

Walkersville Parks Commission Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2024

Walkersville Town Hall

In Attendance: Jay Lochner (Commission Chair), David Toohey, Anna Newman, Chris Ragen, Mark Pecor and Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis (Commission Liaison). Also present were Ashley Bailey (Communications Specialist) and Kelly Woods (Parks Maintenance).

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Jay.
2. Approval of February minutes: Mark made a motion to approve, David seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
3. Park Use Requests
 - a. LOUYAA Boogie Bears Tri Club (Steve Hartman)—would like to practice at Heritage, Mondays 6-7:30PM (4/8-7/31), about 30 people total (kids ages 7-16, plus coaches). They use the trails but have coaches with walkie talkies monitoring safety. David made a motion to approve, Mark seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
 - b. Mosby's Rangers Civil War Reenactors (Kenny Long)—would like to do their camp-out event September 6-8 at Community Park; under 50 people, in the field near the tennis courts. Kelly will leave the bathrooms open, but the gate will be locked at night. Ashley will inform nearby residents. Chris made a motion to approve, Mark seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
4. Suggestions for Playground at Heritage Farm Park
 - a. We received \$120,000 to go towards a new playground; the old playground has already been removed.
 - b. Some suggestions include: a spinner or quad see-saw, climbing wall or cubes, music pieces, sensory wall, scavenger hunt.
 - c. Kelly would not recommend a Miracle play area because they don't seem to last very long and customer service is hard to work with.
 - d. It will be put out to bid and we can make a recommendation to the Burgess and Commissioners from there.
5. Program Open Space (POS) Grants for 2024
 - a. There will be less money available this year; smaller projects are recommended.
 - b. One option would be to renovate the tot area at Community Park with a few pieces (we could add more later). All agreed this is a good idea. Bring ideas to April meeting.
6. Astronomy Event (Dave Toohey):
 - a. March 15 at 7:30PM in the soccer field area at Heritage.
 - b. The Astronomy club will help people look through telescopes, etc.
 - c. Will be out by 10PM and Sean knows about closing the gate later.
 - d. They are aware of the current soccer field closures.
7. GVAA Report (Michelle Fyock)
 - a. Winter sports are over except for basketball playoffs. GVAA hosted the wrestling tournament and did well.
 - b. Spring practices have begun: baseball, softball, boys and girls lacrosse, soccer, and track and field.
 - c. Softball put a new roof on their shed.
 - d. Because WHS now has a turf field, their usage has changed and GVAA track no longer has access. GVAA track will be at Heritage one night a week, then looking for space around the county to practice on a track. This is true for all rec leagues in the county.

- e. Elections are on March 20, 7-7:45PM at the WZ Building. Secretary and treasurer positions are vacant this year, as well as three director positions.
 - f. Steve Gessner–Field 4 does not have a fence on one sideline; they would like to add a fence to match the existing fencing. Anna made a motion to approve, Chris seconded the motion, and the motion passed. However, Sean pointed out that the fence proposal will need to be brought to the planning commission as well
 - g. Steve also asked about park hours for baseball practice; park closes at 5PM but daylight lasts longer. The consensus is, with town staff hours already established, it is too last-minute to change park hours for this spring, but we will revisit the park hours based on the information that some teams want to start practice in early March.
8. Kelly Woods' Report
- a. Old play area was taken out. Most of the rubber tire mulch was saved and taken to Community Park, which saved the town a lot of money.
 - b. Too wet to till the gardens right now or do mulching.
 - c. Took some trees down by disc golf course.
 - d. Two new dog stations will be installed (replacing one by lacrosse field and adding one near the duck pond at Community Park).
 - e. His daughter will have her Girl Scouts Silver Award pinning ceremony on April 13th, 3PM at Pavilion 2 (Community Park) and all are invited.
9. Manor House Update (Ron Layman)
- a. Two areas in the basement are now concreted.
 - b. New wiring and lighting in back hallway.
10. Girl Scout Silver Award Project Proposal (Brooke Bliven and Emma Hormes)
- a. Proposed a slingshot range at Community Park, along the path facing the train tracks.
 - b. Mary Ann shared town's concerns about safety and liability. She encouraged Brooke and Emma to consider another project.
 - c. Chris suggested a less populated location in the park, like the hay field. But mowing is an issue and safety concerns remain.
 - d. Jay commented that this project would need more dialogue with town staff and commissioners. It's a good project idea, but maybe doesn't fit best in a community park.
 - e. Mary Ann will bring this proposal up with the Burgess and commissioners for their thoughts, but suggested that Brooke and Emma talk with Mr. Layman about possibly doing a different project at the Manor House.
11. Commissioner Concerns
- a. Dave: connected with the Frederick News Post master gardener, but he did not want to come out to Walkersville. It seems the gardening program will not take place at this time.
 - b. Chris: proposed that we hold some kind of community event in the park next Halloween (maybe a campfire program at Heritage, Mary Ann suggested, perhaps in conjunction with the Walkersville Historical Society.)
 - c. Anna: is hoping to be at the April meeting, but if she doesn't get back to town in time, Chris will serve as secretary.
12. Adjourn
- a. Mark made a motion to adjourn; Chris seconded the motion; all approved.
 - b. Meeting was adjourned at 8:10PM.
 - c. Next meeting is Wednesday, April 3 at 7:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Newman