

WALKERSVILLE PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

October 5, 2022

In Attendance: Jay Lochner (Committee Chair), Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis (Commissioner Liaison), David Toohey, Anna Newman, Kevin Conley and Kitty Baker. Also present was Sean Williams, Town Manager.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Jay.

SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONER –

Burgess Chad Weddle swore in Kevin Conley as a commissioner serving a term from August 5, 2022 to August 7, 2024.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES –

Dave made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes; Anna seconded the motion and all approved.

PARK USE APPLICANTS –

- Kenny Long requested to use Community Park April 28-30, 2023 for the Civil War reenactor battalion (43rd Battalion of Mosby's Rangers) that has used the park in the past. Under 50 reenactors are expected. More living history participants are coming this year. They hope to advertise on the Walkersville Facebook page so more people can come to see the encampment. Kitty made a motion to approve and David seconded. All voted in favor of approval and paperwork was submitted.
- Memorial Tree Request: Donna and Willie Johnston requested planting a sugar maple in Heritage Park in memory of their daughter, Allison Johnston. Possible locations are near the walking path where the outer loop and soccer loop meet (shading existing bench), to the left of the soccer shed near the road, or near the large playground. Chad Barrick may volunteer to plant the tree. They would like to plant this fall and place a monument (stone with a plaque) at the base of the tree. Their preferred location is along the path; Mary Ann raised the concern that it should not be planted too close to the path. She also has concerns about the monument as it would not be consistent with other memorial trees. They would be open to a plaque on a steel stake at the base of the tree. David asked what would be on the plaque; it would state Allison's name and that she loved playing sports in the park. Kevin made a motion to approve the request; Kitty seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

*Mary Ann asked if we should designate specific areas in the parks where memorial trees would be planted since we have lost large areas of trees to the ash borers. David said he thinks that we should make recommendations to applicants but if they have a special location in mind it could be approved. Mary Ann is going to come up with a form for memorial tree requests and will present it to us at the next meeting. Applicants could list their top three preferred locations for a tree. David requested that we encourage planting native species trees.

- Walkersville Feeder Schools PTA (represented by Anna Newman) requested the use of Heritage Park on Sunday, November 13th from 12-4PM for a food truck fundraising event. They expect

200-400 people to come through. The trucks would be parked in the lacrosse field parking lot. Two or three food trucks are expected. The event has been held twice in the past with good success. Mary Ann pointed out that the event can be advertised on the town Facebook page if the PTA's post is shared with Ashley Bailey. David made a motion to accept the request, Kitty seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

MEMORIAL PARK UPDATE –

Mary Ann was told that they have gotten more requests for memorial bricks and more bricks are currently being installed.

BARN ELECTRICITY –

Mary Ann met with Sean Williams and John Grimes to talk about electricity to the barn at Heritage Farm Park (Mr. Grimes has a band and does the sound for the Veterans event annually, so is experienced with electrical requirements for various events.) Mr. Grimes recommended the bank side of the barn, just inside the doors on either side of the doors. Public works will soon be planting rain gardens around WZ building and this could be a good time for the electricity to go in as well. Mr. Birch will get an estimate and then we can determine if the work can be done this fiscal year or next.

PARK USE FORM –

We discussed the current Park Use form and how it could be improved/updated.

- Jay suggested that we require a name and e-mail of the GVAA representative that was contacted by an applicant.
- Mary Ann would like to add dates next to signature spaces (signature of applicant and parks committee approval).
- Mary Ann suggested that park use forms would need to be submitted to the town office by the 15th of the month prior to the meeting that the applicant would attend for approval.
- Kitty questioned whether there is any way on the form to ask if the event would benefit/involve primarily Walkersville residents. Mary Ann pointed out that as a commission we could turn down any requests we deem detrimental to the park and not involving Walkersville residents, at our discretion. Kevin wants to make the policy of non-resident usage more clear moving forward, so it is equitable for all. Kitty pointed out groups are considered on a case-by-case basis; Mary Ann says we do the best we can for the good of the parks. Jay said that the deciding factor in approving each case is whether a park use is good for the town or not. David asked whether “residents” include only residents of the town or of the wider Walkersville feeder-pattern; there was a general consensus that requests from residents throughout the feeder pattern are generally prioritized. Anna mentioned that even events brought in from outside Walkersville can give town residents new opportunities, thus conferring an indirect benefit. Michelle Fyock also pointed out that any event bringing people into our parks also brings more people into the town, benefitting local businesses. Our guidelines for park use requests will be an ongoing discussion for the commission.

PARK SIGNS –

New signs are needed at Creamery Park and Community Park. Signs would have the park name and Walkersville ensignia, similar to the “Welcome to Walkersville” signs. The commission agreed that this is a good design.

PARK PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE –

Mary Ann said that she now has a contact for park planning to make suggestions about current parks and also potentially establishing a new park on the Walker farm land (currently owned by the town and leased/farmed by Matt Toms). The county has a contract with this planning company and Mary Ann can look into the fee to work with them also. The commission agreed that this is a good idea.

GVAA – Michelle Fyock

- Fall baseball, soccer, softball, football and cheerleading are about halfway through their seasons. Some football teams are doing well and may go deep into playoffs.
- Field hockey is thriving and playing home games at Heritage Park.
- Winter sports registrations are open.
- Lacrosse is looking into off-season fundraising and working with the high school girls’ team. By spring of 2024 they hope to field a youth girls’ lacrosse team.
- GVAA teams will line up for the Homecoming Parade behind town hall on Friday at 4:30.
- An online calendar of GVAA events is now live and can be accessed by the parks commission as needed.
- There was a rumor that GVAA bricks on the hill at Heritage were removed; this is not the case. They are likely just overgrown.

MARY ANN’S REPORT

- Our annual tree lighting is coming up! It will take place on Wednesday, December 7th at 7 PM. Last year we did not serve any refreshments. Mary Ann recommends cookies but no hot chocolate this year; David wondered if we could have a food truck selling hot chocolate. Sean Williams pointed out that there is no longer any way to make hot chocolate at town hall post-renovation so he likes the idea of a food truck. Mary Ann would like to know how much hot chocolate will cost attendees. David will look into the food truck (Glamourview Creamery). Anna will contact local churches and the WHS music department to see what music groups will perform. Kitty will order the cookies. Chad will be the emcee. Bob Sussman may do a Hannukah presentation. Everyone will bring more information to the November meeting.

COMMISSIONER CONCERNS –

- David Toohey: would like to see several of the horseshoe pits at Community Park converted to bocce courts. He also wondered about adding half-court basketball at Trout Park. We will think about what could be added to Trout Park.
- Kitty Baker: mentioned an article in the newspaper about grant money that we were awarded: \$237,635 to improve our parks (all the LPPI money that we requested). She also asked about ladders at the Manor House; they are fixing the roof. She mentioned that there are still wooden sign posts needing to be removed at Community Park.
- Kevin Conley: brought up the parks survey and he would like to talk about and plan ahead for a dog park and footgolf course. He asked what the procedure is for advancing these topics. Mary Ann clarified that these items were not discussed with LPPI or POS money because those

requests had to be made prior to the town survey results. Kevin would like to go ahead and get these dialogues going to plan for next year's grant money requests. Mary Ann said that now that we know there is more interest within the town for a dog park we will begin to plan towards that. Footgolf has been considered in the past and we can look at it again. Kitty brought up that the burgess has concerns about more amenities being added to Heritage without better access for traffic and specifically emergency vehicles.

- Sean Williams pointed out that LPPI funds had to be applied for quickly this year as we did not know they would be offered again. The survey was used to identify large project and small project ideas so that we can address those as funding allows in the future. When it comes to the dog park, we want to find the perfect location, keeping in mind how the parks may evolve in the future.
- David asked Mr. Williams about the town acquiring a piece of property along the river behind Sheetz (off of Retreat Road). Mr. Williams said it is a complicated property with a buffer zone so the property would not include riverfront, but it could still be a possibility. The property behind the Bowling Alley has also been explored; it is in floodplain and there are other interested parties.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

There was no public comment, as no public was currently in attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:24. Kitty made the motion, seconded by Kevin and all approved. The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 2nd at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Newman