



Allen Township Park and Recreation Board

Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2023
6:00 P.M.

A General Meeting of the Allen Township Park and Recreation Board was held on Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 6:00 P.M. at the Allen Township Fire Company Building, located at 3530 Howertown Road, Northampton, PA.

1. Roll Call:

Present: Gary Behler; Louise Bugbee; Nicole Dotta; Adrienne Ibarra; Donna Teklits; Ilene Eckhart, Manager; and Maurin Ritinski, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Mary Austin; Maria Bonett; and Paul Link

2. **Announcements and/or Actions to Add New Items to Current Agenda:** No announcements and/or actions to add new items to the current agenda.

3. **Annual Organization:** Mr. Behler explained the duties of the Chairman and Secretary. Ms. Eckhart indicated that minutes will be prepared detailing the discussions that occurred at each meeting. Ms. Eckhart stated that she and Ms. Ritinski will be responsible for taking notes during the meeting and drafting the minutes. Upon approval of the minutes by the Park and Recreation Board, Ms. Eckhart explained that the minutes will be provided to the Board of Supervisors and will serve as the monthly report. After a brief discussion, Mr. Behler made a motion to appoint Ms. Teklits as Secretary subject to her appointment to the Park and Recreation Board at the February 14th Board of Supervisors meeting, seconded by Ms. Bugbee. On the motion, by roll call vote, all members present voted yes. Mr. Behler made a motion to appoint Mr. Link as Chairman, seconded by Ms. Dotta. On the motion, by roll call vote, all members present voted yes. Due to Mr. Link's absence at this meeting, Mr. Behler served as Chairman for the remainder of this meeting. There were no objections by members regarding this.

4. **Public to be Heard:** No public comment. Mr. Behler indicated that there were no members of the public in attendance at tonight's meeting.

5. Business Items

A. **Discussion on Process for Receiving and Accepting Donations:** Ms. Eckhart reported that the Allen Township Dog Park is a highly used park. She indicated that Allen Township does not own the land but maintains the property under a property management agreement with Northampton County through 2035. She explained that the initial park funding was acquired through a Northampton County Path Grant. Northampton County does require an annual certificate of insurance and they do make visits to the park from time to time to check on the maintenance of the park. Ms. Eckhart reported that the Allen Township Municipal Office receives frequent inquiries on how to make donations to the

dog park. Ms. Ritinski provided an example of a recent phone call that she received from a gentlemen who wanted to make a donation to the Allen Township Dog Park in memory of his beloved dog. Ms. Ritinski explained that this gentlemen wanted to fund an improvement for the park in memory of his pet, such as a bench with a plaque or another improvement. Ms. Ritinski explained that at the time there was no process for receiving and accepting donations at the time. Ms. Eckhart reported that as part of the Park and Recreation Board Ordinance (Ordinance No. 2022-02) there is a section regarding the acceptance of gifts and disbursements of money. Ms. Eckhart indicated that a procedure for the acceptance of donations will need to be determined by the Park and Recreation Board. Ms. Eckhart explained that it would need to be determined if the Township is responsible for maintaining any memorial plaques. Ms. Teklits stated that she would not want memorial donations to get out of hand. Ms. Eckhart explained that the Board may consider what goals there are for the improvement of the dog park and allow people to donate towards these goals. Ms. Bugbee questioned if this would be a separate fund. Mr. Behler was agreeable to having a separate fund. Ms. Dotta recommended the goals and donation list be updated quarterly. Ms. Eckhart indicated that donations may be able to be pursued. She explained that a Pet Supplies Plus warehouse is located in the municipality and they may be interested in donating to the dog park.

Ms. Bugbee inquired if the dog park has the ability to expand and if Allen Township would ever own the land. Ms. Eckhart explained that the land will always be owned by Northampton County but that there is more land that could allow for expansion of the dog park. Ms. Eckhart explained that there is a meadow planting to the rear of the dog park and the Nor-Bath Trail goes through the property. She noted that trees provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission were planted for the other side of the property. This portion of the property is off Barbara Drive, a cul-de-sac off of Phyllese Drive. Ms. Eckhart reported that the tree tubes are frequently stolen from the newly planted trees. Ms. Bugbee mentioned that the fence would need to be extended if the dog park area was expanded.

Ms. Ibarra questioned what improvements are currently needed at the dog park. Ms. Eckhart reported that shading has been recently added. She reported that there is a consistent need to maintain the fence at the dog park. Ms. Eckhart recommends putting a survey out for dog park users to see what improvements they would like to see. Mr. Behler stated that the Friends of Allen Township Dog Park Facebook Group may be interested in providing feedback if a survey is published. Mr. Behler indicated that the administrator of the page, Joe Pallitta, has been very helpful in the past.

Ms. Eckhart reported that water from NBMA has been run to the dog park for the dogs and for people. She noted that there is no electricity on the site. Ms. Teklits inquired about the feasibility of adding cameras to the site. Ms. Eckhart explained that electricity would need to be run to the site to allow for cameras. She indicated that for the number of users at the site there is a very low rate of incidents reported. Ms. Bugbee stated that the dog park users police each other. Ms. Eckhart mentioned that some municipal dog parks have an intricate process for people to use their dog parks. This sometimes includes applications, classes, and manuals to be granted access to the dog park. She explained that she has occasionally received requests to provide more control on who is allowed to use the park. Ms. Eckhart reported that since the Allen Township Dog Park is on land owned by Northampton County, the park must be open to the general public.

Ms. Bugbee inquired how dog waste is handled at the park. Ms. Eckhart reported that waste bags are provided at the site. She noted that entire rolls of waste bags are frequently stolen. Ms. Bugbee indicated that a dog waste septic system may be an improvement to be considered in the future.

Ms. Teklits recommended that a fund be established for the acceptance of donations. She also recommended that the Park and Recreation Board create a punch list of improvements and combine this with the survey responses received from dog park users. A final list will be compiled and donation funds will be allocated to the items on the improvement list. The Board members were agreeable to this recommendation. Mr. Behler mentioned that Allen Township also has an Open Space/Recreation Fund that may be able to be used for some improvements.

The Park and Recreation Board members discussed that it would be best to avoid memorial plaques and that donations would be accepted for the punch list improvements. Ms. Eckhart suggested that a nice letter or a small token could be provided as a sign of appreciation for donations.

B. Requests for Proposals (RFP) for Master Site Development Plan Project – Howertown and Kreidersville Covered Bridge Parks – Update: Ms. Eckhart reported that several months ago the Board of Supervisors issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Master Site Development Plan for both Howertown Park and Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park. She reported that Howertown Park is under-utilized with substantial promise but is experiencing impacts from years of nearby projects, including road widenings. Ms. Eckhart stated Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park has a very unique setting. She explained that by having a landscape architect’s eyes on these two parks the Township will be able provide recommendations to plan for the next steps to make improvements. Ms. Eckhart indicated that two proposals were received in response to the RFP. Proposals were received from Barry Isett & Associates Inc and Urban Research & Development Corporation. Ms. Eckhart explained that there is a substantial cost for the RFP and that the standard DCNR format for the RFP was used for the proposal so that the Township may pursue grants in the future. Ms. Eckhart indicated that two Supervisors will be conducting interviews of the firms. Once the consultant is identified, should the Board of Supervisors choose to move forward, Ms. Eckhart noted that there will be a public study process which the Park and Recreation Board will be a part of. Ms. Bugbee questioned the reason for the two parks being combined in this RFP. Ms. Eckhart explained that they are drafted together to limit the repetition of the process. Ms. Eckhart will send the Board members a link regarding the RFP.

C. Howertown Park Security Upgrades (Wi-Fi Expansion, Camera System, Field House Access Control System Installation) – Update: Ms. Eckhart updated the Park and Recreation Board that the Board of Supervisors has just approved several security upgrades at Howertown Park. Ms. Eckhart stressed the importance of modernizing safety at the Howertown Park due to the additional development that is proposed in the vicinity. She indicated that the upgrades include Wi-Fi expansion, a camera system, and an access control system. Ms. Eckhart explained that the access control system will be for the field house and that assigned fobs and codes for a keypad system will be used to grant or deny access to the building. Ms. Eckhart indicated that additional lighting may be an improvement to consider in the future but that consideration would need to be taken for the nearby residences. Ms. Dotta proposed low lighting near walkways as a solution. Ms. Eckhart indicated that she did not want to get ahead of the RFP but that she had concerns regarding safety at Howertown Park. She reported that there has been incidents in the past regarding the burning of a port-o-john and Walmart shopping carts being left in the park. Ms. Teklits voiced her concerns regarding cars being parked late at night at the park.

She questioned if drug deals could be occurring. Ms. Teklits also indicated that there will likely be an increase of foot traffic at the Howertown Park with the addition of the proposed Wawa at Route 329 and Savage Road.

Ms. Eckhart requested the Park and Recreation Board’s opinion on allowing food trucks/mobile food vendors at Howertown Park. She explained that requests have been received on if a food truck would be allowed for private events at Howertown Park. A recent request was received to seek information on if a food truck would be allowed to park on the street in a residential neighborhood for a graduation party in the summer. Alternatively, the resident requested information if the food truck would be permissible at the Howertown Park if a pavilion was rented for the graduation party. Ms. Eckhart explained that it would be beneficial to have more flexibility with Howertown Park. She stated that if authorized and the appropriate proof of insurance was provided that this graduation party may be a trial run for allowing food trucks at the Howertown Park. She further noted that the food truck would need to be a self-sustaining unit. Ms. Ibarra questioned the rules and regulations for allowing a food truck to be parked on a street at a private residence. Ms. Eckhart explained that this would be classified as a Block Party and that the applicant would need to submit an application that would be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors. She further explained that the roadway would need to be able to be cleared quickly in the event of an emergency and therefore the Township does not allow items such as “moon bounces, stages, tents, etc” on the roadway. Ms. Eckhart interprets “etc” to include food trucks. She also indicated that she is unsure on the time necessary to move an operational food truck if there was an emergency. She explained that cooking surfaces may need to cool down prior to moving the vehicle. Ms. Eckhart indicated that the food truck would be allowed if it was parked in a residential driveway. Ms. Teklits inquired how other municipalities handle food trucks and if they allow mobile food vendors in their parks. Ms. Eckhart will research this further. Ms. Dotta voiced her concerns regarding food safety and health safety.

D. Dog Park Temporary Seasonal Closure – Effective February 20th through Mid/Late April (Weather Permitting): Ms. Eckhart informed the Park and Recreation Board that the Allen Township Dog Park closes seasonally each year. She indicated that effective February 20th through mid to late April that the dog park will be closed. Ms. Eckhart reports great success with the seasonal closure from previous years. She further explained that the closure is due to the freeze and thaw cycles and that it is typically reopened after the first cutting. The Public Works Department applies lime to neutralize the soil and also applies fertilizer in the spring to help regenerate the grass. Ms. Eckhart explained that it is very difficult to perform maintenance at this park outside of the seasonal closure due to the frequent consistent use of the park. She indicated that the reopening date is subject to change depending on weather conditions.

E. Park and Recreation Board Spring 2023 Park Site Visits: Ms. Eckhart requested that the Park and Recreation Board consider making visits to the parks in the spring. Ms. Dotta indicated that she believes this is a great idea. Mr. Behler inquired on the scope of the visits and if parks that are not owned by the Township should be included in the site visits. Mr. Behler also recommended visiting the Allen Township Riverview Preserve no later than April. He also questioned if the site visit of the dog park should occur during the seasonal closure. Ms. Dotta requested that the survey be posted at the dog park ahead of time so that comments can be reviewed while at the site. It was discussed that there are some memorial plaques at the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park but that these are for the original members of the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Association. Mr. Behler indicated that Park and

Recreation Board member Mary Austin is also a member of the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Association. He reported that at one of the ad hoc meetings it was discussed if the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Association could disband due to the creation of the Allen Township Park and Recreation Board. Mr. Behler reported that Ms. Austin took this suggestion back to the Association. It was reported that the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Association would not be disbanding. Mr. Behler indicated that he was informed that the current Kreidersville Covered Bridge Association President will be stepping back and that this may cause a domino effect with members leaving the Association. The Kreidersville Covered Bridge Association is responsible for events at the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park such as the KCB Festival, 5K/10K, and an annual Christmas tree lighting.

Further discussion indicated that the Park and Recreation Board members preferred to visit the parks during the scheduled monthly meeting with the start time of the meeting/site visits being at 5:30 PM. The March 23rd Park and Recreation Board meeting will begin at either Howertown Park or the Allen Township Dog Park at 5:30 PM. Following the completion of this park site visit, the Park and Recreation Board will travel to the other park. Park and Recreation Board Members requested that a survey regarding improvements for the Allen Township Dog Park be posted online prior to this site visit. Responses from the survey would be considered and discussed while at the site on March 23rd. For the April 27th Park and Recreation Board meeting, the Park and Recreation Board will meet at the Fire Company Building at 5:30 PM and visit the Allen Township Riverview Preserve and the Kreidersville Covered Bridge Park. Members decided that the site visit of Kreidersville Park should be completed individually. The February 23rd Park and Recreation Board meeting will take place at the Fire Company Building at 6:00 PM.

6. Public to be Heard: No public comment.

8. Announcements: No announcements.

The upcoming meetings held at the Allen Township Fire Company Building as listed on the agenda are as follows:

Board of Supervisors – Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Park and Recreation Board – Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Planning Commission – Monday, February 27, 2023 at 6:00 PM
Board of Supervisors – Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 6:00 PM

9. Adjournment: There being no further comments or business the meeting adjourned at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ilene M. Eckhart



Allen Township Park and Recreation Board

**Meeting Agenda
Thursday, January 26, 2023
6:00 P.M.**

**Location: Allen Township Fire Company Building
3530 Howertown Road, Northampton, PA**

The Allen Township Park and Recreation Board meetings will be held at the Allen Township Fire Company Building, located at 3530 Howertown 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: January 25th, 2023.

1. Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Roll Call

_____ Gary Behler, Member _____ Maria Bonett, Member _____ Ilene M. Eckhart, Manager

_____ Paul Link, Member _____ Adrienne Ibarra, Member _____ Louise Bugbee, Member

_____ Nicole Dotta, Member _____ Mary Austin, Member

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

5. Annual Organization

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

7. Business Items

A. Discussion on Process for Receiving and Accepting Donations

B. Requests for Proposals (RFP) for Master Site Development Plan Project – Howertown and Kreidersville Covered Bridge Parks – Update

C. Howertown Park Security Upgrades (Wi-Fi Expansion, Camera System, Field House Access Control System Installations) – Update

D. Dog Park Temporary Seasonal Closure – Effective February 20th through mid/late April (Weather Permitting)

E. Park and Recreation Board Spring 2023 Park Site Visits

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

9. Next Meetings – All meetings will be held at the Allen Township Fire Company Building, located at 3530 Howertown Road, Northampton, PA

- ◆ Board of Supervisors, Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- ◆ Parks and Recreation Board, Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- ◆ Planning Commission, Monday, February 27, 2023 at 6:00 PM
- ◆ Board of Supervisors, Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 6:00 PM

10. 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.