



**MINUTES OF THE PARK COMMISSION MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024, AT 9 AM**

PRESENT: Wesley Posvar, Chairperson; Carrie Casey, Nicholas Muller, Susan Crookston, Jeffrey Cohen, Melinda Guinn, Jay Troutman, Jeffrey Beyer, Members; Gary Koehler, Borough Manager; Larry Kurpakus, PWD Director; Michael Stevens, Chief of Police; Shawn M. Peterson, Borough Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Alex Scott, Mayor; Frederick Leech, Councilmember; Victor White, Scout

VIA ZOOM: Betsy Monroe, Park Commission Liaison to Borough Council; Andy Gillespie

ABSENT: Steve Whittingham, Member

Wes Posvar called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

The minutes of the June 10, 2024, meeting were unanimously approved.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

None

FOX CHAPEL BOROUGH – NEW POLICIES

Mr. Posvar stated he spoke with the Borough Solicitor, Bruce Bowden, regarding who needs to sign the Borough's volunteer waiver. Mr. Bowden told Mr. Posvar that everyone who volunteers for the Borough of Fox Chapel should sign a waiver. Mr. Posvar reminded all committee members to sign a waiver and turn it into the Borough office. Waivers are valid for one year.

PARK PUBLIC SAFETY

Chief Stevens stated that the "Permit Parking Only" signs have been installed in all parking lots that require a permit to park. The Police Department has begun issuing citations to all violators without a permit.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Mr. Kurpakus stated the boot brushes had been installed at the Lockhart Loop parking area, Riding Meadow Park, the upper Trillium Trail parking lot, and the lower parking lot serving Hidden Falls Court. He said they are being utilized, and the Park Commission may want to consider installing more at other parks in the future.

He also said that the PWD has started clearing privet bushes on the upper segment of Hidden Falls Trail. Grading of the trail will be done to address erosion from recent storm events when the developer removes the stormwater pipes.

Mr. Kurpakus also said that decomposing benches have been removed from Riding Meadow Park. LSSE Engineers have started design and permitting for Phase 2 of the Sanitary Sewer Relocation. This Phase will continue from Hardie Valley Park through Riding Meadow Park and will connect adjacent to Riding Meadow Road. The PWD will most likely begin working on clearing the area in late winter and begin the sewer work in early spring 2025. Ms. Casey recommended possible park closures from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the week when work is being performed.

McCahill Park Improvements

Mr. Koehler stated a pre-construction meeting with the Borough, contractor, and engineers was held on Friday, September 6, 2024. A meeting with the Allegheny County Conservation District will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, September 10, 2024. The contractor will begin mobilization later this week. Work is scheduled to be completed by November 20, 2024. The Western PA Conservancy and the Borough plans to plant the rain garden in early to late spring of 2025. Annie's Field of Dreams will remain open during construction.

PARK COMMISSION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

BIRD TOWN PENNSYLVANIA PROGRAM

Ms. Casey stated that Ms. Guinn and Mr. Beyer will travel to local schools to present the Bird Town PA Program. She also said that Mr. Muller will work with a group of Scouts to build birdhouses. Ms. Casey said that she would begin looking at Borough ordinances to see if changes need to be made to benefit birds. Ms. Guinn arranged for the Audobon Society of Western PA and Bird Town PA Program to have a welcome table at the Foxtrot Race.

TRILLIUM TRAIL PARK

Proposed Eagle Scout Project – Targeting Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Victor White presented his proposed Eagle Scout Project, Saving Hemlocks from Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), for the Park Commission's consideration. Mr. White's proposed plan consists of educating the public about HWA through presentations and the creation of a website; conducting an Eastern Hemlock Tree Survey of the Fox Chapel parks to determine the number of healthy and infected hemlocks, and physically and geologically tagging the hemlocks; and conducting a controlled beetle release on two hemlocks located in Salamander Park. The beetles are predatory only to HWA and the use of beetles to control HWA is approved by the USDA.

Ms. Casey suggested not only having Mr. White treat the two trees in Salamander Park but also having the Borough treat two trees in another park with a chemical treatment to see how the two treatments coincide. Mr. Muller further suggested selecting two trees from a third area of the Borough to act as a control group. Further, each group of trees (control, treated with beetles, and treated with pesticide) needs to be clearly identified with a plan for pre-and-post treatment infestation assessments.

Mr. Posvar suggested that a PWD employee who already has a pesticide license should be trained in the type of treatments used on HWA.

Ms. Guinn moved to approve Mr. White's proposed project to target Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. She stated that she was very impressed by Mr. White's project and that the survey of the parks would be very beneficial to the Borough. Mr. Cohen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

FOXTROT 1 MILE/5K TRAIL RUN

Mr. Cohen stated that the event was a resounding success. There were 227 people who registered for the race; 70 of those registered were under the age of 18, 45 individuals and businesses donated, and there were over a dozen volunteers. Mr. Cohen said that the race cost a little over \$8,000, and the funds raised were a little over \$15,000, giving the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy a profit of about \$7,000. All funds raised from the Fox Chapel Foxtrot will go toward the planting of the rain garden at McCahill Park.

Mr. Leech thanked the Public Works and Police Departments for their involvement in the run and Mr. Cohen for his great leadership. Mr. Cohen also stated that resident Matt Harris was invaluable.

10 MILLION TREE PROJECT

Ms. Guinn stated the Borough requested trees in July and it has been confirmed that the Borough will receive 1,000 trees. The seedlings will be planted in completed construction areas, the entrance to Hidden Falls, and Salamander Park. It was requested that a sweep of failed plantings be completed prior to the acceptance of the new trees.

Ms. Casey stated that the Fox Chapel Parks Conservancy will donate 1,000 bulbs (allium or daffodils). She would like to link the plantings so they are done at the same time with volunteers.

DELAFIELD CONNECTOR TRAIL

A walk-through of the connector trail will held on Monday, November 11, 2024, at 9 a.m. with an alternate date of Saturday, November 16, 2024, at 9 a.m.

SALAMANDER PARK – VERNAL POOL INQUIRY

A Resident inquired if the Borough would be interested in registering its vernal pool at Salamander Park with the PA Natural Heritage Program. Mr. Posvar suggested the commission read the *Best Management Practices* contained in the PNHP publication "VERNAL POOL CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT" and discuss them at the next meeting.

PARK COMMISSION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Joint Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Posvar stated the Planning Commission has recommended that Borough Council adopt the Joint Comprehensive Plan with O'Hara Township. The next step will be for Borough Council to hold a public hearing on Monday, September 16, 2024, at 6 p.m., after which they may adopt the Plan.

Priority Management Program

Mr. Cohen stated that twenty-one items have been completed on the Priority Spreadsheet created after the April 22, 2024, Park Commission meeting. He stated he would like to add one item to the list: leaf management. Mr. Koehler stated the Borough newsletter already contains articles on how residents should mulch their leaves or let them lay where they fall. Mr. Cohen suggested having a pledge for residents to sign in an effort to reduce the leaf collection in the spirit of benefiting the environment and local ecosystem. If enough residents sign the pledge, Mr. Cohen suggested having some type of incentive like a community celebration and recognition event.

Ms. Crookston also suggested a way for the Borough to be more environmentally friendly: reduce the leaf collection by one week, with the last collection beginning the week of Thanksgiving.

PARK STEWARD REPORTS

Mr. Muller stated that three trees are down near the Lockhart Loop. Mr. Koehler suggested Mr. Kurpakus begin tracking the trees the PWD removed from Borough parks and trails.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

- Touch-a-Truck, 401 Fox Chapel Road @ the new Public Works Garage – Saturday, September 21st from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Paint Pumpkins with Police, 401 Fox Chapel Road behind the Police Department – Saturday, October 19th from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Light Up Fox Chapel, 401 Fox Chapel Road – Wednesday, December 4th from 5 – 7 p.m.
- The next Park Commission Meeting is on Monday, December 9, 2024, at 9 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Shawn M. Peterson
Borough Secretary