

Lehigh Township Recreation Commission

May 19, 2025

7:00 PM

Call to Order

Sandy Hopkins called to order the regular meeting of the Lehigh Township Recreation Commission.

Roll Call

David Hess, Jerry Pritchard, Patrick VanderPloeg, Tammy Hess, and Sandy Hopkins were present for the meeting.

Approval of April 21, 2025, Minutes

David Hess made a motion to approve the minutes. Patrick VanderPloeg seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Old Business

Ag Days. There was no update on this.

Danielsville Tennis Courts. The Township Engineer felt that the courts couldn't be salvaged and needed to be redone with drainage. The base would need to be reconstructed. The fence is also not salvageable. The estimated cost to rebuild the courts is around \$118,400, but it could go higher or lower at the time of construction. Mike Jones questioned if there is anything that our road crew could do to help reduce the costs, such as the removal of the fencing and old material. Sandy Hopkins commented the estimate has a cost of \$5,000 for the demolition. Jerry Pritchard commented the branches could be cut by the road department as well. This would help bring the costs down. The overall cost estimate seems to be high. If we start working with some local people, we may be able to get the costs down.

Sandy Hopkins questioned if as board, do we want to replace the tennis courts and where would the money come from? Jerry Pritchard commented he is not saying it needs to be done right now. The estimate is a starting point. We can talk to local people to try to get the cost reduced and go from there.

Patrick VanderPloeg commented the courts do get used. Mike Jones agreed. He sees at least one group per night on the courts; sometimes they are waiting in line.

It was agreed that the courts should be kept in Danielsville and additional input will be needed as to cost. Jerry Pritchard will talk to some local people to get their opinions on costs. Sandy Hopkins will reach out to Bryan Cope regarding companies who professionally build the quotes.

2025 Tree Lighting. Mike Jones commented Indian Creek Tree farm would be willing to donate a live tree that was 12 feet. The concern with the live tree was the maintaining it so it would have a decent shape.

Christmas Trees. Mike Jones commented trees can be purchased from the tree farm that Palmerton gets their trees for \$25 to \$30, depending on the type of tree, usually between 5 and 6 feet. The cost of the trees for someone to purchase would be \$50. All the Borough needs to provide is the power and the stands for the tree and set the trees around the park. The stands are just 2 X 4's. Patrick VanderPloeg commented that his concern was that the Township doesn't have the foot traffic like the Borough of Palmerton. Will people go look at the trees after the Christmas Tree Lighting? Jerry Pritchard questioned if the road department will have the manpower to do this. Mike Jones spoke with Frank Zamadics and he said it is not an issue if he is given enough time to get the items ready. He just can't be given the task at the last minute. Sandy Hopkins commented the cost of the electricity and road crew time should be figured into the costs for the trees. We will be taking them away from other projects they could be doing. It was suggested that for the first year, there be a set number of trees that would be ordered. Guidelines will need to be established for the type of lights and ornaments.

The most feasible way to get the word out about the trees would be to place an article in the next newsletter. The ideal situation would be to have the newsletters out to residents by September 1 and then people would need to order their trees by October 1. The trees would be made available by early November for decoration.

Alice Rehrig will check on getting the deadline for the newsletter moved up so that it is mailed by September 1. It can also be placed on the website once the details have been finalized. David Hess and Jerry Pritchard will check into getting the electrical cords and boxes made and possibly the Lions contributing to the expenses for the chords.

Rec Consultant. Sandy Hopkins commented when this was discussed at a previous meeting, there was someone missing and the vote was 2 to 2. She was also disappointed as to what Mike Jones had put on facebook; not all the information was provided.

Cindy Miller commented she spoke with representatives from DCNR and DCED at PSATS regarding funding. The process is getting quotes from a consultant that are used as an estimate to apply for funding to cover the cost of the consultant developing the plan. DCNR required a match and the match can be funds from DCED. Even though we put the RFP out for bid, nothing can be signed until there is a grant award. The consultants are used to working with these agencies. The timelines on the draft proposal may need to be adjusted. DCNR requires a match towards the funding. You can use funding that is received from the County or DCED as

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the match. The two agencies are used to working with each other for these grants. If the cost of the consultant is \$50,000, DCNR would pay \$25,000 and DCED would pay the other \$25,000 so there would not be any out of pocket. You cannot move forward with awarding a bid or contracting with someone until all the grants are received. If you move forward prior to that point, the grant becomes void. Once the planning is done, then you can move forward with executing the plan and applying for the funding to do what is listed in the plan. Most of the time, if you receive funding for the planning phase, they will provide funding for the implementation or execution of the plan.

Janet Sheats questioned if grants are going to be used for paying for the consultant, why did we earmark \$50,000 in the budget for the consultant. Cindy Miller commented at the time when that was earmarked, we didn't know that there were grants available for planning. The RFP can be changed before it is put out to bid to state that no proposals will be accepted until we receive the grants.

Mike Jones questioned if as a Township, we have determined what we want to see for our parks. This seems like we are having someone deciding for us what we want in our parks. Why not have a starting point to tell them what we want to see. Cindy Miller commented that is what the consultant would do. They will meet with the Board and public, conduct surveys, and discuss all of this to help guide the development of the parks.

Janet Sheats commented she feels we need to concentrate on maintaining and repairing what we already have before spending additional money on new. There are a lot of items that should be maintained rather than left go. Cindy Miller commented that would all be addressed as far of the plan. They would also estimate costs. Mike Jones questioned why we couldn't do this ourselves instead of using a consultant. Our road crew knows what needs to be fixed. Cindy Miller commented that list needs to be provided to either Alice Rehrig or Frank Zamadics. She thought members of the Rec Board were assigned to different parks to determine what needs to be repaired. Sandy Hopkins commented she does report things to Frank Zamadics on occasion. Janet Sheats commented she had previously asked a list of items that need to be done or not working properly. If something has to be done to prevent additional damages, it needs to be incorporated into the Rec Budget or come out of the Rec fees. Waiting on these things will only end up costing the Township more money.

Marc Kerscmar commented until you know number the cost, you don't know how much to apply for. If you get a grant that's great, if not, you don't have to move forward. What does it hurt to get quotes. If you are successful with getting the grant, you have a greater opportunity of getting future information. The maintenance can happen parallel to the consultant. It can't be left go while waiting.

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Patrick VanderPloeg commented most of this discussion should be taking place at the Supervisor level. The Rec Board is only making a recommendation as to whether or not the Board should move forward with this. The details are up to the Board of Supervisors.

Jerry Pritchard believes we should use our engineer rather than hire a consultant. Cindy Miller commented he would be preparing a different type of plan. Mike Mike Muffley would do a schematic type of plan. We tell him what we want and he puts it on a plan and gives an estimate. That is not what she is looking for. A plan is only a portion of it. She is looking at a comprehensive plan for the four parks. What is the future of each park and what do we want them to become. What are the up and coming new items? Pickle ball is actually old. It's been around for 10 years. We are behind the times. A professional consultant understands what is happening today with parks and what is anticipated for the future. Sandy Hopkins commented we need more guidance, not just a plan of what is there. Mike Muffley can draw up a plan based on what we tell him, but he does not provide the guidance that is listed in the RFP.

Tammy Hess commented previously she was of the impression that the Rec Board was being asked if they wanted to spend the money for the consultant. If she is understanding it correctly now, the question is do we want to move it forward to get pricing and applying for a grant to pay for it.

Janet Sheats commented it was not portrayed at a Supervisors meeting as applying for grants to fund it. It was portrayed as being funded through the budget. She is not willing to spend \$50,000 of tax payer money on a consultant. Cindy Miller commented it was included in budget because she was unaware of the grants. We were planning on using COVID money so it wouldn't have been tax payer money. When COVID money first came out, it was only intended to be used for planning and infrastructure. It wasn't until quite some time after the money was received, that the federal government changed what the money could be used for. She just learned about the grant funding and being able to match one against another. Mike Jones commented he has no objection to having grants pay for a consultant. He does not like the idea that we have the plans for Delps Park and they are sitting on a shelf. Cindy Miller commented the original plan for Delps Park will be incorporated into the new plan by the consultant. Any plan, whether recreation or the master site plan for the municipal complex should be reviewed periodically to see what may or may not need to be changed.

Patrick VanderPloeg made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the proposal be put to bid to obtain a price so that grants can be applied for with the understanding that no funds are being spent. Tammy Hess seconded the motion. Cindy Miller commented she would like input on the proposal from the Rec Board. If there are items they would like to see changed, they can be incorporated into the proposal. The dates can be removed from the proposal. If there are comments regarding the proposal, they should be

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forwarded to Sandy Hopkins so they can be incorporated into the proposal. Jerry Pritchard commented he has had a lot people tell me to not spend money on a consultant. All voted aye. Motion carried.

New Business

Park Gates. David Hess commented he and Mike Jones have been discussing with Frank Zamadics, the idea of adding additional gates to the ballfields. Mike Jones commented there is only one access to the fields. There should be an additional gate added to the ballfield for better access for safety and to get to the field. In speaking with Frank Zamadics, a gate on Aspen Drive would be helpful and also along the baseline in Danielsville. It would make it easier for maintenance. The location for the additional gates should be up to Frank. An additional gate should be added in Berlinsville along Aspen Drive near the dugout, one for each of the baselines at the large field at Danielsville, and then another gate for the small field. David Hess made a motion to move this to the Supervisors after he and Sandy Hopkins meet with Frank Zamadics to discuss the locations. Tammy Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Patrick VanderPloeg commented the volleyball net needs to be replaced at Indiantrail Park.

Alice Rehrig commented she was asked by LTAA if they could replace the plastic shed that was at Delps with a 6 x 6 or 8 X 8 wooden shed. They use it to store field hockey and soccer equipment. They would either have the shed donated or they would pay for it. They understand that if it needs to be removed, they would be willing to move it. David Hess made a motion to approve the shed with the understanding that they will be responsible for the removal of the shed and base in the event it becomes necessary. They would also be responsible for any damages that may happen to the shed. Jerry Pritchard seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Jerry Pritchard made a motion to obtain pricing for replacing the window at the refreshment stand and then take it to the Board of Supervisors for approval. David Hess seconded the motion. Mike Jones noted he has obtained good pricing from Whitehall Door for projects. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Monica Brown questioned how to start a process for adding horse mat or roll to cover the area where the grass doesn't grow because the dogs congregate in the area where the people are sitting. The area is about 18' x 25'. The concern with the horse mat is that grass may grow between them. Sandy Hopkins commented she had also provided Frank Zamadics rubber belting that may also be a solution since they are solid. Monica Brown commented she would

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be willing to try to work on funding for a portion of what is needed. Mike Jones commented the belts get slippery when they are wet. David Hess commented he will check with his brother who has race horses to see if he has any mats available that he could donate. Sandy Hopkins made a motion to work on getting horse mats for the dog parks where the grass doesn't grow. If there is a cost, they will move this to the Board. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.

David Hess commented he is working on getting pricing for shelters at the park.

Mike Jones commented he is aware that there would be discussion regarding a digital sign at Berlinsville Park. Wi-fi is needed for the programming of the sign in order to program the sign remotely. Bluetooth works, but only for about 75 feet. Sandy Hopkins commented she has been working with someone who is familiar with the signs. Mike Jones was also wondering if a grant would be available for wi-fi at all the parks so that cameras and electronic locks could be installed for the bathrooms. The cameras and electronic locks may help be a deterrent for some of the vandalism that occurs, particularly overnight, in the parks.

Jerry Pritchard commented he was the one who had the fencing stop where it currently is. There is a section where people sit to watch the game from up top. DNS Fencing will be cutting the slats down to a point so that people can continue to watch the game from up in that area.

Adjourn. Patrick VanderPloeg made a motion to adjourn. David Hess seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion carried.