

Harcrest Park Committee Meeting Minutes

Purpose: The Penn Township Park Committee met at 6:30 p.m. on April 24, 2024, in the Penn Township Municipal Building, 157 East Airport Road, Butler, PA 16002 for the Harcrest Park Phase II design and engineering.

Attending:

- Bert Mowry – Penn Township Supervisor
- Bill Geibel – Park neighbor
- Doug Roth – Penn Township Supervisor & Park Committee
- Janet Sperling – Park neighbor
- Melissa Heagy – Park Committee
- Paul Walter – Resident
- Sam Ward – Penn Township Supervisor
- Theodosia Regal – Park neighbor & Park Committee

Distribution of minutes:

- Attending
- Adriene Smoczek – PA Bureau of Recreation & Conservation
- Ashley Helmstaedter – Butler County Parks & Recreation
- Cathy Woller – Park neighbor
- Christina Sarson – HRG Land Planner
- Clinton Bonetti – Penn Township Land Use Administrator
- Craig Thomasmeyer - Park neighbor
- Dan Wible – Penn Township PWD Foreman
- Dave Andrews - Connoquenessing Water Shed Alliance
- David Bruni – Township resident
- Devin Dunwoody – HRG, Project Manager
- Diane Curry – Park neighbor
- Gwilym Price – Resident
- James Bonner – Audubon Society
- James Feath – HRG, Registered Landscape Architect
- Jim Woller – Park neighbor
- Kimberly Geyer – Butler County Commissioner
- Lance Welliver – Butler County Director of Parks & Recreation
- Linda Zerfoss – Penn Township Manager
- Mark Gordon – Butler County Chief of Economic Planning
- Mark Hansford – PA DCNR
- Michael Corle – Penn Township SEO
- Nicole Tempalski – Penn Township – Administrative Assistant
- Sarah Giamporcaro – Park neighbor
- Scott Gumto – Park Committee
- Tammy Able – Penn Township Consultant
- Will Pitts – Butler Eagle

Discussion:

- Melissa Heagy made the motion and Theodosia Regal seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 24, 2024. The motion was approved.
- The Board of Supervisors changed the cost for park benches to \$2,035. The Township provides the excavation and concrete work.
- The Board of Supervisors discontinued the donor tree program.
- All new plantings will be restricted to “native plants” only. James Feath will provide a list of native plantings that residents could choose to plant. The Park Committee will approve the location of all new trees. James Feath has designated areas for plantings to provide “successional growth” and uses the vegetation to “craft” views in the park. Refer to the HRG Harcrest Vegetation plan, dated April 22, 2024. A copy is attached to these minutes. Post-meeting note: Doug Roth suggested checking out the DCNR website for native plantings and establishing a meadow.
- This Vegetation plan also shows meadow areas to be set aside. The meadows would be mowed every one or two years. Theodosia Regal suggested that the meadows be mowed in March, in consideration of the native bees, rather than after the first frost in the Fall. Janet Sperling stated that mowing the meadows would stop the growth of invasive plants. Mowing should not include Milk Weed plants. More investigation is necessary to establish a policy.
- Theodosia Regal will continue planting in the pollinator garden. Theodosia Regal has a sketch identifying these plants. A sign is to be developed to identify these pollinator plants. This could be like the sign at North County Line Park in Cranberry Township. Theodosia Regal will provide an update.
- Penn Township completed the Butler County Parks and Recreation grant application. The Butler County Commissioners awarded \$7,500 for Phase II stormwater piping materials. Penn Township will provide the \$2,500 “Local Match”. We wish to express our thanks to the Butler County Commissioners and the Parks and Recreation Department for this grant.
- The Committee is to consider providing a bike pump track in the Phase II development.
- HRG will consider using permeable paving for extended overflow and lighter vehicle parking areas of the Phase II development such as a portion of the parking near the Adult Fitness area and in parking area islands. Approximately 30 parking spaces near the Adult Fitness area would be required for peak times and the remaining parking areas could have permeable paving. The permeable paving in parking areas would facilitate stormwater infiltration. Parking blocks can be used to define the parking spaces in these areas.

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- HRG will consider providing “rain gardens” in parking areas to help manage the stormwater which can be accomplished with “bio-infiltration” swales.
- A local stone mason, Bob Winters, has agreed to donate the labor to install the sign on Brownsdale Road in front of the Township equipment storage building. This sign will use the former Hartzel barn stone and the stone signs purchased from the Raducz Stone Quarry. Two signs as shown below and a street number sign. We are on Bob Winter’s list of projects to start.



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- The Phase I toilet rooms are collecting a lot of debris in the vaults and have odor and insect problems. Options for new Phase II restrooms include:
 - A grinder pump system conveying the wastewater to the Saxonburg Area Authority (SAA) lines at Penn Drive will be very expensive.
 - A composting wastewater treatment and a vault structure, like Phase I, will also be very expensive.
 - Penn Township conducted pit tests for on-lot wastewater treatment on April 22, 2024. The results will be available in the immediate future. A cost estimate will be prepared once the type of system is determined.
- The Phase I restrooms will remain as is to provide year-round toilet facilities. They are relatively maintenance-free. Paul Walter suggested contacting BASA for odor control recommendations and using self-closing toilet seats to help control these issues. The Committee will also ask Lance Welliver for recommendations and continue investigating methods to minimize odor and insect issues.
- Penn Glade Lions donated \$750 and David and Tami Bruni donated \$400.00 for a bicycle repair station with compressed air at Harcrest Park near the bike rack. Many bicycle riders frequently stop at the park to use the restrooms. Penn Township PWD will provide the concrete pad. Post-meeting note: Provide a plaque in recognition of this gift.
- HRG is preparing the Post Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) agreement in which Penn Township agrees to maintain the stormwater management structures. This agreement will be recorded with Butler County.
- HRG has assigned Devin Dunwoody as the Phase II Project Manager. Devin Dunwoody and James Feath are currently value engineering the stormwater management system.
- The preliminary plans show a swale along the Northern property boundary to accommodate stormwater from the adjacent farm field. HRG will consider providing a line of trees along this Northern Border.
- The proposed sequence of construction will include erosion and sedimentation controls will be installed first, and then stormwater piping and retention facilities will be installed beginning at the small stream at the lowest point of the site. Lawn restoration will follow the installation of the stormwater piping. HRG and Penn Township will continue developing a detailed sequence of work.
- HRG will verify the depth of excavation in the proposed driveway into Phase II to avoid an existing underground electric utility line from a pole along Three Degree Road to the Phase I Restroom and Utility room.
- Doug Roth reported discussions about donated services from local excavation contractors for Phase II.
- Penn Township has provided payments and signed applications for the various permits.
- Penn Township will consider requesting an additional 25% or \$75,000 to our existing DCNR grant for Phase II facilities.

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- Penn Township will consider applying for a 2024 DCED - Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP) with a maximum of \$250,000 for the pavilion planned for the Phase II development. This has a 15% or \$37,500 “Local Share” match. This application is due by the end of May 2024. Notification of an award will be made in late 2024 or early 2025.
- Penn Township will consider applying for a 2025 DCNR grant for the adult fitness area and restrooms and other work shown on the updated Master Plan.
- Penn Township will consider repainting the Phase I toilet room doors, frames, windows, vents, and interior.
- Penn Township will consider adding electrical receptacles on the Phase I restroom structure and the pavilion columns to accommodate the Community Day activities. A local electrician, Brandon Rau, is preparing a proposal for this work.
- The Committee discussed continuing the Park Committee and replacing Committee member, Karen Trempus, who has resigned. The Board of Supervisors may make an appointment at their next meeting on May 14, 2024, to maintain the five-member committee.
- Doug Roth reported that the paint had peeled off the wheelchair swing. The manufacturer replaced this swing on April 24, 2024.
- Doug Roth advised that Renfrew Park flooded twice during recent extreme rain events. We wish to express our thanks to the Penn Township Volunteer Fire Department for hosing off the play area.
- Doug Roth reported that the Renfrew Park three pickleball court nets need to be replaced.
- Doug Roth advised that Penn Township has an opportunity to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to provide a handicap-accessible trail to the gazebo. The HRG provided a drawing titled, ADA Accessible Route Assessment with two proposed handicap-accessible trails to the gazebo, dated April 24, 2024, and the relative costs. The Committee preferred the shorter route from the Phase I development and suggested that a bridge be utilized to cross the small stream. The Board of Supervisors will consider requesting a proposal from HRG to investigate this route in greater detail and provide a cost estimate at their next meeting. This information will help prepare the CDBG funding request.
- HRG representative, James Feath, was unable to attend the meeting. However, he provided the following information:
 - HRG has submitted the NPDES permit application and received initial comments from the Butler County Conservation District (BCCD). HRG has submitted a response to the BCCD questions on this application.
 - HRG is preparing a detailed cost estimate for the current project plans. This estimate will be reviewed with the Board of Supervisors in the immediate future.
 - HRG will submit updated plans to DCNR for approval before bidding/construction.
 - HRG prepared a Harcrest Park ADA access trail plan from the Maintenance building on Brownsdale Road parking area to the existing gazebo and an alternate plan for a trail from the Phase I development to the existing gazebo. A copy is attached to these minutes. Refer to the comments in the previous bullet point.
 - HRG prepared a Harcrest Park Vegetation concept plan for areas of successional growth (no-mow) and meadow (annual mow) within the park. Committee members are to mark up this plan with proposed revisions to reduce the mowing areas. The Committee will review marked-up plans with HRG at the next meeting.
- Janet Sperling suggested that signs be displayed stating that dogs are to be on a lease while in the parks.
- The next Park Committee meeting will be held in the Penn Township Municipal Building, 157 East Airport Road, Butler, PA 16002, on June 26, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.
- Melissa Heagy made the motion and Theodosia Regal seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved and the meeting concluded at 7:45 p.m.
- Minutes of the meeting will be posted on the Penn Township website, www.penntownship.org under Documents, Park Committee.

Respectfully submitted,



Samuel M. Ward, Supervisor