



BOROUGH OF NORTH WALES

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PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING **Thursday, December 14 2023 – 7:00 PM**

Gina Calhoun, Chair
Lynne Fitzgerald
Martha Lottes
Robin Parker
Elliot Sadlon, Co-Chair
Kathy Schweitzer
Rachel Wise, Secretary

MEETING: December 14, 2023, 7:06 PM, EST

CALL TO ORDER made by Elliot Sadlon.

ROLL CALL: Gina Calhoun, Chair – Absent
Lynne Fitzgerald – Present
Martha Lottes – Present
Robin Parker – Present
Elliot Sadlon, Vice-Chair – Present
Kathy Schweitzer – Present
Rachel Wise, Secretary – Present

Christine Hart, Borough Manager was in attendance. No members of the public were in attendance.

- **Public Comment**

None.

- **Consideration: Approval of Minutes: Thursday, October 12, 2023**

Lynne made a motion to approve the minutes from October; Robin seconded. The motion passed unanimously. No meeting was held in November due to lack of a quorum on the planned date (November 9).

- **Discussion: Feedback on Soldier's Christmas Collection**

Christine reported that there were not as many donations this year. Martha reported the recipients were appreciative of the donations that were received. Christine mentioned some daycares collected in previous years but not this year. There was discussion of other organizations (in unrelated charity drives) receiving less donations this year, so decrease could be economic trend rather than specific to this drive. Christine mentioned the collection being posted on Borough signs and website as well as the Savvy Citizen App. There was discussion of whether to have an event but no momentum behind that at this point. Christine mentioned possibility of starting to

collect donations earlier by tying it to Veterans Day instead of Christmas, and Martha said the organization sends donations out earlier in the year. Lynne made a motion to approve the change in timing and move up the collection to November; Martha seconded. The motion passed unanimously. There was discussion of strategizing to increase response as it approaches.

- **Discussion: Feedback on Park Clean-up Event at Walnut Square**

There was discussion of having had good turnout at the event. Christine talked about planning discussion leading up to the event and the motivation for having suggested this location, which included concerns that had been brought up related to the kiosks and appearance of the park, as well as the borough's recent efforts to seek grants to improve the park without success. She shared that Public Works had not been working on the park due to low staffing, and that TexMex ended their formal relationship with maintaining the park but wanting to approach that sensitively after the previous owner had invested a lot of money and resources into the park. Christine also clarified that the Borough does not relinquish responsibility or authority with park adoption, but rather business sponsorship is for improvements. Christine relayed that there was a directive from Borough Council that since Hess Park has had focus of this event in the past, there was interest in spreading focus elsewhere, and there was interest in this specific park due to the high visibility. Christine shared an update that Straub Tree won the bid for tree removal at the park but decided to waive the cost and spend the money on other improvements (which required a decision to approve that offer by Council). Elliot shared discussed lack of communication leading up to the park cleanup. Christine said that there was discussion with Board leadership prior to the suggestion of the specific park. Christine encouraged board members to contact her with concerns. Martha talked about having looked at the park but when mowing took place.

There was back and forth about the communication leading up to the cleanup and discussion of roles. Christine talked about her role of being liaison between Parks and Recreation and the Borough, making sure events are not a liability. Christine clarified that she can't tell Parks and Recreation what to do unless it violates Borough code. Elliot shared his concern was not the specific location, but the process and communication before the event.

Robin stated the event turned out wonderful and she enjoyed the event and Lynne agreed. Martha raised the idea of moving the event up a week earlier due to weather. Christine discussed hope of future improvements in the park. Lynne mentioned concern of tree near 3rd Street based on the bricks. Christine mentioned an aside about the Borough having planted 15 trees in the parks over the year.

Martha said she has had experiences over the years of being on the Board but not knowing what is going on in the parks and wanting the respect of being informed of changes and plans. Rachel voiced some role confusion of the Board and interest in the Board having more of an advisory role related to parks oversight and planning in advance for park related projects (rather than solely focusing on recreational events), as the Borough code seems to reflect this being within the scope of the Board. Robin voiced similar sentiments. Christine talked about there having been a shift in Board focus during prior administrations. Christine talked about the potential for the Board to discuss suggested ideas to then present it to her. Rachel mentioned previous experience of having been informed of certain limitations on specific parks, but not having details on what parks/areas are not restricted to updates.

Christine explained that Council asks a lot of questions with presented with ideas and she tries to prepare as best she can for it. There was more discussion about Walnut Street Park and planned improvement. Martha asked about what the process is if a landscape architect chooses to donate their services, and Christine explained rules about donations not being solicited by the Borough and getting approval from Council to accept the donation.

- **Adjournment**

Elliot motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 PM and Lynne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Attest: Rachel Wise
Secretary for Parks and Recreation