



COUNTY OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
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PARKS AND RECREATION
MARC J. MANFRE
DIRECTOR

ANNE P. STAUFFER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Delaware County Park Board Meeting
May 8, 2024
12:00 p.m.

Location: Hunt Club

Attendees:

- Board: Kathy Lopez; Bridget O'Donnell; John McMullan; Mary Coniglio; Kelly Johnson; Trish McFarland
Department of Parks and Recreation: Marc Manfre, Director of Parks & Recreation; Anne Stauffer, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation; Beth Chapman, Marketing & Communications Manager; Brooke Kempczynski, Redwood Center Coordinator, Upland Park
County:
Not present: Stephanie Gaboriault; Barron Lacy; Parker Snowe; Nicholas Hoyt
Minutes by Carol Tustin
Call to Order: 12:06 pm

Meeting Minutes from March 13, 2024 were approved by the board.

Call to Order..... Chair Kathy Lopez

- The meeting was called to order at by Kathy Lopez, Park Board Chair.

Guest Speaker.....None

Directors report.....Marc Manfre

- We have two documents that we have handed out. One is basically a performance matrix breakdown of the last 2 years of the Parks Department, and we are only five months into this year. The other document will be given to the controller to be added into the fiscal report. It is basically an asset report, and we will do one every year going forward. This report shows our numbers over the last year and a half. The rounds of golf at Clayton Park have been up, probably the largest in years, it also shows the number of permits among other information. The recent huge jump in Redwood classes is due to the Redwood Center being closed last year in July and during the roof repairs, etc.

- We had our tour of Upland, did a walk for National walk at lunch day, which was sponsored by Delaware County Council. The members that showed up were able to partake in everything. It was very nice. At the Redwood Community Center at Upland Park, we have a new coordinator. Her name is Brooke Kempczynski, she is the newest member of our team. We are very excited; she comes to us with a background in communications with her degree from West Chester University. She was hired in late March, and we are expecting great things from Brooke. Anne and Beth are helping Brooke to settle in. Brooke is learning the senior citizen demographic and doing a good job understanding what their needs are. She is going to be very involved in our Senior Games.
- The Rose Tree Community Garden started in April. Some of our capital projects have started. We are looking to refurbish the Darby Creek Trail Phase I, where we have had a runoff problem and drainage issue for the last 2 ½ to 3 years, that's the section by Kent Park. We spoke with the County engineer today, who works for Public Works. They put out an RFQ to various engineering firms through the IDIQ program with the county sponsors. Hopefully, we can get a resolution to offset the flooding and drainage problem that we have since it is a dangerous situation and a liability. It is also an environmental problem for our wildlife since a lot of the stone or other materials run off into the creek.
- We have hired a new foreman, Justin Alderfer, who was a groundskeeper. He was elevated to the new position, which is a non-bargaining position. Justin is a very nice guy and a very qualified individual. He is going to be a great asset to our maintenance department. We will now be able to move in another groundskeeper once we get the paperwork complete.
- The Rose Tree Park schedule is booked up for the year. Ruby Jones has done a great job with scheduling the Cross County events and large weekend events at Rose Tree.
- The noise issue with the playground during the Summer Concert Series was discussed and it was decided to limit access to the playground during the concerts. We did research in Philadelphia and counties in the tri-state area and most area County parks close their playgrounds during special events, so we will be closing the playground around 7:15.
- We will get an overview of our slide presentation in the Green Space Task Force today at 4:30. This is the one that was presented to the County Council. We can send you all a link to the slide presentation.
- We have a contract with Downend Landscaping to do our chemical applications at the golf course. They are doing 11 treatments for a reasonable cost, which is tremendous.
- There is a new Executive Director, Barbara OMalley. Barbara and I are going to tour some of the county parks on May 17th. We no longer report to the head of sustainability and that just happened. We are still a part of the sustainability unit, and we put sustainability practice into every day.
- I urge all of you to come to the Juneteenth celebration. It is a county holiday and Anne, Beth and I were there last year and will be there again this year. The Juneteenth celebration displays the great diversity of our county.

- We are at a standstill with our plans for the Festival of Lights. We are looking for sponsors to help with the cost of the tree lighting. ARPA money covered the cost in recent years, which was \$200 thousand plus. The County wants to bid the job out. We do a section of the lights, so it's a delicate bid. Our superintendent went out and counted the strands and lights and separated the job, the bid section from our section. Also, Trish McFarland discussed the vendors' village. It's three weeks and it is too much on the Chamber of Commerce staff to work out for just the three weeks with all of the weather issues and the cost. It comes down to the cost for the county to put on the event versus the cost for the vendor and if it's worth the county making a significant investment. It was a great idea to help give small local businesses an opportunity to make some money during the COVID period. It turned out to be a great idea and it was a beautiful spectacle and a wonderful event. Parks got nothing but compliments on the whole Festival of Lights. Now, we may have to go back to the Parks and Recreation Department doing all the lights and it's not going to be the same because we just don't have the equipment to be able to pull it off. To make up the difference in cost would be like \$200 thousand. It is a big undertaking with costs of Park Police overtime and the huts themselves. They're pretty weather beaten and would have to be replaced. We may go with tents again and food trucks. The bottom line is, we used around \$600 thousand + ARPA money to fund the entire project, and it is no longer there. There is also a cost for Upper Providence Police for traffic control which ran around \$10 thousand. The Commerce Director is out trying to allocate money towards this, but I haven't heard from the County Council about helping finance any of this. I think that it would be a disaster not to have the light show that we've had. At this point, we will have to see about the vendors, it's a lot of time and money. We are looking at getting sponsors to support the Festival of Lights. PECO was mentioned and the IBEW union.

Deputy Directors report..... Anne Stauffer

- We had three Earth Day events in April. The Health Department came out to Upland Park and did a planting outside of the Redwood Center of native plants. They also collected a lot of trash from the woods around there, which was great. Then we had an event at Delco Woods at Whetstone Run, which is a tributary to Darby Creek. We did a native planting up at the top of the parking lot and we did a stream bank restoration method called live staking. We had red-osier dogwood branches that you hammer into the stream bank that will take root and stabilize it to prevent erosion to prevent sediment going into the stream. It will help all the communities downstream. On Arbor Day, again at Delco Woods, we had our friends from the Marple Tree Commission along with a company called EY with their 16 volunteers do tree plantings around the parking lot area. They moved some maples and other trees to the parking lot and then spent an hour clearing out invasives in the area. I also want to add that on Earth Day, Chester County did not have an event and so we got volunteers from Chester County also.
- Today, again at Whetstone Run in Delco Woods, our Parks & Recreation crew were installing the Christmas trees along the stream bank for stabilization. This added to

the project from the Conservation District that started four years ago at Glen Providence Park. This is not a restoration; this is a stabilization project. It's a temporary fix. They are trying to implement it down at the Swedish Cabin area. It's trees that are being recycled to get a second life. It is a good project that our old parks Superintendent Norm started along with Karen Wilwol from the Conservation District.

Guest Speaker..... None

Old Business

- We provided the names to the County Council that we proposed for the naming of Little Flower. They paused the renaming until they could make a visit to the park. The park itself looks great and Anne Stauffer submitted a grant proposal for water hookups for the community garden area.
- The old Don Guanella property has been named Delco Woods.
- Last month for our park visit we went to Upland County Park for the county's walk at lunch. At the county walk, we got to meet the Park Groundskeeper staff and the new Redwood Coordinator, Brooke Kempczynski.
- Marc met with the First Responders Group. They are going to do an extension of the monument, but no pavilion or anything between the two monuments.

New Business

- We are going to kick off the Summer Concert series on June 12th. The brochures will be ready on Monday. Next year will be our 50th anniversary for the Summer Concert series. Beth is on the top of her game, and I have all the trust in the world in her. She has done a phenomenal job since she's taken over. Delaware County Council has ratified Price Steven's contract for the next 3 years and he has started repairs to the stage and other upgrades. We have six young people staffing the concerts this year. It's great that they're getting on-the-job training with Price leading the way. The County should be proud of that. I'm looking forward to the opening this year, hopefully the weather holds up better than last year.
- Senior Games will start in June. We have a lot of volunteers from both County agencies and our employees who want to be involved. Early registration has already started.
- The Pennsylvania Resource Council is moving to the Hunt Club from the second floor of the Leedom House. They had their electronics collection already this past week. We partnered with them. PRC has an office in Pittsburgh and then the folks here at this office. They do some really great stuff, like the electronic collection, and they hosted a composting workshop.
- In June we are going to Pennock Woods and Shrigley Park for our park visit. We must let Bonnie's nursery on Scottdale Road know since we are meeting there.

Open Discussion and Public Comment

- Kathy Lopez learned today on Facebook that the Friends of Glen Providence Park is disbanding. Their reasoning was that they wanted to move away from that model and have their volunteers more engaged with the Parks department. The problem is that they don't have anybody interested in joining, they don't have the resources or the bodies to continue. It is a huge loss and derails our discussion about them providing a sort of model of support for park friends groups. They tried to invite some younger people to recruit, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen. It's very hard for nonprofits. People work their jobs and then put a lot of time into these organizations. It can be exhausting. It was a very emotional meeting; I wish Stephanie was here. Hopefully, maybe someone steps up for them.
- The only other thing that I have is this whole situation with County Council and Delco Woods. My concern is, as an advisory board, I don't know how to respond when people come to me. We learned about everything in the newspapers, so we were kind of blindsided. I walked around the property with an appraiser last week. I am not in the conversations about the appraisal, but I think that this is that they requested a new appraisal because it's being contested. It seems that Marple folks are fired up. What's the take from the members of the board? It was discussed that the board members are concerned about transparency. The county had many meetings to discuss community input and ideas. They made sure information was spread countywide in both English and Spanish for community engagement, but never mentioned that they had the possibility of reserving one of the buildings for county use other than what was discussed in the master plan. There were many times that this could have been disclosed and it seems like a communications issue. The other thing is Commercial filming, which was not discussed with us as an advisory board. We had input for the original ordinance against filming in the parks. If they were thinking of making a change, shouldn't we have had input on changing it? We were told after the decision was made to change the ordinance. There is sympathy in terms of people that need a mental health facility. We are more concerned about the process and that it was not transparent. A decision was made to put together a document and it will be forwarded to everyone on the board for edit and then we can send it to the entire County Council.

- **Meeting adjourned: 1:06 pm**

Meetings:

January 10

March 13

May 8

July 10

September 11

November 13

Park Visits:

February 13 – Little Flower Manor

April 10 – Upland Park

June 12 – Pennock Woods and Shrigley Park

August 14 – Smedley Park

October 9 – Don Guanella

December – Rose Tree Festival of Lights on opening night