

LUZERNE COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting minutes: June 4, 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, Neil Kaufer, Carol Husa

County: Daniel Butch, Transportation Planner, Luzerne County Planning Commission, Eddie O'Neill, County Operations Manager

Motion to approve meeting minutes: Meeting minutes for April 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, as Stephen Maakestad and Rich Adams were absent. The Board welcomed new board member Neil Kaufer. Michele needs to send Neil LCRFAB by-laws

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.

- Eddie noted his road & bridge staff is too busy to install signs. He needs to contact the D&L to find out who might be taking Pat Stephen's place. Pat would have helped the County install the signs. We discussed that the County can hire an outside contractor to install the signs—the job should not take too long.

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 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 from the winter. There are no issues with using River Commons, but there is a need for underlying work that involves engineering. Eddie estimates work could be from \$35-150,000.

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*

4-c) **Bi-County Downtown Bicycle Circulation Study:** RFP for this Study will be released in June, and there will be a steering committee to review applicants.

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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 \$4423.86.

In 2017, projects that received funding had to state they were willing to proceed with the complete project in its entirety and for the amount specified 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 additional funding needed for their projects.

In the request for support for 2016, funding was divided into two parts, with second part to be received upon completion of project and submission of 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 have small costs and short durations, so projects ideally should be completed.

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, a date to release to general rec. use the encumbered funding.

Focusing only on closing the initial 2016 Request for Support. Has the Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership sent in final paperwork for reimbursement? Michele will find out. Has the County Council set a date to close up this grant? It would need to be put on an agenda for work session-discussion and subsequent vote.

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 the vacancy. Filling positions is dependent on applications

7- Recreational Facilities in Luzerne County-General

We discussed the Kingston-Forty Fort trail feasibility study. The applicants (Kingston and Forty Fort borough) missed an opportunity to present at the TA Set Aside consideration meeting in November 2017, prior to the disposition being made on the TA Set Aside grant and before the feasibility study on the trail was officially complete, because the applicant did not understand the need to make a presentation to qualify for the grant. We may want to pass on to the MPO a request to be more specific in asking grant applicants to present for these funds?

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8- New Business

No new business

Next Meeting: July 2nd

Motion to adjourn by: Michele; all in favor

Meeting adjourned at 6:30PM

Recorded and submitted: Michele Schasberger, Vice-president