



Allen Township Park and Recreation Board

Meeting Minutes March 23, 2023 5:30 P.M.

Site Meetings of the Allen Township Park and Recreation Board was held on Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 5:30 P.M. at the Howertown Park, located at 10 Short Lane, Northampton, PA and the Savage Road Dog Park, located at 673 Savage Road, Northampton, PA.

1. Roll Call:

Present: Gary Behler; Paul Link; Louise Bugbee (left at 6:04 P.M.); Nicole Dotta; Maria Bonett (arrived at 6:30 P.M.); Adrienne Ibarra; Donna Teklits; Ilene Eckhart, Manager; Maurin Ritinski, Administrative Assistant; and Tom Gogle, Public Works Crew Leader

Absent: Mary Austin

2. **Announcements and/or Actions to Add New Items to Current Agenda:** Ms. Eckhart stated that she had asked Mr. Gogle to attend and take part in the site visits of the parks. She indicated that due to his extensive knowledge of the parks that he would be a valuable asset to the Park and Recreation Board during these visits.

3. **Review of Minutes:** Ms. Teklits made a motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2023; seconded by Ms. Bugbee. On the motion, by roll call vote, all members present voted yes. (*Ms. Bonett was not present at the time of this motion*).

4. **Public to be Heard:** No public comment.

5. Business Items

A. Park and Recreation Board Spring 2023 Park Site Visits:

- i. **March 23, 2023 – 5:30 P.M. – Howertown Park and Savage Road Dog Park**
- ii. **April 27, 2023 – 5:30 P.M. – Allen Township Riverview Preserve and Kreidersville Park**
- iii. **May 25, 2023 – 5:30 P.M. – Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park**

Howertown Park Site Visit

The site visit began at Howertown Park. Ms. Eckhart provided a brief history of the park and the parcels that make up the park. She indicated that parcels were acquired and donated. Ms. Eckhart further explained the Howertown Park has existing restraints and conditions due to prior funding by PA DCNR. As a condition of this prior funding, there was an audit of the property upon completion of the Rt. 329

Improvements Project. The audit by DCNR found that due to the installation of stormwater facilities within the park, which were associated with the road project, the Township will eventually need to acquire additional acreage for recreational use to make up for this lost space. Ms. Eckhart stated that prior to Howertown Park existing, the property was part of a farm that housed cattle. Ms. Eckhart noted that the Township had added the field house, playgrounds, and sports fields. The newest pavilion is by the soccer field, where added following the donation of land (by the Horwith Family) on the west side of the Dry Run Creek. Ms. Eckhart informed the Park and Recreation Board that the bridge over Dry Run is made from an old flatbed trailer. Mr. Gogle reported that the Public Works Crew has made repairs to this bridge overtime.

Mr. Link inquired about the number of parking spots available at Howertown Park. He feels that knowing this number and the limits of parking will be useful in the future with planning events. Ms. Eckhart will look further into this.

Mr. Gogle provided information about the playground directly north of the pavilion by the Field House. He reported that this playground is prone to flooding. Mr. Gogle explained that there is excessive runoff from the roof of the Field House that travels down to this playground and eventually to Dry Run. The playground was observed to be a lower grade than the surrounding area. Mr. Gogle reported frequently having to fence off the playground area due to flooding and indicated that the playground mulch often washes away. He explained that Dry Run has been known to overflow as well. Mr. Link inquired if the playground equipment could be raised. Mr. Gogle explained that the equipment was installed according to the manufacturer's directions which included cementing the equipment. Mr. Link and Mr. Gogle agreed that this would be difficult to raise given that it is cemented in. Mr. Gogle spoke about the lifespan of playground equipment and that this equipment is due for replacement. Ms. Eckhart questioned the Park and Recreation Board if the playground could be relocated to an area that is less likely to flood. Ms. Teklits would like to see the playground areas consolidated.

The Park and Recreation Board toured the Field House. Ms. Ibarra and Ms. Dotta reported that the northern part of the building is used for Bath Allen Youth Club board meetings. They indicated that the area is not used for many other purposes. Ms. Eckhart and Mr. Gogle explained several issues with this building. These issues include the need to use moth balls, water issues, and heating issues. They explained that there is no running water during the winter months and that the building is extremely difficult to heat due to the block structure and no insulation. Ms. Eckhart questioned if the garage doors are practical. Ms. Dotta indicated that the Bath Allen Youth Club rarely uses the garage doors. She only has knowledge of one time when they were used. Ms. Dotta indicated that the space could be used for events such as Easter egg hunts and movie nights but it is very cold in the building. Ms. Eckhart reported that there were provisions made in the floor of the Field House to allow for radiant heat. She explained that she is unsure if this is a feasible option. Ms. Eckhart also explained that the water comes from the City of Bethlehem and that it is not metered. She reported that the City of Bethlehem is aware of this. Mr. Gogle reported that there are no issues with the Field House roof. He noted that he would like to work to improve the down spouts and soffits, as well as do some minor exterior painting.

Mr. Gogle noted that the bathroom is on a time control lock in the warmer months from approximately 7AM to 8:30 PM. He clarified that there is no Field House restroom facility use in the winter months due to the water being shut off. Ms. Eckhart reported that there are port-o-lets at Howertown Park. These are owned by Allen Township due to the Township being classified as "high-

risk". She indicated that there have been issues with vandalism where port-o-lets have been set on fire at the park. The port-o-lets are routinely serviced by a company.

Mr. Gogle provided an overview of the snack stand and how to operate it. Ms. Ibarra stated that safety is a concern in this space. Mr. Link suggested that the Fire Company's kitchen equipment may be useful in this space.

Ms. Eckhart showed the Park and Recreation Board where the camera system and network is housed in the utility room. She provided a brief update regarding these improvements. She indicated the utility room, which houses the IT components will be secure locked to restrict access. All members agreed this was an appropriate change.

Ms. Bugbee questioned the reason for cutting the trees down along Dry Run. Ms. Eckhart explained that this was necessary for line of sight for the new security improvements. She explained that she will be researching some options for planting along the Dry Run that will not impede the camera's line of sight. At this time Ms. Bugbee left the meeting (6:04 PM). Ms. Teklits indicated that shade needs to be added along the fields as well.

Mr. Gogle gave a tour of the storage building. He provided information regarding field care. Mr. Gogle explained that the Public Works Department maintains the fields as well as the Bath Allen Youth Club.

Members of the Park and Recreation Board continued to discuss possible improvements such as adding a pickle ball court, a volley ball court, and some heating options for the field house.

Members further discussed drainage concerns and the swale along the main baseball field. Ms. Dotta reported that there have been injuries due to players tripping and falling while running to catch a ball. Members debated if a pipe could be buried to transport the water or if an impervious bridge could be put in place. Ms. Eckhart noted there are numerous constraints regarding stormwater. Mr. Link stated that an engineer should review the fields and the proposed new additions once determined prior to any landscaping being considered. Ms. Dotta suggested that lighting be added for security along walking paths. Mr. Gogle explained that this improvement would require extensive electrical upgrades. He indicated that there are underground lines in unknown locations. Ms. Eckhart reported that there is sewer running through the property, including a sewer main, water from the City of Bethlehem, fiber optics from Verizon, and she noted that there is an extensive amount of the park that is in the flood plain. Mr. Behler explained that battery operated LED or solar lights may be an option.

The Park and Recreation Board briefly discussed the basketball court. It was mentioned that this court is frequently used but that there are no basketball leagues.

Ms. Dotta and Ms. Ibarra discussed the baseball field along Atlas Road. They explained that this field is seldom used and is reserved for tournaments. Mr. Gogle reported that due to the infrequent use, Bath Allen Youth Club does not maintain this field as consistently as the other fields. It frequently has weeds until there is a tournament. Mr. Link discussed the different age groups that play on each field. Members discussed the field sizes and fencing limits. Mr. Gogle questioned if softball would be able to be played on the fields. It was noted that Bath Allen Youth Club only offers baseball. Mr. Link indicated

that Allen Township still has a youth club which is currently inactive. Members discussed the difficulty of finding coaches and other individuals who would be willing to get involved.

The Park and Recreation Board reviewed the soccer field. It was noted that the field is not regulation size. Ms. Teklits questioned if the field could also be used for lacrosse and Ms. Dotta questioned if the field could be used for field hockey.

At this time Ms. Bonnet arrived (6:30 PM).

Jason Frack, 600 Snow Hill Road, commented that there is a lot of dead space at Howertown Park that is not being used properly. Mr. Link indicated that he would like to see Howertown Park connected to the Nor Bath Trail.

Allen Township Dog Park

The Park and Recreation Board members and members of the public who were in attendance traveled to the Allen Township Dog Park to view the site. Ms. Eckhart explained the property management agreement between Allen Township and Northampton County. Members expressed their satisfaction of the new gate at the parking lot. Mr. Gogle explained how the new gate was operated. It was explained that during the temporary seasonal closure of the park, the Public Works Department had placed cones at the entrance to deter anyone from parking in the lot. The cones had been moved frequently by individuals wanting to access the park. It was reported that dog owners would lift their dog over the fence and allow them to play in the park during the closure. Mr. Gogle explained that the park is closed to allow for Public Works to apply lime and fertilizer to the grass. This allows the grass to grow in prior to foot traffic being introduced in the spring. Mr. Gogle provided some background of improvements made to the dog park, including the expansion of parking. Ms. Eckhart indicated that grants from Northampton County have also contributed to improvements at the dog park. She reported that water fountains were added. Mr. Behler reported that trees were donated. Ms. Teklits questioned why the benches were not under the shade structures. Mr. Gogle explained that the shade moves throughout the day. Ms. Eckhart indicated that the shade is meant for the dogs.

Denise O'Brien, 885 Graystone Circle, questioned if there is anything that can be done about the white on the tree bark. This white color is likely due to dog urine. Mr. Gogle explained that he can place wire around the trees to restrict access from the dogs. He also suggested mulching around the trees.

The Park and Recreation Board walked around the rest of the property that is part of the property management agreement. Ms. Eckhart pointed out seedlings, trees, a pollinator habitat and the meadow to the rear of the property. She explained the meadow took about three years to properly established. She further explained the goal has been to convert areas to meadow plantings, where practical, to save in the perpetual mowing of turf grass which does not benefit nature.

6. Public to be Heard: Denise O'Brien, 885 Graystone Circle, questioned the Park and Recreation Board's plans for benches at the Dog Park. Ms. Eckhart indicated that due to the responses gathered by the survey, the Park and Recreation Board will review bench options for individuals with disabilities and consider adding a bench that meets the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards that is closer to the entrance of the dog park.

8. Announcements: Mr. Link inquired if everyone knew where the Allen Township Riverview Preserve was located. The majority of individuals were not sure where this property was located. Members decided to meet at the Allen Township Municipal Building, located at 4714 Indian Trail Road, to start the next meeting. From the Township Building everyone travel over to the Allen Township Riverview Preserve. It was noted that vehicles traveling to this property should be higher and/or have four-wheel drive. Members were cautioned to wear boots, long pants, and bring bug spray.

The upcoming meetings held at the Allen Township Fire Company Building (unless otherwise noted) as listed on the agenda are as follows:

- Board of Supervisors – Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- Board of Supervisors – Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- Planning Commission – Monday, April 17, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- Park and Recreation Board – Thursday, April 27, 2023 at **5:30 PM** (*Site Visits of Allen Township Riverview Preserve & Kreidersville Park*)

9. Adjournment: There being no further comments or business the meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ilene M. Eckhart



Allen Township Park and Recreation Board

Meeting Agenda
Thursday, March 23, 2023
5:30 P.M.

Meeting Site Visit Locations:

**The Howertown Park Field House, located at 10 Short Lane, Northampton, PA and
the Savage Road Dog Park, 673 Savage Road, Northampton, PA**

The Allen Township Park and Recreation Board meeting will be held at The Howertown Park Field House, located at 10 Short Lane, Northampton, PA and the Savage Road Dog Park, 673 Savage Road, Northampton, PA

A summary of the public comment policy and procedures is located at the end of the agenda as a reference for individuals wishing to address the Board during the “Public to be Heard” segments.

Note: Per Act 65 of 2021 requirements, this agenda was posted to the Township website, at the Township Municipal Building, and at the physical location of the proposed meeting, by Township staff on: March 21, 2023.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

____ Paul Link, Chairman ____ Gary Behler, Member ____ Ilene M. Eckhart, Manager
____ Donna Teklits, Secretary ____ Adrienne Ibarra, Member ____ Louise Bugbee, Member
____ Nicole Dotta, Member ____ Mary Austin, Member ____ Maria Bonett, Member

3. Announcements and/or Actions to Add Items to Agenda

4. Review of Minutes

5. Public to be Heard (Residents shall limit their comments to no more than three minutes)

6. Business Items

A. Park and Recreation Board Spring 2023 Park Site Visits

- i. March 23, 2023 – 5:30 PM – Howertown Park and Savage Road Dog Park
- ii. April 27, 2023 – 5:30 PM – Allen Township Riverview Preserve and Kreidersville Park
- iii. May 25, 2023 – 5:30 PM – Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park

7. Public to be Heard (Residents shall limit their comments to no more than three minutes)

8. Next Meetings – All meetings will be held at the Allen Township Fire Company Building, located at 3530 Howertown Road, Northampton, PA – **WITH THE EXCEPTION AS THOSE NOTED AS SITE VISITS BELOW**

- ◆ Board of Supervisors, Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- ◆ Board of Supervisors, Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- ◆ Planning Commission, Monday, April 17, 2023 at 6:00 PM

- ◆ Park and Recreation Board, Thursday, April 27 at 5:30 PM (Site Visits Allen Township Riverview Preserve and Kreidersville Park)

9. Adjournment

-Public Comment Policy and Procedures-

- 1. A period for public comment will be held at the beginning of the meeting and at the conclusion of all agenda business items. Any public comments or questions shall be reserved until time on the agenda. Public comments and questions will not be permitted during the course of the Board's/Commission's business items.*
- 2. Individuals who speak must give their name, address and municipality prior to speaking.*
- 3. Time limit on length of public comment or presentation will be three (3) minutes per person, per meeting.*
- 4. A speaker will only be granted one three (3) minute extension, if given, for a maximum speaking time of six (6) minutes, at the discretion of the Chairman.*
- 5. Comments/questions shall be directed to the Board/Commission members only.*
- 6. Procedures will be in place to maintain proper decorum for the hearing. Public participation will be allowed but the Board will ensure respect for all citizens and maintain order. Personal attacks and outbursts will be ruled out of order. The Chairman of the Board or Commission may, within this discretion, rule out of order scandalous, impertinent, and redundant comment or any comment the discernible purpose of which is to disrupt or prevent the conduct of the business of the meeting.*
- 7. Individuals with lengthy written statements may submit them for the record and provide a verbal summary of three (3) minutes or less. Interested persons may email public comments via email, sent to manager@allentownship.org until 3:00pm local time the day of each meeting or by contacting the Township office. Public comment received via email will be read at the outset of the meeting. If you require an auxiliary aid, service or other accommodation, please contact the Allen Township offices in advance. In addition, an audio recording of the meeting will be posted to the Township website: www.allentownship.org within 48 hours of the meeting.*