

WALKERSVILLE PARKS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

October 6, 2021

(No September meeting – Hurricane Ida)

The October meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Jay Lochner, Committee Chair. In attendance were board members: Jay Lochner, Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis (Commissioner Liaison), Kelly Woods (Parks Maintenance), Anna Newman, Patricia Rowley, David Toohey and Kitty Baker. Artie Fauble was absent.

OLD BUSINESS

Debbie Wivell, 15423 Old Frederick Road, Emmitsburg, was present to discuss the memorial bench idea that was presented at the August meeting. This is in memory of **Anne Ricciuti** and her family; they want to place a bench and tree in Community Park in her memory. Jay researched the bench possibilities and the cost from Tree Top Projects is \$700 - \$1200. This is made of recycled plastic and includes a “built-in” plaque. Some Commission members will meet with Debbie on October 14th at 4:00 at the approximate location to discuss further, i.e. placement, kind of tree, type and color of bench. Debbie plans on working with a nursery in Carroll County who will plant the tree also. Ordering the bench could take up to 10 weeks so there is a possibility the tree will be planted prior to bench placement.

NEW BUSINESS

Danielle Vattimo, 8812 Adventure Avenue, Walkersville, is representing the **PTA** of Walkersville School District. They want to host a **food truck event** fundraiser on November 7th from 12-4 at Heritage by the football practice fields in the parking lot. She anticipates 5-10 vendors with an estimated attendance of 300. All paperwork presented. Kelly will provide extra trash cans. David motioned to be approved, seconded by Patricia and unanimously passed.

Heritage Park – GVAA Closing of Heritage Park at Dusk

GVAA Football was informed by the Town that they could no longer maintain their years-long tradition of practicing under their lights, after dark. After further

discussion, the town will allow football to continue to practice, while the rest of the park and all fall sports must leave by sunset. (This was taken from a letter written by Michelle Fyock, GVAA President.) She circulated this letter and recommended interested parties coming to this Parks meeting to discuss further.

Michelle spoke about the common agreement between the town and GVAA. If football can practice after dark using their lights, she feels it should be the same for all sports to do the same.

Mary Ann questioned when football started after sunset. It was stated this began over 15 years ago without proper knowledge. She feels this is not equitable because of insurance and liability issues.

A field hockey/soccer parent (could not understand name), asked if it was possible to sign a waiver. Mary Ann stated this needs to be answered by a lawyer.

Larae Harrison, GVAA Cheerleading President spoke. She is grateful that football shares their lights with the cheerleaders. Larae feels it is good to keep kids active to decrease the possibility of "getting into trouble." "Better for the kids and the town."

Jason Patton, 100 Chapel Court, is a commissioner for GVAA. He fields @150 football players and they need longer time to train. The lights are needed to properly get all the players through all the necessary training. Also, he stated that GVAA bought the lights for this.

Brittany Sheets – Vice President of GVAA. Suggests a new policy and plan. There is "new life in GVAA volunteers." Wants to suggest changing the "old rules." Mary Ann discouraged by some of the comments...stated that the town gives a lot. Jay, who served GVAA for 5 years, has fielded @ 20 calls about this. "GVAA leadership needs to communicate to the parents," stated Jay.

Russ Almono, 204 Bellgate Court. He has been a resident here for two years. Is a coach of JV football; nine years prior experience elsewhere. He stated it is tough to field a team this year with Covid and other issues. All the players get to play a lot. There are scheduling issues with parents getting the child there on time. He feels they need to “practice longer,” which would involve using lights.

Mike McNeish, Commissioner. Resident of Deer Run Drive. Also a GVAA parent along with his wife. He stated there are a lot of GVAA parents on the Walkersville boards. “Town is not in the wrong, maybe how it was presented.” He is not supportive in opening all sports at night because of the safety issues. His suggestion is that football operates as previously done and has an evaluation next season for other sports. Also, Mike and Michael Bailey, another Commissioner, support electricity going to the barn for possible events.

Mary Ann listed her concerns: safety, not a lit park. It is not set up that way. The town was not aware of the “wink/wink handshake” agreement. It is a concern. Walkersville does not have rangers to patrol the parks. There is no budget to hire a park ranger.

Over \$400K was put into the new Whitmore/Zimmerman building and it has been vandalized already. A lot of money has been spent to stabilize the barn. The Boy Scouts have spent a lot of money at the Manor House. She is concerned with keeping the park open later with the possibly causing negative issues with these buildings; concerned for all the buildings safety and security. Stated it gets very dark there at night.

Sean Williams, Town Manager

Introduced Trooper Silver. Troopers now lock the inner gate at dusk. Possibly locks the main gate too. Lack of lighting in the parking lot is the main issue. Also questioned if changes are made at Heritage, how will it affect the other parks?

Parks Commission stated their thoughts on the above. Discussion ensued. A motion to approve was made by Patricia: Football can practice from 6:00 – 8:00

p.m. until the end of the season (same arrangement as now). David seconded the motion and all approved with one opposition.

MARY ANN REPORT

Glade Valley Community Service, which has a room in the Manor House, requested that it be painted. Vicki Poole suggested this. The Parks budget will pay for the paint and the labor is yet to be decided (Boy Scouts or a willing involved couple).

Suggested that Bocce ball be put in one of the parks.

Need more multigenerational swings.

Solar lighting at the Manor House parking lot to the Whitmore/Zimmerman building would be beneficial.

Suggested adding electricity to the barn. There is a slope which could possibly hold town events (movie night). The slope forms a natural stage. Commissioners McNeish and Bailey support this.

KELLY WOODS REPORT

Need a date for all gardeners at Heritage to clean off their gardens and accumulate in one location. November 11th was the decided date. The rubbish will then be picked up by our local recycler/trash company.

Mike McNeish reiterated that the garden plots be plowed up this year.

The tree contractor took the trees down at Community Park.

A chipper was rented and 40 loads were taken to Barrick's Garden Center.

Residents at Community Park are asking when the bridge will be repaired. Ron Layman will offer this as a service project for a Scout.

Old golf course at Heritage is in need of repairs to flags/cups. This will be discussed at a winter meeting to perhaps have repaired by spring.

GVA – MICHELLE FYOCK REPORT

9505 Gravel Hill Road, Woodsboro

Sports are going well.

All sports are invited to participate in the Homecoming parade.

Woodsboro Scout Troop 1011 weeded and painted the GVA sign at Heritage.

The cleaning in the Whitmore/Zimmerman building starts this week. Mary Ann stated that this is paid for by the town. Paper products are supplied by GVAA. There has been no home school donation, as of yet, for using the soccer field. Michelle suggested that a town/GVAA agreement as to the lights issue be addressed prior to the start of spring sports, which is March 1st. Jay said this will be discussed further at our November 3rd meeting. He will talk with the Burgess and Commissioners, troopers and Sean. Mary Ann recommended a possible joint meeting between several boards to discuss.

Patricia questioned the next steps for Creamery Park as far as the renovation of equipment. Sean has communicated with our State Representative for state funds. Mary Ann will meet with Sean about this on October 7th. Projects might have to be switched up depending on the funding.

TREE LIGHTING – CREAMERY PARK

It was decided to hold this annual event on December 1st from 7:00 until finished. Patricia will contact the band director. Mary Ann will contact Robin at the library to make sure not a conflicting event. Anna will contact the town churches as to their possible participation (1-2 selections each). David will contact St. Paul's. This event will be further discussed at our November meeting. No food/drink was addressed at the meeting. The burn barrels would be welcomed. Mary Ann will let Diane know this is going to happen this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Patricia motioned and seconded by Kitty.

Sincerely,

Kitty Baker

