosty McSnowflake and Crystal Northfrost.
 - (c) Shredding Day on March 6th was as busy as usual, with 23,700 pounds of paper was shredded over the four hours of the event, ending in both trucks leaving filled to the brim. By participating in the shredding day, the township saved 201 trees, 27,400 kw of energy, 35.55 cubic yards of landfill space, and 82,950 gallons of water. Donations generated by the event totaled \$4,975, shattering records and resulting in approximately \$1,700 going to the Barren Hill Fire Company and \$1,700 to the department.
 - (d) Teenie Shamrock Day was held for the first time and resulted in nearly 40 people attending the indoor, socially distanced event.
 - (e) The Lions Club of Whitemarsh cancelled the annual Egg hunt due to an abundance of caution.
- xi. Tom Blomstrom then previewed the upcoming events which included:
 - (a) The spring Wells St. Clean-up was announced that it will follow social distancing and that John Monro would not be attending due to COVID-19 worries, but would still feature one of his associates in John Zollers and the Jolly Green Giant to assist.
 - (b) See-A-Truck is scheduled for April 24th and all sessions are sold out.
 - (c) Concerts at the Courts is scheduled for April 15th with Mojo and the Helper Monkeys playing from 7pm – 9pm. It is the first time for the event and for an event to be BYO. Planning walkthrough is scheduled for April 7th.
 - (d) History Bus Tour has been cancelled due to COVID-19 and the inability to reasonably socially distance.
 - (e) Mini Spring Fling is scheduled for Thursday May 13th.
- xii. Tom Blomstrom announced that Whitemarsh Little League installed a new shed at Miles Park's Pony field, moving the shed that had been there to the AA field. They are also examining an

improvement to install additional batting cages at the Senior Field. Jim Convey was asked for comment and clarified that the cages wouldn't take up additional space as they will be situated where the current pitchers bullpens are situated. These improvements are being made at Whitemarsh Little League's expense.

xiii. The next reveal is that the Koontz Park building is being outfitted with a new door and 2 sets of windows in the next month.

xiv. Redtail Restoration has been performing environmental invasives work at the McCarthy Park Trail and the basin area. Sean Halbom and the EAB have been the contacts for this job. Tom Blomstrom has worked with Public Works and the Davey Tree Expert Company who have performed soil injections to combat the Spotted Lanternfly infestation at various parks and the library. The John B. Ward arborist will also be assisting in fighting the Spotted Lanternfly at township parks.

xv. As part of the NLT Stewardship Plan at Wells St. Open Space, 4 bird boxes and 5 gourd bird boxes were installed.

xvi. Working with Sean Halbom and the Shade Tree Commission to be a part of the tree tender grant tree planting program. Planting trees at Valley Green Park, Leeland Park and Koontz Park.

xvii. Concession stand bathrooms have been painted and new fixtures have been installed to update damaged ones.

xviii. Public Works installed LED lighting at the Art Center at Cedar Grove and a new AED unit will be installed at the Art Center.

xix. 2 new ADA picnic tables have been purchased for Miles Park.

xx. Tom Blomstrom concluded his report by asking if there were any questions or comments from the Park and Recreation Board members.

(a) No questions were presented, so Tom Blomstrom was granted the ability to continue into the New Business portion of the meeting by Joanne Crawford.

b. NEW BUSINESS

i. Township planned and budgeted for park improvements over at Miles Park to rebuild the basketball courts, address stormwater management, add ADA equipment to the playground area, replace the roof over at the pavilion, and changing out the lights at the basketball courts. Money had been set aside in the 3-year capital budget and DCNR worked with us to complete Phase 1. We are submitting a grant request for the full amount of work to DCNR in which they will provide 50% of the projects cost.

(a) The Phase 2 grant application is due April 14th.

(b) We should be hearing back on the application by the end of 2021 or in the beginning of 2022.

(c) Joanne Crawford acknowledged the lack of quorum, but voiced support for the grant.

c. OLD BUSINESS

i. No old business was discussed during the meeting.

7. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

a. Member of the board, Jim Convey, provided comments regarding electronic recycling. Jim shared his desire to bring it to the Township once again, following a visit to a similar electronic recycling event around Villanova University.

i. Tom Blomstrom confirmed that he recalls the township having done it in the past couple of years. He elaborated on the fact that he was not in charge of the event and thus didn't know all of the details. Tom revealed that due to changes in the acceptance of electronics has changed and now the township would need to pay to dispose of the items, whereas before there was a secondary market for the recycled items.

- ii. Laura Nester added that she had spoken to Township Manager Rick Mellor regarding the electronics recycling and that the challenge has become that non-residents were dumping their items and leaving Whitemarsh Township responsible to clean-up at a cost to the township.
- iii. Joanne Crawford also added that some equipment is needed by local Catholic schools and can be donated to those schools.
- b. Laura Boyle Nester brought forward information regarding a new topic on the Board of Supervisor agenda. She was excited to share that the Township and the Art Center are in a position to purchase the Abolition Hall property. Laura revealed that the agreement of sale will be voted on in the Board of Supervisor meeting on April 8th.
 - i. Joanne Crawford asked if the meeting would be on video and Laura confirmed it would be on Zoom.

8. COMMUNITY MEMBER COMMENTS

- a. No community member comments.

9. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Tom Manley made a motion to adjourn, Jim Convey seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:49pm, unanimously.