

**MINUTES
NORTH LEBANON TOWNSHIP
PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
JANUARY 6, 2004**

The meeting of the North Lebanon Township Parks & Recreation Board was called to order on January 6, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the North Lebanon Township Municipal Building located at 725 Kimmerlings Road, North Lebanon Township.

The following members were present:

Evelina Krall Chairman
Jay Snavely Vice-Chairman
Steve Smith Member
Gary Zelinske Member
Clyde Ebersole Member
Sheila Wartluft Assistant Township Manager

There was no public present this evening.

Chairman Krall asked the Board if they wanted to wait to see if Member Smith came before they started the re-organization of the Board? They decided to call for a motion to approve the December minutes and see if he came in prior to the re-organizational portion of the meeting.

Chairman Krall called for a motion to approve the December minutes.

MOTION: Motion was made and second to approve the December minutes. Motion unanimously approved.

REORGANIZE BOARD FOR 2004

Chairman Krall explained to the new members that this is the portion of the meeting where the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are nominated for the new year. Chairman Krall was asked if she is interested in serving as Chairman of the Board again for this new year? She said she doesn't mind serving again or if someone else would like to do it that would be fine also.

At this time, Member Steve Smith nominated Evelina Krall for Chairman of the Park and Recreation Board for 2004.

MOTION: Motion was made and second to approve Evelina Krall as Chairman of the Park and Recreation Board. Motion approved.

Chairman Krall then asked for a nomination for Vice-Chairman for the Park and Recreation Board. Jay said it is time to let another serve as Vice Chairman, so he is not interested in serving again this year. At this time, Member Zelinske nominated Clyde Ebersole for Vice-Chairman.

REORGANIZE BOARD FOR 2004(cont'd)

MOTION: Motion was made and second to approve Clyde Ebersole as Vice-Chairman of the Park and Recreation Board. Motion approved.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP FOR 2004

Evelina Krall Chairman
Clyde Ebersole Vice-Chairman
Steve Smith Member
Gary Zelinske Member
Jay Snavelly Member

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments from the public this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation for Comprehensive Plan Update

Sheila said it is time to narrow the field to at least 3 choices to do our update on the Comprehensive Plan. It was asked, how many presentations did we see, 5 or 6? Sheila said we had 5 presentations. Chairman Krall said on the agenda, there is a list of presenters that we had to help jog your memories. She said as they gave their presentations, she jotted down notes so that she could better remember what they presented. As she understands the process, once we narrow it down to 3, we then get prices from these three to further narrow the field and do more investigating. At this time, an informal discussion was held as to whom each member liked and why he or she liked him or her. Jay said he felt that Steckbeck was local and that is what he liked about him. Clyde said he can agree with him on that, but that is not always good. He did a very good presentation and represented his company very well. He showed his concern with what happens locally because he lives so close. Jay said he already works for the Township in other areas. Clyde said the 3 that he chose he felt the plotting that they used for the piece of land on Narrows Drive was all pretty similar and doesn't doubt that the other two would use the same process. It was just that they never mentioned it in their presentation. You almost have to use this type of system, especially if you are going to tear up the ground and clean up the property. Krall asked him who is referring to? He said David Miller and Associates, Steckbeck Engineering and Spotts, Stevens and McCoy. He also liked the RBA Group because they had people that worked with the State Forestry Commission and the greenway plan. Member Smith asked of it would be feasible to list 4 groups and then we can discuss the ones that are left over. At this time, Chairman Krall felt we should go back to the beginning of the agenda and elect the officers for 2004. As the re-organization part of the meeting has taken place, the discussion on the Comprehensive Plan can now continue. Chairman Krall said we are a small enough group that we do not have to vote on these recommendations for the plan by secret ballot. We can go through these presentations and then make our decision. We can start by picking 4 presenters and then go from there. In Chairman Krall's opinion, the most creative presentation was

Recommendation for Comprehensive Plan Update(cont'd)

from Spotts, Stevens and McCoy. He did not have any fancy drawings or pictures and spoke off the hip. He just did such a good verbal presentation and showed a lot of enthusiasm. She liked his ideas about the planets and the creative aspect of his presentation by involving physical exercise along with the educational aspect. She liked his looped walking paths because he said that was very good for wildlife. He seemed the most enthusiastic with refreshing ideas. The RBA Group also seemed very good at geography and the knowledge of trees and getting information and grants, etc., since this person worked in State Parks for all his life. He lived it. The older gentlemen impressed her the most with his knowledge of the parks system. Since we have a lot of parkland and trees, he just seemed to have the most knowledge in these areas. She feels that it is always nice to go local if we can, but we have a big project here and she thinks we should explore going out of the local area as well. She feels that Steckbeck has a lot of wonderful qualities, but she wasn't the most impressed by him. If she didn't know he was local, she would not pick him to do the job. She felt that Rettew was good as well. They were the ones that had the suggestion to look at the entire Township and seeing how to lay the plan out, even though that is not what we asked him to do. She thinks that the Township had hired them before for various projects, including the first comprehensive plan. At this time, Sheila asked to interject. She explained that what we are doing with the comprehensive plan is to plan for the entire Township, not just one specific piece of property, although we are interested in ideas for the Moyer Property. A comprehensive plan covers the entire Township, not just one small part. It will be dealing with recreation throughout the entire Township. It is not going to be a specific plan just for the Moyer Property. We have to work on the overall view of recreation in the Township. Member Zelinkse asked if we were to choose the RBA Group as an example, to do the comprehensive plan, but we would want Steckbeck to do a specific portion of the plan, say the Moyer Property, is that permissible? Sheila said we could, it would depend on whom we worked the best with. The comprehensive plan is totally different from the actual physical work that would be done on any of the parks in the Township. The plan is just that, a plan. It also depends on how intense we are going to be with our comprehensive plan. Time, money the budget, etc. Some people do it all at once, the comprehensive plan for the Township and then the master plan for a specific area. She is not sure what we are going to be doing. Chairman Krall said then she is unsure if she was thinking correctly from the beginning of these presentations. She thought we were looking for someone to design this specific park and the master plan kept coming up as part of this plan. She thought they were hand in hand, but she thought we were looking for someone to design a plan for the Moyer Property. What are we voting on then? Sheila said remember when she brought over the comprehensive plan that we did in 1992 and it basically talked about all the recreation in the Township. It talked about the three districts and the recreation that was in outlying areas. It basically talked about how we planned for recreation. When we did that plan, we had not started Lions Lake, but it had an idea of what we wanted to do with that property and it also talked about the eastern section and finding an area to develop in that area, the east. It can be basic or it can be all encompassing. Ours was pretty intensive, and she has seen other municipalities and theirs' was not as intensive. It is going to be pretty much budgetary as to what we can and cannot do. But the comprehensive plan is going to encompass recreation for the entire Township. It may or may not focus on the Moyer Property, obviously, that is going to be the next area to be

Recommendation for Comprehensive Plan Update(cont'd)

worked on, so it will be included in the plan. But it is not going to be specifically on the Moyer Property. Again, Chairman Krall asked what we are then looking at or voting for this evening? Sheila said we are looking for someone that will be doing our comprehensive plan. Krall then asked when we would be looking for someone to do the park at the Moyer Property? Sheila said this is going to take quite a while to get done, so it might not be for a while. Krall then asked if the Moyer property is going to be part of this comprehensive plan? Sheila said it is going to be a part of it. Is it specifically going to address how many fields, pavilions, etc., the Moyer Property is going to have, probably not. That will be part of the scope of work that someone will be planning. Krall said that it would probably be better to stick with one engineer to do the plan, when we finally choose to do everything. Sheila said it depends on whom you pick. There are people that are good at some things, and not at others. There are some groups that are good at the master plan and others that are better at the comprehensive part of the plan. So it all depends on whom you pick and what their specialty is. To give the Board an idea, when they purchased the Moyer Property, they put some numbers together and came up with \$1.75 million needed to develop this property. Between walking paths, pavilions, grading, etc. It is not going to happen this year or maybe not even next, it does take time. It will all depend on the budget and what we can do and how far we will go. Gary asked whose decision it is on the development of the comprehensive plan? Is it the Board or the person developing the plan to focus more on a particular property? Is this a mutual decision on both parts? Sheila said since we are doing the hiring, we are essentially the bosses and she would think, yes, it is up to us to make the decision. She was not here during the first comprehensive plan, so she is not sure what exactly happens. The one thing that bothers Vice Chairman Ebersole, is that, if we have someone doing a comprehensive plan and we know that we have a parcel of land that must be developed, why would we not have them do a quote right away that would probably save us half of what it would normally cost to do it alone? Or if we have another outfit coming in, let them know in advance of the proposed development. Chairman Krall said it seems that it would be a waste of money to have 2 different engineers come in rather than have the same one do both plans. Sheila said the reality of this, is that in 2004, the Comprehensive Plan **may** be completed. Krall asked if we have to complete this prior to starting the new park? Sheila said most definitely. She cannot envision seeing the park getting started for several more years. Chairman Krall said in light of that, she had been paying special attention to RBA because they were the ones who gave an awful lot of information on comprehensive plans with trails and tying it into other communities. Plus they were the ones that were experts in forestry and parkland. Ebersole said all of these groups probably work in all of these different areas, but may have not emphasized this in the presentation. Sheila said she is sure, if they do not offer a particular service, they pair up with another group, just as the one presenter did. The one thing that made Sheila uncomfortable was the group that cancelled out at the last minute and sent someone totally different. This was the HRG Group that works with Spotts, Stevens and McCoy. Member Zelinske said he would put Steckbeck and Rettew on the side, personally. He was not that impressed with either one of them. He would keep the RBA Group on the list. Chairman Krall said she agrees with his assessment, she would also set those two groups aside as well. After much discussion on the various presenters, it was decided that they would narrow the field down to RBA Group, David Miller and Associates, and

Recommendation for Comprehensive Plan Update(cont'd)

Spotts, Stevens and McCoy for the 10 year Comprehensive Plan. If these are the three that are our favorites, there is no need to take a vote. Krall said she really enjoyed coming to the meetings and envisioning what each presenter had to offer. She thanked the rest of the Board for thoughts and opinions on the presenters and for making this decision as easy as it was. Sheila was asked what the next step is in this process. She said she will get a memo together for the Board of Supervisors and ask for a request for proposals from the three that we have selected. She was asked if this is a bidding process? She said no, we can decide and pick whomever we want. She said she has no idea as to the cost of these plans. Maybe the Supervisors are going to look at these three and see that one of them is \$20,000 more than the next one and maybe this is where they will decide. They have asked us to listen to the presentations and provide them with the insight that we are comfortable with all three of these and will leave it up to you to decide. Chairman Krall said after discussing this a little bit more, it sounds like if we had to narrow this down to 2 choices it would be David Miller and Associates and RBA Group. She would like the Supervisors to know this as well as it might be helpful to them.

Pertinent Issues

Sheila had no pertinent matters other than the Lion's Club dates for the Lions' Lake pavilion for the year. Also, the dam inspection report has nothing new to report. She is still waiting to hear about the mural that has been requested on the concession stand at Long Lane.

OLD BUSINESS

Northeast Swim Club

One thing that popped out to Chairman Krall when she read the Township minutes reminded her of when the Township purchased the Ebenezer School many years ago. It is the mind set that if you don't buy it, it will turn into developments. This is a much smaller scale, but the mind set is the same. She thinks they did the right thing although they have been persecuted for doing it. The same thing may happen here. You might think you are doing something good, but we may be persecuted for it. The persecution that the Supervisors have gone through was over sharing the fields with New Covenant. And although, there were legitimate arguments that were really good, the whole thing was, if they would not have bought the school, it would have been developed. She doesn't think the Supervisors were fully appreciated for what they did for the Township. She went into an explanation of what went on with the ball fields between the Township Sports organizations and the New Covenant School. She sees the same argument coming up with the pool if we would decide to take it over. She felt the new members needed to hear the history of Long Lane before any decision is made. Jay said he couldn't see the Township buying the pool and then lose money. They don't have money to lose. He said he is a taxpayer too and he doesn't want to see his money pay for something down there that is losing money. Chairman Krall said every time you buy property for parkland, you could look at it as a loss of money or

Northeast Swim Club(cont'd)

gaining parkland that is going to be used by the residents. We aren't making any money on any of the parks we have, but it is being used. But if the maintenance is so high that it costs and costs and costs, then you really have to look at it. That is her main concern. We just bought a big piece of property that will take years to develop and that will take a lot of money as well. Jay said when that pool was originally built, they came to the Supervisors and asked for it to be built here on Township property and the Supervisors said no. These same people then left the park and formed their own park. His feeling is, now let them get rid of it. There is no one that is going to buy it because it is losing money already. He is sure that no one is going to put more money into this pool that is losing membership and is in great need of repair. On the other hand, Chairman Krall said for the kids that love to swim and go to the pool everyday in the summer, it would be really awesome for them, which is why she hates to take this whole topic lightly. Member Zelinske said it is apparent that this is not the only pool that is suffering a membership problem from some of the information that we have received. It may be a little bit more dramatic, but no different. This is the first and only time that we have been faced with some of these questions raised by the Board that they originally had not thought of. His gut feeling is that, he would hate to see the pool close, because it is in the Township and the kids that use it everyday. But on the other hand, it could be a big burden for the Township unless it is set up right and established and there is no guarantee that this environment will continue. But he does like the idea of before acquiring the property, have someone come in and look at it and evaluate what it would need. There are a lot of money questions that are going to be raised. Looking at some of the questions that were raised by the Board, he doesn't feel it is realistic to make a decision of this magnitude within the next month or two. Not that we are not willing to help, but we would need a lot more time to make this very important decision. Sheila said when she met with them; they told her they do not have the time to wait. They already are on the delinquent sewer list with us, the delinquent water list with the City and they are running out of time and already have run out of money. We had suggested to them that we would make a financial contribution to help them and have them run the operation and they said no, that is not an option. When she told them that she was going to report to the Board tonight on the meeting with them, they said they need to know as soon as possible and do not have the luxury of time on their side. Steve said it is then time to go to the Board of Supervisors and get a decision and have the pool people get more creative in trying to solve this problem. Maybe work with the YMCA as suggested by Supervisor Sattazahn at the Board of Supervisors meeting. We are close to the City at the location but he is not sure how the other members would feel having other people joining or using the facility as some of the problems are at Coleman Park. The City, right now is looking for another pool. They were talking about building over at Optimist Park. They have significant Federal Funds available to them that have to be used. Sheila said if the Township would decide to take over the pool, it would then be a public community pool as Coleman Park is. We would not be able to limit membership to a certain few individuals and not others. No matter what happens with this pool, if someone takes it over, it is going to be a community, public pool. No other community has a "private pool", they are run by various organizations, such as the Lions Club, private association, etc. Vice Chairman Ebersole asked if the staff or Board of the pool has done a survey to see where their members come from? It was mentioned that they reported @ 90% of the residents were from North Lebanon

Northeast Swim Club(cont'd)

Township. Initially, when this pool was set up, it was all people that were close at hand, it isn't that way anymore. The immediate neighborhood has become mature and there aren't children in the neighborhood anymore. That is another reason that the membership has fallen off. Jay also mentioned that a lot of people have put pools in their yards as well. The only good pool in the area that is still solvent is South Lebanon. The pool at Fairview Golf Course, Valley Beach Club, is in trouble also. Sheila said they are basically all in trouble. Ebersole said when you operate from one year to the next, there is going to be problems. Plus the fact that there is a lot of overhead with operating a pool. Plus the older and older the pool gets, the bigger the overhead becomes as well. How do you track people beyond the realm of that area? Chairman Krall said that is why approaching the YMCA would be a great idea. Is the swim club looking to make a profit on the pool by selling it? Both of the individuals that were here at the meeting and also met with Sheila and Cheri are accountants and maybe they think too much from a profit standpoint, versus a sustenance standpoint. The other problem is that shareholders and not a company own the pool itself. When they asked them about the bylaws, they really didn't know what the bylaws were. Sheila also found out through the grapevine, that the people that are shareholders have already received a letter saying basically the pool is closed and done. Both Steve and Gary who are shareholders said they have not received this letter that they know of. A question was raised if a non-profit organization can claim bankruptcy? Sheila said she is not sure, but they told her they are not a non-profit organization. That was one of her suggestions to them, declaring bankruptcy in a letter that she sent to Greg Dommel explaining the AES Foundation. She gave him information and contacts with AES since they are basically in their backyard and contributes to non-profit organizations. This is when she was told they are not non-profit. AES would contribute if it were open to the community and making it public to everyone. Would it be a workable solution to have maybe three or four entities going into joint ownership and taking it over? Sheila said maybe that is why they came to us first, so they can go to the next person and tell them that they came to us and the Township said this, this and this. No matter what they do and who they go to, they are not going to get a quick answer. It takes time to investigate and come up with the money. Jay asked, what about the people that have money invested in the swim club, what about them? He was told they would not get their money back unless it is sold at a profit. Chairman Krall said she heard the representatives say, they want to make a profit when they were at our last meeting. Jay said if they sell it, they may not even get out of it what they owe, to which the rest of the Board agreed. Sheila said from what she found out from some of the other pool clubs that she spoke to, they are struggling and they don't have a \$100,000 mortgage hanging over their heads. The swim club has money in their account right now, but that is only because some of the people paid their membership early. They do not want to pay any bills from this because they don't know if they will be opening this year or not. They have their man that cuts the grass and they haven't been able to pay him either because he came to late to recover his money. It was asked where their volunteers are to help with this? Chairman Krall said maybe their only other alternative is to sell and have it developed. The only other problem with this is the location and the neighborhood. She said she likes the idea of contacting the YMCA because they are better equipped to handle something like this than we are. We just purchased a big piece of land that we have to

Northeast Swim Club(cont'd)

pay off and develop. It was mentioned that the Y is having problems finding employees as well. The one thing that a member said he finds hard to understand is that the pool is 30 years old and still has a mortgage of \$100,000. Sheila said they just recently took out a loan, 3 to 4 years ago to do repairs. Krall asked if the pool is in good shape? She hears it is beautiful, but is it in good shape? She was told that the decking around the pool was just redone, along with the electric under the decking. As far as the pumps and that type of thing, he is not sure. Sheila said they told her that they were getting good deals on re-built pumps and they were relying on the members and their expertise on other repairs that had to be done. The concession stand, the parking lot and the other utility type buildings are in good shape. The pool itself is sandblasted every year and cleaned by the pool group that did the decking last year. Chairman Krall asked why they are having problems getting new members? How would the Township get new members? They were told that they have relaxed some of the rules they had previously to try and get more people involved. They let visitors come in as many times as they wanted, versus, limiting that in previous years. They started with single parent type activities, but that didn't really help a whole lot. Sheila said pretty much what they told her is that more and more people have their own pools and are vacationing a lot more than they once did and the demand for the public type pool is not as great as it once was. Plus there are many more activities with sports and other clubs that take up time away from the pool. But for those kids that go to the pool everyday, they would really miss it. There is no easy or fast answer for this problem. It is unfortunate that this has to be. Here we sit as a recreation board with an opportunity to provide more recreation and physical activity for not only the kids of the Township but the adults as well, but this one has a lot of economics attached to it that might not make it feasible for us to do. The economics of maintaining this are much more than say, Lions Lake or here at the Township building. Putting economics aside, they are also under the impression that we would be able to fully staff the facility with maintenance people and that simply is not the case. We barely have enough for the properties that we have now. It was then brought up; can we afford not to save the pool? We feel we can't afford to run it, but what will come in if we don't save it? Jay said we could put a pool down at the new park. Chairman Krall said this is something she was a little afraid of saying that herself. It is not that far fetched an idea. It is not an impossibility. Jay said he would rather hold on to our money for our park and let them find someone else to run the pool. Chairman Krall said she still feels they should contact Wal-Mart about it. They are always saying they want to help the community; this would be a great help. The bottom line right now is, we don't have any answer for them. Both Chairman Krall and Jay said they have their answer for them, they would not do it. We can't afford and we can't maintain it on our own. The rest of the Board members basically concurred with Jay and Evelina and decided it would be best to give the Swim Club an answer now, instead of tabling the issue and stringing them along. If they could hang in there another year, that would be a different story, but he doesn't think they may be able to open this summer without help.

MOTION: Motion was made and second to not take over ownership of the Northeast Swim Club at this time. Motion approved with two members abstaining.

Chairman Krall said it is times like these that it is very difficult to be a Board member and make these types of decisions. Although, we would all love to be able to help this group out, financially and physically we are unable to do so at this time.

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no information items this evening.

MOTION: Motion was made and second to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved.

With no more information before the Park and Rec Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina M. Haser
Recording Secretary