

LUZERNE COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting minutes: April 2nd, 2018

Vice-President Michele Schasberger called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM followed with the pledge to the flag and roll call.

Attendance: Michele Schasberger, Stephen Maakestad , Carol Husa

County: Daniel Butch, Transportation Planner, Luzerne County Planning Commission

Tim McGinley, Chair of the Luzerne County Council was also in attendance.

Motion to approve meeting minutes: Meeting minutes for March approved without corrections. Minutes will be sent to Sharon Lawrence.

Board Reorganization and new board members: The Recreational Facilities Advisory Board declined again to reorganize. The Board is still down one member, and Rich Adams is not in attendance, leaving only 3 board members in attendance.

Discussion items:

4-a) **Levee Trail Interpretive signs:** *(Background information) Existing interpretive panels were installed in 2003, and are 15 years old. Because they were only designed to be up for 10 years, they are cracked and faded and needing replacement. Replacement panels have been located at the Flood Protection Authority, but Board has also discussed locating digital files before putting up replacement.*

Michele located digital files from Keith Ragone, the graphic designer for the original project in 2003. She noted that he said a CD of the data would be \$750, but that the files were in a legacy Quark Xpress format. It would cost \$75 per panel for Keith to open and translate the files and output as a .pdf, meaning that the cost of translating the files in total would be about \$4650 or more. There are 62 unique panels installed per the Flood Protection Authority inventory, and there may be more designed files that were never installed. The County has received paid for and received a disk from Keith Ragone.

- No update as Eddie O'Neal, the County Operations Manager was not in attendance. Also, Pat Stephens of the D&L has left his position per an email to Dan Butch, so someone needs to contact them to find out who is filling out Pat's roles.

4-b) **River Common:** *(Background information) Luzerne County, Wilkes University, Kings College and the Riverfront Parks Committee finalized an agreement to jointly fund programming and maintenance on River Common, with the each university contributing \$20,000 and the County contributing \$10,000 from Act 13 Conservation & Recreation funding for the next five years. County Council approved this agreement on Tuesday November 14th. The County has additional obligation for maintenance of the park.*

The biggest issue at River Commons is ice damage to facilities, which is widely prevalent. Riverfront Parks Committee are organizing cleanups. There may be funding for cleanups mentioned at a Riverfront Parks committee meeting connected to PEC or to DCNR. Michele will email Eddie, Dan about possible opportunity.

4-b) **Forty Fort Recreation Fields.** *(Background) The West Side COG are having their lawyer (Forty Fort Solicitor) preparing much of the deed work prior to submitting their official request for acquisition of parcels at the Forty Fort Recreational Complex to be used to build a recycling center. Leases for Forty Fort Soccer and Whitewater Challengers are still pending but use of the fields during the 2017 season has gone well with no complaints. No updates about this*

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4-c) Bi-County Downtown Bicycle Circulation Study. Information in the newspaper announcing a bicycle study was confusing—it was actually the Penn DOT statewide bicycle plan, not the Bi-County Circulation study. MPO is hoping to release an RFP in May. Michele mentioned that George White did a City of Wilkes-Barre Trails and Greenways study, and has lots of old rail-line data, and also might be a good contact to respond to the RFP. She will ask PEC to see if she can get Dan the contact information.

4-d) Skate park: *(Background): River Common is currently being used as an unauthorized skate park which is causing vandalism and destruction. Portal doors have been dented—flood protection depends on ability to roll out gates stored in portal. The City of Wilkes-Barre has enforcement responsibility, but the level of enforcement in place is not impacting the problem. Neither the County, nor the City are likely to take on the responsibility for an additional facility due to perception of risk, and also limited budgets to manage current facilities.)*

No updates: Larry Newman of the Diamond City Partnership, the WB Downtown business revitalization organization has a downtown/close to downtown skate park on his to-do list for this year.

5- LC Recreation and Conservation Request for Support

Background: There are two Request for Supports outstanding. The First request for support from Marcellus Shale legacy funds was released in 2015, awarded spring of 2016, with funding released in June of 2016. There were about 20 applicants and limited funding, so not everyone received funding. Some County Councilmembers questioned the length of process, results and need for criteria. In 2017 County Council managed a process that was simpler, but again many more applicants than funding. Because it would have been so time-consuming to try to decide between applicants, Council split the funding equally between all applicants regardless of project size, with everyone receiving about \$4000.

In 2017, projects that received funding had to state they were willing to proceed with the complete project they requested given the amount funded before their funding was released. A number of applicants then decided they did not want to proceed—some applicants were unsure or negative, but then requested funding after they found sufficient funding for their projects.

In the request for support for 2016, funding was divided into two parts, with second part to be received on completion of project and reporting documentation. In June of 2018 it will be about 2.5 years since grants were awarded and 2 years since funding was received. Projects were initially conceived to be small and quickly completed, so projects ideally should be finished.

March 2018 LCRFAB meeting discussed the Requests for Support. County Council President Tim McGinley was in attendance. Because first (2016) Request for Support funding was encumbered for completion of projects, we agreed it was time to determine status of projects, and after that to recommend, after communication with original recipient, to set a date to release to general rec. use the encumbered funding for projects that were not completed.

Board members agreed that Michele would follow up with Eddie about status of projects focusing on first (2016) request for support.

6- Need for Board Members-Swearing In

There is still a vacant position on the Luzerne County Recreational Facilities Advisory Board, County Council is aware of this. Filling positions is dependent on applications

7- Recreational Facilities in Luzerne County-General

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The Kingston-Forty Fort trail feasibility study was up on the boroughs' websites. One of the boroughs will have to take the initiative in applying for funding to implement this study, and the great majority of the trail is in Forty Fort.

8- New Business

No new business

Next Meeting: May 7? But maybe we will cancel, because Carol will not be able to attend.

Motion to adjourn by: Michele; all in favor

Meeting adjourned at 6:15PM

Recorded and submitted: Michele Schasberger, Vice-president