

Delaware Township Recreation Commission Minutes – November 2, 2020 via Zoom
Chairperson Brian Sulewski called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Notice Statement – The Notice Requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied by notification to the Hunterdon County Democrat and by posting with the Township Clerk and on the Delaware Township bulletin board on October 22, 2020.

Flag Salute – Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present: Judy Allen, Rebecca Burns, Tim Drew, Charles Herman, Steve Smotrich, Tim Soltis, Brian Sulewski, Linda Ubry
Absent: Joe Benincasa, Connor Devlin, Aiden Ricci, Julie Luster-Roell, Toby Ruttenberg

Evergreen Tree Donation – Josh and Kasey Petrucelli

Brian Sulewski introduced Josh Petrucelli via Zoom. Josh and his wife Kasey would like to donate an evergreen tree to be planted on the Sergeantsville Green. They will provide and plant the tree and reseed the grassy area disturbed by the planting. They would like to see it decorated with lights and holiday ornaments made by children with a tree lighting celebration. Brian said the Recreation Commission can not encourage large gatherings due to Covid. He said members have discussed in the past some benches and a possible gazebo as additional improvements to the Green. Members discussed where to plant the tree. The location should be accessible to an electrical source for lights. Perhaps this first year the Sergeantsville Volunteer Fire Company or a neighbor would allow extension cords to light it or else a small generator could be used. Rebecca said different colored lights could be used for different seasons.

Josh said he would like authorization to purchase the tree and get it planted. He envisioned a tree six to eight feet tall. He said Bill Roethel will provide the equipment to transport and plant the tree. Charlie thanked Josh and Kasey for their incredibly generous offer. He suggested bringing in the Township's Department of Public Works to help select a location that may be accessible to a power outlet. He also suggested asking the Shade Tree Commission whether it has plans for the Green or suggestions for a location. Tim Soltis suggested talking to an electrician for a recommendation on an electrical connection.

Members unanimously agreed to accept the Petrucellis' offer to plant a holiday tree on the Sergeantsville Green and thanked them. Josh said he will go to Sweet Valley Farm to check out trees.

Approval of Minutes from the Meeting of October 5, 2020 – Tim Drew moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 5, 2020, Rebecca Burns seconded the motion, and members present approved the minutes with abstentions by Charlie Herman and Steve Smotrich.

Final Review of Open Space Improvement and Maintenance Plan - Goals

Steve said he incorporated members' comments into this final draft. He said the language is general, not specific, in this document. The final draft will go to the Township Committee for review and approval and then submitted to Hunterdon County by December. Judy asked whether plans for possible future development/improvements to various Township properties, if not included, would be affected. Steve said he will check with Katherine Fullerton, the Township's Open Space Coordinator. He thought those plans are more appropriately included in the Township's Master Plan. This document addresses maintenance and improvements. Brian thought the Recreation Commission should have some input into how any funds received from the County are allocated. Steve said the Shade Tree Commission needs funds as well, and funding for maintenance of the White Oak Trail is needed. Tim Soltis asked whether some funds could pay for the electrical outlet for the evergreen tree.

Members unanimously agreed to approve the Plan with the corrections previously discussed.

REPORTS

Teens – No Report. Members agreed new teen members are needed for 2021.

Board of Education – Rebecca reported the Board is continuing its policy not to approve uses of school facilities by outside groups in view of the fact that it can not provide school extracurricular activities and uses due to Covid. She said the Board of Education may extend the school day to 2:15 p.m. effective December 1st. The 2:15 p.m. end of the in-person school day would allow teachers time to work with the School's virtual academy students. It will decide at its November 17th meeting.

DTAA – Tim Drew said softball ends this Saturday with a U-12 Tournament at the Dilts Farm Park. The U-10 team did very well last Saturday at a tournament. Baseball is also wrapping up. Soccer will end in two weeks. He said DTAA has received good feedback from parents about the clinic and scrimmage format used to keep players safe. He said no other leagues are playing basketball with each other. If the basketball program can proceed, teams will play in-house using a clinic and scrimmage approach with the number of parent spectators limited.

Tim said DTAA's fundraiser auction is virtual this month. DTAA is very grateful to the many generous supporters who donated prizes.

Brian asked whether DTAA might consider use of a private venue, like the St. Magdalen's gym, for basketball. Tim said that would depend on the cost and parental agreement.

Open Space – Steve said that a number of members of the public attended the September Open Space Committee meeting to discuss the possible use of Open Space Trust funds for maintenance of open space/recreational areas. The general consensus was that such use was not appropriate.

APPROVAL OF DILTS FARM PARK APPLICATIONS – No applications were received this month.

Brian said there was an unauthorized commercial dog training class recently at the Park. He called the Police Department. He thought such a use opens the Township to potential liability. He advised the trainer that such use requires permission from the Township. Commercial uses are not allowed. The next newsletter could include an article reminding residents of this fact. Tim Drew suggested signage that these uses need advance permission from the Township. Charlie thought a sign with this notification could be posted on each of the two gates to the Park. He will check with Director of Public Works Jay Trstensky.

HALLOWEEN EVENT – OCTOBER 31ST AT DILTS FARM PARK

Members discussed the pumpkin carving contest held at the Park on October 31st. Overall, for a first time event with little advance notice, it was successful. Julie organized it well. Joe arranged for the donation of a lot of candy from concessions at closed Broadway theaters. Brian thought it could be combined next year with something at the School or in Sergeantsville. Judy suggested that prizes next year be cash because most of the winners in the various categories were children who might not appreciate a gift certificate as much as money to purchase something.

COMMITTEES:

Summer Recreation – Cancelled due to Covid-19.

Egg Hunt – Cancelled due to Covid-19.

Yard Sale – Reported.

Fishing Derby – Cancelled due to Covid-19.

Plant Swap – October 3^{re}. Reported.

Campout and Bonfire – To be considered in 2021.

Great Crate Race – Cancelled due to Covid-19. Charlie said the contract to repave Lower Ferry Road was awarded, and work will begin soon. Brian suggested a checkered flag finish line be painted on the road.

Fall Fun Fireworks – September 12th – Reported.

Community Day/Block Party – Cancelled due to Covid-19.

Ice Rink – Pending installation. Tim Drew suggested the possibility of placing the rink on the LBL infield at the Dilts Park. Brian said the Township may be able to borrow portable lights from Hunterdon County to light it by night.

Adult and Teen Recreation at DTS – These uses are on hold due to Covid-19.

Scavenger Hunt – Reported.

HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST – Members agreed to view the registered entrants individually either Sunday, December 13th or Monday, December 14th. They will pool their votes at a special brief meeting on December 15th at 7:30 p.m. to award first, second, and third place winners and a new Fan Favorite category. The newsletter article will note that addresses for registrants will be posted on the Township website so that residents who are interested in a self-guided tour to appreciate the décor can participate. Winners’ names and addresses will also be posted on the website. In addition, residents are encouraged to take a picture of their decorated house and post it on the Delaware Township, Hunterdon County – Locals or Sergeantsville Nook Facebook page by December 11th. The house with the most “likes” will earn a special “fan favorite” prize. Tim suggested purchasing gift certificates from businesses that support Township events.

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT BY AVERY GOULD AT THE DILTS PARK

Charlie reported that Avery Gould, who does not live in Delaware Township, recently completed a new pedestrian bridge crossing a culvert at the Dilts Park for his Eagle Scout project. Members greatly appreciated his work. Members should send possible future project ideas to Charlie.

Linda said the bridge is lovely, but it does not have handrails. Charles said the scout worked with the Township engineer. When Mr. Avery changed the pitch of the bridge, it eliminated the need for a handrail. Charlie said he will look into adding a handrail.

SERGEANTSVILLE GREEN PROJECTS

In addition to an evergreen tree planted on the Sergeantsville Green, members thought a possible future gazebo and benches would be a nice addition to the center of the Village. Charlie said the Township’s Historic Advisory Committee has some serious concerns about this construction. Judy said it will probably require approval from the State Historic Preservation Office because Sergeantsville is an historic district. It reviews and approves construction on municipally-owned facilities and property. Steve said residents might be able to donate paving stones to be placed around a gazebo. They agreed that the evergreen tree should be planted fairly near the walking path in a location that is ADA accessible.

OLD BUSINESS

Brian asked whether the Township Committee formally voted to appoint Joe Benincasa to the Recreation Commission, and Charlie replied yes.

NEW BUSINESS – none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: December 15, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom