



BOROUGH OF NORTH WALES

300 School Street, North Wales, PA 19454
Phone: 215-699-4424 • Fax: 215-699-3991
<http://northwalesborough.org>

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING Thursday, January 11, 2024 – 7:00 PM

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

MEETING: January 11, 2024, 7:05 PM, EST

CALL TO ORDER made by Gina Calhoun.

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

One member of the public was present – Dan of 213 Church St.

- **Public Comment**

Dan expressed Happy New Year greetings.

- **Consideration: Approval of Minutes: Thursday, December 14, 2023**

Rachel made a motion to approve the minutes from December; Gina seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Discussion: Easter Egg Hunt – March 23rd**

Gina discussed event will not be held rain or shine. Recommendations were reviewed from last year's event and notes indicated that in discussion held then the decision was to NOT stagger, include ages up to 12, and announce the rules louder/better to hear – including telling people to check eggs. There was also discussion to have the areas for each age group roped off. Robin suggested Board could request the supplies from the Borough for Board members to do this beforehand the morning of the Egg Hunt. Board agreed on keeping the same start time as last year.

There was discussion and agreement on the following age groups: 4 & under, 5-8, 9-12 years old. Board discussed making signs to post in each area about checking eggs so that participants

discover if they won prizes before they leave the event. There was agreement to continue to brainstorm ideas of how to get the message of checking eggs out better, and ideas mentioned at present included using a megaphone (currently do not have), posting the message at some kind of central focal point (tent, table), having signs fixed to posts and tables, and having volunteers spread the word.

Gina mentioned borough staff now stuffs the eggs. There was agreement to continue talking about more details related to signs at the next few meetings.

- **Discussion: Community Garden – Spring Planting – May 18th**

Board confirmed that date has been selected as well as topic/theme for the event (Native Plants: A Case for Butterflies, Bees, Birds, and Bats). Rachel mentioned that clarification will be needed from Borough about whether they will provide plants to be planted or if Board should plan to do so. Elliot talked about hope that the garden will become more of a community venture – with people in town knowing they can take part, put plants in and tend to them, with the community taking it on and Board/Borough support being a backup instead of the garden being a Borough venture. Robin mentioned an idea for theme of planting things that can be ingredients for a specific meal.

Board discussed promotion of the event and Gina brought up idea for event to be promoted on Savvy Citizen, as well as SavvyCitizen messages to promote use of the garden once it is planted. Elliot mentioned the Borough's new use of Instagram could be beneficial to highlight this feature as well. Rachel mentioned interest in signage for the community garden and getting more information about what is needed for that to be implemented, whether it is Borough funded or if the Board can we make/obtain one. Gina raised the idea of Parks and Rec having separate social media presence but there was discussion that may be cumbersome and could reach smaller audience than promoting Parks and Rec events/messages through Borough account. Elliot discussed Board members monitoring the community garden and sharing that information with Borough to be posted – i.e. photos of garden in progress/vegetables available. Member of the public asked question about how plants are watered and that being an opportunity to involve the community. Board discussed that last year there was a schedule with members taking turns for a limited period of time, and then Lynne watered the remainder of the summer. Board talked about the goal of community garden being to involve the community in the care/watering of the plants as well as harvesting. Member of the public mentioned possibility of reoccurring community gathering there being a way to increase engagement – i.e. getting together for an informal picnic and then watering, etc. Elliot said it would be beneficial for Board to encourage others to post from/about the location and share the information. Robin said making Community Garden a “check-in” on facebook could promote involvement. Elliot shared that he recently spoke with someone else doing a citizen science activity and raised the idea of highlighting the location by bringing people there for another event to highlight it. Rachel said maybe the event could be the next Fall Cleanup event if there is a useful project there. Robin and Elliot expressed support for that possibility and Elliot said planting cover crops could be an idea. Board agreed to continue discussion over the coming year to further develop ideas.

Gina brought up wanting to consider ideas of how to draw people to the planting event such as a nonprofit to give something away – in addition to the seeds given away by Master Gardener speaker. Robin talked about event being an introduction to the garden for some people, but

wanting to keep focus on having people engaged with the garden ongoing. There was discussion of finding what other communities have found success with, and Robin said she has researched and found that getting people committed makes a difference.

Gina mentioned promoting the Community Garden event at the Egg Hunt and she offered to draft flyer to do so. There was discussion of having event appeal to both kids and also for adults. There was discussion of continuing to brainstorm ideas to draw people there at next meeting. Elliot mentioned local Garden Club might be interested in taking part. Gina said library may be open to promoting it.

Kathy expressed interest in making a sign if that's an option. Rachel suggested finding out from Christine what Board is able to do and whether that would need to be approved by the Borough. Kathy asked for input to the sign. There was discussion of including a quote about gardens and ideas encouraging people to participate – making it clear others can help & harvest.

There was also discussion of a pollinator friendly perennial planting beneath the mask wall in the back.

● **Discussion: Park Planning**

Rachel expressed wanting to know what specific restrictions are in place and what is allowed in terms of improvements and adjustments to each of the parks (i.e. expanding the community garden, additional plantings), and others expressed support for this. Rachel said she will ask to meet with Christine and Alex to obtain more information and will share information gathered with the Board.

Elliot expressed support for increasing evergreens and perennials, promoting insect habitat, and improving soil health/quality. He raised the idea of a dedicated natural area in a park for that purpose. There was discussion of using that to educate the community, such as through a sign explaining the area/intended benefits.

Elliot said he would like to encourage the Borough to take a step beyond promoting all native plants to also consider biodiversity and overall ecological health. He shared that he sees a benefit to council having these priorities and plants/gardening in mind as they continue to plan for the future. There was discussion of finding a path forward for council to encourage biodiversity and on the ground involvement across the community.

● **Discussion: Summer Kick-Off of June 8th 5-9 PM**

Gina said there are currently have 7 food truck vendors committed, and there is a need to reach out to local businesses to ask if they want a presence/table at the event. She reported that one vendor closed their food truck, preferably a vegan/vegetarian truck – Elliot said he will make contact with another option. There was discussion that the registration fee is new this year and Alex sent 2nd email today to vendors with the form and fee. Gina said the band from last year (Tube Top Mama) was committed but cancelled. Gina said the band that played at St. Peter's on Community Day was in contact and there is currently an attempt to negotiate a price. Gina contacted another band as a backup if that negotiation is not successful. Gina said fireworks are happening again this year. Rachel mentioned interest in additional portapotty, Gina said she had

requested that and was told by the Borough that Scout cabin was open (as well as the two portapotties), so it is unlikely that another portapotty will be approved. There was discussion of the concern about whether there will be vendors who commit elsewhere, but Board is hopeful that vendors will follow-through based on success of the past 2 years.

Gina said MyPlace confirmed they will be present for children's entertainment again. Gina said there has been no word from Arts Alliance about facepainting; last year Christine sent the request last time so Gina will ask her again. Kathy said she would recommend not having tattoos if doing facepainting.

There was agreement on Board members contacting local businesses to see if they want a presence at the event:

Empanadas Lab – Kathy
TexMex – Lynne? If willing
Alice – Robin
Green Fork – Rachel
Boy Scouts – Gina
Whoa Nutrition – Elliot
Everything Bagel – Rachel

Gina confirmed the group that gave away bike helmets is coming back. She said the Flyers giveaway contact hasn't responded, so they may not return.

● **Adjournment**

Gina motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 PM and Rachel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Attest: Rachel Wise
Secretary for Parks and Recreation