



**COUNTY OF DELAWARE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
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**COUNCIL
DR. MONICA TAYLOR
CHAIR**

**PARKS AND RECREATION
ANNE P. STAUFFER
INTERIM DIRECTOR**

**RICHARD R. WOMACK
VICE CHAIR**

**KEVIN M. MADDEN
ELAINE PAUL SCHAEFER
CHRISTINE A. REUTHER**

**Delaware County Park Board Meeting
September 11, 2024
12:00 p.m.**

Location: Hunt Club

Attendees:

- **Board:** Kathy Lopez; Parker Snowe; Barron Lacy; Bridget O'Donnell; Mary Coniglio, John McMullan
- **Department of Parks and Recreation:** Anne Stauffer, Interim Director of Parks & Recreation; Beth Chapman, Marketing & Communications Manager
- **County:** Councilperson Elaine Paul Schaefer, County Council Liaison
- **Not present:** Stephanie Gaboriault; Nicholas Hoyt; Kelly Johnson; Trish McFarland
- Minutes by Carol Tustin
- **Call to Order:** 12:03 pm

Meeting Minutes from July 9, 2024 were approved by the board.

Call to Order..... Chair Kathy Lopez

- The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm by Kathy Lopez, Park Board Chair.

Guest Speaker..... Karen Wilwol, Executive Director at Delaware County Conservation District

- Karen Wilwol introduced herself as the District Manager / Executive Director of Conservation District. They are a county department as the soil and water conservation department, and that's where her Executive Director title comes in. They also do a lot of tests outside of the county as delegated by the state, and that's where her District Manager title comes in.
- The presented slide show explained the district overview of what they do and the collaboration with the Parks department over the years. They are a county department, but they are also a political subdivision of the State of Pennsylvania. Conservation districts were established by law in the 1970s. All Pennsylvania counties have a Conservation District, other than Philadelphia County. All the districts manage natural resources. They work with landowners, whether they're residents, developers, municipalities, county governments and then also state

lands. They are a small staff and work through partnerships and cooperate with all kinds of agencies, landowners, municipalities, and all different kinds of groups.

- They report to a Board of Directors, which have nine directors. They currently have a vacancy. Three of their directors are required to be farm directors, and their current vacancy is for one of the farm directors. Please let any farmers that you may know about this vacancy. They must be a resident of Delaware County to sit on the board and meet some other requirements.
- So, every year, the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD), asks all the districts to put together one slide to highlight that year's work. Karen presented the slide from 2023. They've done riparian buffer planting, purchased a UTV with state funding, which will help the Parks Department and help us with some of the planting projects. The state also provided funding for the district to scan files and go full electronic.
- They are the municipal separate storm sewer system permit coordinators for county facilities. The process is called MS4, which is an EPA mandated permit program regulated by the state to public entities that own property with storm drainage systems that drain directly to surface water. That program requires a lot of oversight to make sure that waste and pollution does not wash into the streams. They inspect facilities and educate facility managers to keep them informed of wastewater management procedures. They do inspections and review applications before any permits are issued. The district at this time has two vacancies for technicians, so if anyone knows someone interested in natural resource management, please let them know. The district has some funding for the state's low volume Road program, described as less than 500 vehicles per day, so municipalities can apply to fix these roads if needed.
- In 2011, they received a growing greener grant to purchase a conservation planting trailer. It is shared with Bucks County, Montgomery County and Chester County Conservation Districts and is full of equipment that volunteer groups might need for planting projects. It's very popular and is reserved every weekend up until the end of November. We recently received another growing greener grant to keep the trailer going. We are also the first point of contact for the newly named Trees for Watersheds Grant Program, which is funding for tree plantings to try to restore tree coverage and enhance riparian buffers on waterways. The funding primarily comes from DEPs Growing Greener Program, but also Aqua and the state of Pennsylvania.
- They also coordinate the Envirothon at the county level. This is a high school competition testing the knowledge of all kinds of natural resources. We would love to have more high schools participating if anyone has any contacts. Parker Snowe asked about working with colleges. He thought that Haverford College would be a great fit to work with since they have a farm on campus. Mary Coniglio thought that working with Tyler Arboretum would be a good idea due to the large vegetable garden the plant every year. The Poster Contest for elementary schools is something they do. They also do adult education focusing mainly on storm water. We try to participate in the Keystone 10 million trees program. We also do training programs for homeowner's associations.

- There are a couple of projects that were done with the county parks over the years. There was a multifunctional riparian buffer done by live stake planting along Crum Creek and Smedley Park. Another project was at Smedley Park that involved the outfall pipe in the stormwater basin. ATV's and Jeeps had crushed the pipe causing flooding and freezing roads. We awarded the county a low volume road grant to fix up the basin. This corrected the flooding issues, a guiderail was installed to prevent it happening again, and a backflow preventer was installed as an improvement for the watershed. At Glen Providence Park, we reinforced the stream banks by anchoring the leftover Festival of Lights trees into the bank to cushion the stream banks against erosion along with some live stake planting. We worked with the US Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to secure funding to hire a contractor to help us kill off the Spotted Lanternfly population at the parks and it was a success. At Clayton Park Golf Course, we used catfish and bluegill in the irrigation pond to eat the snails that got into the pond during floods. They were clogging the irrigation equipment resulting in a lot of manhours clearing them out. Using the fish was a natural solution requiring no chemicals or permits.
- We also work with other county facilities, like Fair Acres and the prison property. We have good relationships with all our facility managers.

Interim Directors report..... Anne Stauffer

- This is the first Park Board meeting with Anne Stauffer as the Interim Director. She wanted everyone to know that they can reach out to her with any questions or concerns.
- Parks & Recreation had a very successful summer festival, which Beth Chapman will present today.
- We hired three new groundskeepers to start on Monday, great news as we've been short staffed. We have reached out to the county clerk, and they are working on getting the opening on the Park Board filled.
- The sign for Delco Woods has been ordered and there will be an event, either in September or October, to introduce the park name. The event will have a ceremony to award the person who suggested the winning name in the contest. We will send out the date so you can attend if you have the time. There are two master watershed stewards' programs at Delco Woods currently. One is a little mini berm in a trail to help with slowing erosion, and the other program is trying to take out invasive plants, replacing them with native plants.
- I want to recognize friends of Glen Providence Park. This Saturday is their final concert in Glen Providence Park. They will no longer be an official group doing programming in the park, but they will still be there to help pull invasives and unclog pipes among other things. I'm sorry that Stephanie couldn't be here today, but I just want to recognize their hard work over all the years.
- The Festival of Lights is moving forward. The opening night will be Thursday, December 5 and we hope you can make it. It's going to be a little different this year. We are moving from a business to a community-oriented program. There will be food trucks and a brewery or wine vendor in the back, there will be community

performances and the programming will run for five nights. It will be the opening night on December 5, then the following Saturday and Sunday, and the next Saturday and Sunday, weather permitting. We're removing Fridays due to traffic from the Festival of Lights and work traffic resulting in extreme traffic conditions. We are looking for sponsors for the programs. Right now, Visit Delco helped with the collaboration fund, but we are seeking more and need sponsors for 2025, so this is something that will be coming to the board. We'll need policies for donations and sponsorships so just think about that for later. We no longer have ARPA funds to help with the Festival of Lights, but we want to keep the program going because it's a great community program. We also plan to take donations from the public if they choose to donate. Brooke Kempczynski will be there every night as the Parks contact for the food trucks. We're thinking about having a Parks and Recreation table at the event, so board members can man the table some nights if they choose to talk to the public.

- There was discussion about where and at what times the performances would be held and who would be the performers. There will not be huts at the festival anymore, but we would like to continue the awesome lighting from the last few years.

Council..... Councilperson Elaine Paul Schaefer

- Elaine wanted to thank the Parks Department for taking ownership of the Festival of Lights since it is no longer a business oriented economic development effort and has shifted back to a community-oriented event. The Visit Delco collaboration fund, which is the County destination marketing organization has financed the festival this year.
- The park visit to Little Flower Manor by County Council to discuss names and look over the property was cancelled and needs to be rescheduled, so the naming has not moved forward yet.
- The master plan for Delco Woods has not gone away, but we do need to make some changes to adhere to the new zoning changes for the property. We've rehired Ann Toole to make some adjustments to the plans. The new zoning isn't settled yet, so once that's all completed, we can approve the plans at Council. We are putting in a LSA grant application, which are Community Betterment grants, to improve the walking trails in Delco Woods. We would know by next fall if we're able to do that.
- I want to talk about the Briarcliffe building. Just wanted to let you know that for Park naming procedures, it will come to the Park Board for input, probably by next year.
- The last thing that I want to discuss is the possibility of fees on some park amenities. Obviously, if that was decided, there would be a lot of thought put into it, and we would want input from this group. It is kind of unusual for a County Parks Department to not have any charges for use, so these conversations are starting to happen. Anne Stauffer mentioned that we have compiled a list of fees charged by nearby areas and municipalities so we could have a starting point for the fee conversation if it happens.

- Kathy Lopez mentioned that she would like to talk to the board about board priorities and participation in different opportunities. She wanted to see if could maybe schedule a zoom meeting to discuss it.

Old Business

- Barron Lacy gave an update on the Park Board visit to Smedley Park. He mentioned that he and Mary Coniglio enjoyed the visit. He enjoyed seeing the conservation efforts at the park. Parker Snowe mentioned that the Springfield Trail runs through Smedley Park and is an interesting trail.
- Beth Chapman gave a wrap up of the Summer Concert Series. This year was season 49, so we are really looking forward to next year for the 50th anniversary. We had 45 shows this year with only 4 canceled and we did have 17 where the attendance was impacted due to weather. There was discussion about donations for the festival and the probable need for an electronic option. We received great publicity this year through our marquee at the park, bulletin boards, social media, Delaware County PR department, Visit Delco, and different publications. We had 53,313 hits on our web page from June Through the third week of August. Attendance was strong this year. We have had up to 35,000 people at attendance at the concerts. The Juneteenth Celebration with music by Philly Gumbo seems to be getting bigger every year. This year, we closed the playground 10 minutes before showtime to cut down on noise. People seem to be in favor of it 15 to 1. There are renovations taking place over the winter for the amphitheater and the bathrooms, which is super exciting. This will include the historic tea house, which is used as an office.

New Business

- Marc Manfre is retiring as the Director of Parks and Recreation. He is officially done on July 26, 2024. Marc has been here for 30 years. He started here as a Parks and Recreation intern while he was attending Temple University. He worked in different departments before settling in as the Director of Parks and Recreation. He has enjoyed his time working in the County and is going to miss Parks and Recreation. He thanked the Parks Advisory Board and said it is a great cushion between the community and the department and has always been grateful for their advice and
- We have some volunteer opportunities coming up. We have the BioBlitz in Concord Township, September 21 at Clayton Park as the kickoff, but the BioBlitz will be the whole week until September 28. Also, there is a chance to volunteer for the PRC. They have two dates coming up, September 26 at Catania Park and October 31 at Rose Tree Park for electronic waste collection. We also have meadow seeding at Rose Tree Park which is being run by Penn State Extension stewards. Also, this is not a volunteer event, but on October 5, it is Lafayette day at the 1724 Courthouse in Chester. It is coming under parks for scheduling and maintenance. It's a block party event with vendors. Andrea Silva is the Chair of America 250 PA Delco, and it might be a good idea to invite her to speak at a Park Board meeting next year.

Open Discussion and Public Comment

- Our next Park Board visit is on October 9 at Delco woods. We will meet in the parking lot on Reed Road across from the Home Depot, but a little further down the road from Springfield Road. Our next meeting is November 13. We will make it a hybrid meeting for people who can't attend in person.
- Since we are having our next park visit at Delco Woods, should we make it the same day as the Delco Woods sign day? We'll leave the park visit on the usual scheduled day, and if the sign is there, it is a bonus.

- **Meeting adjourned: 1:15 pm**

Meetings:

January 10

March 13

May 8

July 10

September 11

November 13

Park Visits:

February 13 – Little Flower Manor

April 10 – Upland Park

June 12 – Pennock Woods and Shrigley Park

August 14 – Smedley Park

October 9 – Delco Woods

December – Rose Tree Festival of Lights on opening night