



**MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2025**

Present: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Jeffrey Beyer, Carrie Casey, Jeffrey Cohen, Susan Crookston, Melinda Guinn, Nicholas Muller, Jay Troutman, Members

Also Present: Julie Bastianini, Borough Manager; Larry Kurpakus, PWD Director; Michael Stevens, Chief of Police; Kelsey Mersing, Borough Administrative Assistant; Jonathan Colton, Frederick C. Leech, Councilmembers; Cynthia Minogue, resident; Barbara Reichbaum, Rita Ruscetti, Cornelia Harlovic, Trillium Garden Club members; Joe Stemm

Via Zoom: Steve Whittingham, Member; Betsy Monroe, Councilmember

Wes Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

The minutes of the June 9, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved.

Resident Comments

Cynthia Minogue, of 440 Dorseyville Road, mentioned she has played pickleball at McCahill Park several times and has a few suggestions for the Park Commission. She pointed out that the rule of four players on and four players off makes it hard for individuals or couples to play others and meet new people. She requested that this rule be reconsidered.

She also suggested planting trees to shade the court from the morning sun, which currently makes it hard to see during play. Finally, she recommended clarifying the rule about placing a racquet to hold a spot so that each person must set down their own racquet, instead of one person per group doing so.

Mr. Posvar stated that the Park Commission aims for the courts to be a space for social gatherings and will continue to review the rules and planting plan.

Barbara Reichbaum, Rita Ruscetti, and Cornelia Harlovic from the Trillium Garden Club were there to support the deer exclusion fencing, which prevents deer from eating the trillium at the Trillium Trail. Mr. Kurpakus said he contacted a fence vendor who quoted \$134,000 to replace the fence around the Trillium Trail. This quote does not include removing the existing fence or clearing trees to create a fence line for the new fencing. PWD will need to handle this work. The vendor also noted that installing the fencing would require bringing equipment into the area, which could be quite challenging.

Mr. Posvar suggested that the best solution would be to continue patching the existing fencing. He also mentioned that the Borough would maintain the deer exclusion fencing moving forward, as both the Park Commission and the Borough see the fence's value in protecting the trillium.

Park Public Safety

Parking/Dog Enforcement

Chief Stevens stated that the Police Department continues to patrol the permitted parking areas and has noticed more cars with permits.

McCahill Walking Trail

Chief Stevens stated that officers have come upon dogs in parks where they are not permitted, and they issue warnings. He will ask officers to patrol McCahill Park to ensure dogs are not being walked around McCahill Park.

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Mr. Muller stated that there appears to be a professional dog walker using the Borough trails. He mentioned that this person usually has nine or 10 dogs with them and does not attempt to pick up dog waste, and the dogs are out of control. Mr. Muller said this person is usually at Riding Meadow Park during the week, around 8–9 a.m. He also reported that he called the police to report this individual. Chief Stevens stated that people need to call 911 immediately to report any incident at Borough Parks.

Mr. Muller suggested ways to limit access to parks that require parking permits. He mentioned this could be achieved by increasing permit fees or reducing the number of permits issued yearly. Currently, parking permits are free for residents, \$25 for non-residents/Fox Chapel Area School District residents, and \$50 for non-residents. It was proposed that the fee for non-residents be raised substantially. Additionally, it was suggested that the Borough take over issuing permits and collecting payments, which could generate funds for parking lot cameras.

Proposed Crosswalk at Beechwood Farms

Mr. Kurpakus stated that Borough staff met with Allegheny County engineers and Ms. Monroe, who works for Beechwood Farms. There is concern about sight distance. Trees and shrubs are located on the Beechwood property within the county right-of-way. If Beechwood Farms removes some of these, Allegheny County will analyze the feasibility of the best location. He stated that nothing else can be done until sight distance is improved.

Four-Way Stop at Field Club and Hemlock Hollow Roads

Currently, there is a two-way stop with a sign indicating that side traffic doesn't have to stop at the intersection of Field Club and Hemlock Hollow Roads. Chief Stevens recommended that residents concerned about this intersection and would like to see a four-way stop email the Borough Manager to request the installation of stop signs. He explained that this process involves a traffic study.

Ms. Bastianini explained that a four-way stop requires more strict warrants. She also pointed out that stop signs are not traffic calming devices; they are intended to help determine right of way when it is unclear at an intersection. She mentioned that the Borough would need to depend on the traffic engineer for their opinion.

Executive Session

At 10:08 a.m., the Park Commission adjourned into Executive Session to discuss the term expiration of Park Commission member Carrie Casey. At 10:09 a.m., the meeting was reconvened.

Following the Executive Session discussion, it was moved to recommend to the Borough Council that Carrie Casey be reappointed to the Park Commission for another six-year term.

Eagle Scout Projects

Targeting Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)

Mr. Posvar thanked both Victor White and Joshua Lowe for their Eagle Scout projects, which are both complete.

Public Works Report

Ms. Casey stated that knotweed is spreading quickly in the Borough, its parks, and other communities. Mr. Kurpakus said that the PWD has a knotweed plan in place, has finished treating the Borough's right-of-ways with herbicide, and has spot-checked the Borough's parks.

Mr. Kurpakus said that the Borough is hopeful that the Hardie Valley Park DEP Permit for the stormwater/finishing project will be obtained this fall.

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Ms. Guinn stated that the submission for trees from the Ten Million Trees Project has been approved, and the Borough will receive approximately 500 trees on October 9, 2025. These trees can be used in Riding Meadow, where more remediation is needed, and in other park areas throughout the Borough.

Ms. Casey stated that a group of Commission members needs to make a plan regarding what type of trees to plant, where to plant them, etc.

Park Signage

Mr. Posvar stated that Kolano Design's Phase I Implementation will begin soon. He said trail measurements need to be updated. Mr Kurpakus said he can map, wheel, or have a volunteer use GPS to ensure accurate measurements.

Duquesne Light Company (DLC)

Mr. Posvar said that DLC's recent use of herbicides on right-of-ways in Hidden Falls Park and other areas is discouraging. He stated that DLC employed a subcontractor, and the herbicides used seemed appropriate for various locations, including along streams, but only if applied correctly. He also mentioned drafting a letter requesting that DLC and its subcontractors alert trail users when applying herbicides. It was also suggested that the letter include information on proper tree pruning timing to prevent trees from becoming weak and dying.

Live Well Allegheny Campaign

Ms. Peterson proposed that the Borough of Fox Chapel adopt the Live Well Allegheny campaign, a county-wide program sponsored by the Allegheny County Health Department.

Ms. Guinn motioned to recommend to the Borough Council the adoption of the modified 'Live Well Allegheny' program, which includes adopting Resolution No. 713, signifying the Borough of Fox Chapel's intent to collaborate with Allegheny County to achieve the goals of the Live Well Allegheny campaign. Mr. Beyer seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Mr. Cohen motioned to recommend the adoption of proposed ordinance 733 to the Borough Council. Ms. Casey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

As part of the Live Well Allegheny campaign, the Borough will join the Pennsylvania Young Lungs at Play program, creating tobacco-free outdoor spaces in Borough parks and green spaces to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure and protect adults, children, and pets. The Borough will need to advertise Ordinance 733, which prohibits the use of tobacco products in all Borough parks and green spaces.

Foxtrot Trail Run

Mr. Cohen stated that this year's run, which was held on Saturday, September 6, 2025, had 150 runners, fewer than the number of runners in its first race last year. He attributed this to the race being on a Saturday instead of a Sunday, as it was last year. He noted that the one-mile run had half the runners it had last year. Most of those runners are children or parents of children. Sporting events for kids typically take place on Saturdays.

Mr. Cohen said that 42% more money was raised this year than last. It was suggested that there be a group or a smaller rate for children runners next year. Ms. Casey also recommended not using balloons next year, as they can harm birds. She mentioned that a photo booth might be a better option. Mr. Cohen thanked the Police Department, Public Works Department, and volunteers for helping make the race successful.

Ms. Guinn moved to request the Borough Council's approval to hold the trail run again next year. Mr. Troutman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Bird Town Pennsylvania Program

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Ms. Casey stated that she would like to create a resolution to recommend to the Borough Council that the Borough embrace the Lights Out concept during the migratory birding season.

Shady Side Academy West Gate

Mr. Posvar said that Fox Chapel officials met with Shady Side Academy (SSA) officials on May 21, 2025, where SSA explained its reason for choosing the location of the proposed west gate. During this meeting, Borough officials shared their concerns, and both parties agreed to explore options together. SSA received an extension on its application until October 20, 2025. Since then, no new revisions, submissions, or responses to review letters have been sent to the Borough.

Delafield Connector Trail

Mr. Posvar stated that the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy will apply its share of the September 6th Trail Run proceeds to the trail project. He also mentioned that the Borough is exploring the roadside segment because there is a wall, hoping to grade that area into the trail. Mr. Kurpakus said that this is an Allegheny County right-of-way, and the Borough is approaching it formally with an engineering submission, hoping to get an answer this fall.

Ms. Guinn will speak with the park ranger on October 9, 2025, and ask if he can meet with Borough officials after the leaves fall.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- Light Up Fox Chapel – Wednesday, December 3, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- The next Park Commission Meeting is on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 9 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

Shawn M. Peterson
Borough Secretary