

WARREN COUNTY
BOARD OF RECREATION COMMISSIONERS
500 Mt. Pisgah Avenue, PO Box 179
Oxford, NJ 07863

May 17, 2016
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Helbing opened the meeting at 5:07 p.m., read the Open Public Meeting Notice, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Michael Helbing, John Halmi, David Detrick, Charles Fineran,
William Hann (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)

Members Absent: Raymond Tobaygo, Matt Davis

Guests: Elizabeth Roy, Roberta Kugelmeyer, Debbie Huff, Kevin Huff, Bruce Gardner,
Cathie Gardner, Dottie Maxwell, Tom Maxwell, Lauren Maxwell, William Read,
Bonnie Read, Bill Read

Staff: Corey Tierney, Christina Roberts

MINUTES: The April 12, 2016 minutes were reviewed. Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Halmi to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Helbing noted that there were members of the public in attendance and opened the floor to public comment. Neighbors of the Port Murray Preserve attended the meeting to ask questions and express their concerns about the newly constructed parking area on Hoffman Road.

William Read - Mr. Read expressed concern that there is no "End of Trail" sign where the Morris Canal Greenway Trail ends at Harts Lane. He also inquired about whether parking would be allowed there and, if so, whether the County would help maintain Harts Lane. He privately maintains the road and is worried that heavier traffic will cause damage. He also asked if there are future plans for a port-a-john facility.

Mr. Helbing and Mr. Tierney addressed Mr. Read's concerns as follows:

- A trail head and a "No Public Access" sign will be installed on a post at the end of Harts Lane, south of the railroad bridge. The same signage will be installed at the Brickyard Road bridge.
- Anyone accessing that area on behalf of the county, such as volunteers who are doing maintenance work on the trails, should have a permit posted in their vehicle.
- Public parking is prohibited on Hart's Lane and anywhere on county parkland that it is not designated as a public parking area, so there should not be any extra traffic on that road and no need for county maintenance of the lane.
- ATVs are prohibited in all county parks.
- Port-a-johns can be ordered if visitation warrants the need, but such a need is not anticipated at this park.

Cathie Gardner - Ms. Gardner stated that the parking area is not what they expected; they thought it was going to be much smaller. She doesn't want to have to look at the parking lot all summer. She is concerned with drug users in the park and her privacy/safety and wanted to know who polices the park. She is afraid people visiting the park to picnic will leave garbage in the park. Ms. Gardner does not want the Port Murray Preserve listed on the Warren Parks website at all, but if it has to be, she doesn't want any activities other than walking and hiking listed. Someone also recently parked in her personal driveway while the parking area was under construction.

Mr. Helbing and Mr. Tierney addressed Ms. Gardner's concerns as follows:

- The county has plans to install vegetative buffers on the north and south sides in order to provide the adjoining neighbors with additional privacy from the parking lot. At the recommendation of a landscape planning professional, the county had planned to install the buffer in fall rather than in the summer so that they had a greater likelihood of surviving.
- If anyone has problems with park visitors committing criminal activity, they should call Mansfield Township Police Department.
- All parks have the carry-in/carry-out garbage policy, but the NJ Youth Corps along with volunteers also routinely help to keep the parks clean of debris or garbage.
- A kiosk with a trail map and information about the park will be installed near the parking area to dissuade visitors from wandering off trails or going in areas or neighboring properties where they are not permitted. Neighbors are also of course welcome to post their private property with no trespassing signs.
- All activities other than walking and hiking had been removed from the website, but the Board of Recreation must formally decide upon allowable uses.

Roberta Kugelmeyer - Ms. Kugelmeyer lives on Canal Lane and is concerned with horseback riding, picnicking, and bicycling being listed on the website and horse trailers in the parking area. She also stated that people are continuing to hunt in the preserve (during hunting season) and that hunting blinds were put up, even after the notice was sent out to neighbors. Ms. Kugelmeyer also inquired about the County working with the Mansfield Township to develop its parks. She also asked about the NJ Youth Corps and if youth were supervised.

Mr. Helbing and Mr. Tierney addressed Ms. Kugelmeyer's concerns with the following resolutions:

- Mr. Detrick said the parking area is not and will never be conducive to horse trailer parking.
- Hunting blinds installed on county property should be reported to the Department of Land Preservation. Illegal hunting on the preserve should also be reported to the Mansfield Township police. Mr. Tierney stated that as visitors walk the property more frequently, it may also deter hunters from using the property.
- Mr. Tierney said the County is not currently working with Mansfield or other municipalities to develop parks, but does assist with open space preservation projects and making trail connections.
- Mr. Tierney explained that the NJ Youth Corps is a non-profit group that does much of the mowing and maintenance work on County parkland and trails. They work with youth and young adults that complete the work under the supervision of paid full-time staff and there is also an educational component to the program.
- Mr. Detrick also noted that what amenities a park offers will determine the types of crowd it attracts. Merrill Creek, for example, only offers boating and fishing, so it gets nowhere near the crowds that places that offer swimming would get. Same goes for the Port Murray Preserve; if only walking and hiking are offered, it should only attract visitors looking to do those activities. Mr. Detrick also stated that the use of the park has improved tremendously from years ago when dirt bikes and ATVs used it regularly.

Debbie Huff - Ms. Huff inquired about who will be mowing the area of grass near the parking lot. Mr. Tierney said the NJ Youth Corps will assume the mowing responsibility. She also requested that the single post sign that is being installed be pushed back a little from her hedgerow so it is a little more inconspicuous. Ms. Huff also inquired about the rerouting of the canal trail.

- Mr. Tierney will speak with the engineers about an acceptable location for the sign and make sure she has a chance to review the location before final installation.
- Mr. Helbing explained that the Morris Canal Greenway Trail currently uses the old Terra Cotta Lane, rather than following the exact location of the canal, because there are sensitive areas of the old canal where the county does not want to invite the public. Nevertheless, the county tries to follow the canal as closely as possible.

Ms. Huff and Mr. Read expressed another concern about the Terra Cotta lane and the railroad bridge on Brickyard Road. He inquired whose responsibility it would be to maintain or repair that bridge if it needed. Mr. Tierney stated that the bridge is not on county property and is not needed by the county since it has access via Hoffman Road. The county's current intention is also not to have Terra Cotta Lane as an access route for adjoining landowners. The Brickyard Road bridge could become a legal issue if a problem ever arose because it is unclear who is responsible for maintaining the bridge. Mr. Read said that most of those bridges are orphan bridges and that no one actually owns them. He had to take Conrail to court to pay for the replacement a bridge on his property.

It was reaffirmed that the website will reflect the changes mentioned above. Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Detrick to change the allowable activities at the park to passive recreation only open to walking and hiking; all others will be removed. Motion carried

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Morris Canal Committee

- The canal bus tour was last weekend and was well-attended with a full bus load of 38 people. They did an additional route on the tour. A similar tour will be scheduled in the fall.
- The canal boat replica for the Town of Phillipsburg is still being assembled on-site, but nearing completion.
- Mr. Helbing suggested the sign for inclined Plane 5 near the Kugelmeyer's house be moved to the base of the inclined plane at the end of the driveway to deter people from trying to find it.

Trails

- Mr. Helbing stated that there are no updates, but he needs to do a lot of cutting and post installation on the trails.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Parks Foundation Outreach Meeting - Was held Saturday, April 30th and was well-attended.

Preservation Day - The event is this Saturday, May 21st at Ramsaysburg Homestead.

Parks Foundation Workday - The RVC/PVC connection bridge installation at White Lake is Saturday, June 11th.

National Geographic Wild & Scenic Delaware River - The New Jersey pre-launch meeting was held at Walpack Inn. Mr. Tierney and Ms. Roy attended. Nominations can continue.

MAINTENANCE

The Morton Building on the Pump House property was broken into and the door was destroyed. The building has been broken into numerous times and contains railroad artifacts. The Miller's asked if the Department would pay for a new door and provided an estimate of approximately \$4,000.00. After a brief discussion, Charlie Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hann to pay \$1,000.00 to replace the door, along with offering to install a security system, decoy cameras, and a motion activated light. Motion carried. The Department will contact the Miller's to request three proposals for under \$1,000 to replace the door and to discuss the Board's other suggestions.

ACQUISITION UPDATES

White/Woo - Closing on the trail easement was held. The vegetative buffer and fence will need to be installed when the trail connecting Brass Castle Road to Meadowbreeze Park is constructed, likely not until next year. The grass path will be mowed and maintained by the NJ Youth Corps, or perhaps the township if it is amenable.

Cowey - Mr. Helbing inquired if Mr. Tierney contacted the estate of Mr. Cowey, across from Villa Roller Rink, as the Canal runs through the property. Mr. Tierney explained the current issue with the Pohatcong Creek groundwater contamination area and how it is impacting state funding for both acquisition projects and farmland preservation for properties within the affected area from Bread Lock Park to Washington, NJ. The contamination area includes many sites that include the canal. Mr. Tierney is still looking into a resolution to the problem; he has a call into Mr. Osborn at Green Acres to find out their stance on the issue.

Pool - Mr. Tierney contacted the realtor for the Pool property and was informed that due to a Sheriff's sale, the property is now owned by the bank and they most likely will not take less than the \$120,000.00 that they put into the property. Mr. Hann suggested perhaps buying the property for that price and then have the house demolished for \$10,000.00. Mr. Tierney will try to contact the bank to see if they would be willing to sell only the land and except out approximately one acre around the house.

Ferrara - Mr. Tierney, Mr. Detrick, and Ms. Roy visited the property. The property does not contain the canal, but would offer 10 ½ - 11 ½ acres with potential to connect the canal trail under the railroad culvert to the municipal park. Another issue is either rerouting around or gaining access to the parcel that this property wraps around. Due to several concerns, this will be tabled for now.

Cornell Kenyon (formerly Maffenbeier) - The property adjoins White Lake property. Landowner verbally agreed to our offer of \$291,208.00. The Nature Conservancy and the County will each contribute approximately 25% (\$67,000.00 each) and Green Acres would cover the other 50%. Mr. Detrick made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fineran to approve the acquisition. Motion carried.

Canal Lane in Hackettstown - Mr. Tierney met with the landowner. There is an existing access easement with the Hills of Independence that we may be able to piggyback on. Due to lack of time, this will be tabled for now.

True - Property would connect to the Oxford Furnace Lake loop. Mr. Helbing is very interested in the property, but wants to check for mine pits. Mr. Hann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fineran to move forward with appraisals and the Phase I PAR. Motion carried. We could potentially get up to 50% reimbursement from Highlands and 50% from Green Acres, so we may be able to acquire it fairly inexpensive.

NEXT MEETING - The next meeting will be held on June 14, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT - There being no further business, Mr. Fineran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Halmi to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christina', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Christina Roberts
Administrative Clerk