

A regular meeting of the **PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE** for March 2021 was held tonight via web-conference, Commissioner Ann L. Rappoport presiding. Present were Commissioners Brockington, Pransky, Areman, Holland, and Zygmund-Felt. Also present was Ex-Officio Member Norris.

Staff present via web-conference were: Robert A. Zienkowski, Township Manager; Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; Brian Hinson, Director of Parks and Recreation; Christopher Clewell, Public Works Superintendent; Nathan Crittendon, Director of Fiscal Affairs; and Joseph Bagley, Esq., Township Solicitor.

Ms. Rappoport called the meeting to order at 8:43 p.m.

1. The Committee reviewed the following reports for the month of February 2021:

- a. Property Maintenance Supervisor
- b. Public Information Officer
- c. Director of Parks and Recreation

1) 2021 Pool Opening Update – Mr. Hinson provided an update on the work being done to open the pools this season and meet pandemic safety requirements. In order to facilitate social distancing and cleaning requirements, two three-hour sessions will be available each day. On holidays three two-hour sessions will be available. He is working to establish daily user rates, rather than seasonal membership this year and is proposing to reduce the membership processing fee from \$35 to \$10. He anticipates making pool registration information available on April 1, with registration starting on May 1.

- Masks will be required when not swimming and social distancing outside of family groups will be required.
- Guests will be permitted this year and will pay the same daily rate as members.
- Advance registration through RecDesk or by calling the Parks & Recreation desk will be required. Cash will be accepted at the gate.
- The recommended attendance is 50% of the pool's bathing load. Conklin Pool's bathing load is 900 and Glenside Pool's bathing load is 600, so the pools will be able to handle 450 and 300 people, respectively.

2) Discussion on the operation of the Summer Playground Program in 2021 – Due to COVID restrictions, Mr. Hinson recommended cancelling the summer playground program again this year because current requirements for social distancing, cleaning, ventilation, etc. would be burdensome.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked if there were challenges in hiring summer employees due to the pandemic and Mr. Hinson had reached out to the school district to see if the Township could use its facilities for summer playgrounds, since they have initiated COVID protocols. Mr. Hinson said the school district is still not allowing outside entities to use its buildings.

- d. Director of Community Centers
- e. Facilities Event Coordinator

Upon motion of Mr. Pransky, the Committee unanimously received the monthly reports as stated above.

2. Receipt of Committee Meeting Minutes:

- a. Historical Commission – February 11, 2021
- b. Twinning Committee – No February Meeting
- c. Economic Development Task Force Meeting – February 16, 2021

Mr. Rappoport asked the Committee to consider the EDTF's concerns about parking in the business districts and if there is any value for the EDTF to perform exit interviews for businesses that leave the Township.

Mr. Holland said an exit interview is a good idea, but suggested that the Township's first point of contact with a business should not be after it has closed.

Mr. Pransky said that over the past few years, the Board has talked about bringing someone in to work with the business community and said he thinks it is an especially important time to establish this position.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt said the EDTF recommended that business district liaisons and commissioners have an active dialogue with business owners. Mr. Pransky said his experience has found that the business district liaison concept has not been able to accomplish much in the past. Mr. Zygmund-Felt said the EDTF seems to be trying to focus on making the model more meaningful.

d. Substance Abuse and Mental Health (SAMH) Committee Meeting – February 25, 2021

Matthew Abraham of the SAMH asked for the Board's approval to host a web presentation for older adults on Financial Fraud and Cyber Security and provided an overview of the proposed program. This is an important topic, as citizens, especially senior citizens, are constantly being bombarded with ever-changing scams. SAMH would like to hold the event on March 18, but can be flexible with the date.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt supported the event, but suggested pushing the date back to help market the program to groups that would benefit from it. Mr. Brockington suggested reaching out to Representative Nelson to see if he has contacts for the Senior Fair. Ms. Elliott suggested that if the SAMH can push the presentation back to late April, early May, information can be included in the Township newsletter, which will be more likely to reach an audience that does not have access to social media.

Mr. Bagley asked that a disclaimer that it is not officially dispensing legal advice.

e. Human Relations Committee Meeting – February 4, 2021

Upon motion of Ms. Rappoport, the Committee unanimously received the meeting minutes as stated above.

3. Receipt of Staff Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2021 and February 17, 2021.

Upon motion of Ms. Rappoport, the Committee unanimously received the staff meeting minutes as stated above.

4. Presentation by Cynthia Blackwood, Restoration Manager for the Friends of High School Park, on a proposed garden idea for High School Park

Ms. Blackwood asked if the Committee would support her fundraising to plant the hillside were the goats were used to eradicate the invasive plants. When she has an idea of how much money she is able to fundraise, she will develop a plan for replanting the hillside for the Committee to review and approve.

Upon motion of Mr. Pransky, the Committee unanimously supported the Friends of High School Park's efforts to fundraise and present a design to the Committee for replanting the hillside at High School Park in the future.

5. Report of the Township Manager

a. Consider retaining the services of a Professional Arborist, John Hosbach, of Rockwell Associates, on an as-needed basis for Arboricultural and Urban Forestry Consulting.

Mr. Zienkowski introduced Mr. Hosbach, noting that he recommends a three month evaluation period to see if a per-hour rate or a retainer would be more appropriate.

Mr. Hosbach provided an overview of the services of Rockwell Associates. Rockwell Associates does not provide tree removal or maintenance services, so it can provide an independent evaluation on the health of trees and how to handle dangerous situations involving trees. Rockwell Associates can also provide independent guidance on Township ordinances, education and other policies relating to trees.

Mr. Bagley said the Township has not had any professional advisor on managing trees in the Township.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt said the firm could provide advice to the Shade Tree Advisory Committee. Ms. Rappoport added that Curtis Arboretum could benefit from the input of an arborist to follow up on the recommendations of the Curtis Arboretum Conservation and Landscape Master Plan.

Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Upon motion by Mr. Zygmund-Felt the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners award a three-month trial contract to Rockwell for three months to provide arboricultural and urban forestry consulting services on an as-needed basis.

6. New Business

- a. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Pransky, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution supporting an application to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for a grant in the amount of \$25,000 for improvements to the Wall Park Wooden Castle Playground.

Ms. Elliott explained that the Cheltenham Township Community Development Corporation initiated this grant application with DCED and the Township will need to take the application to completion. The total estimated cost of the project to replace equipment and restain the structure is \$55,359 and the Township's contribution is estimated to be \$30,359, which is within the amount allotted in the Township's capital budget.

- b. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Areman, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution honoring Stephanie Vacharat on her retirement from the Cheltenham Township Library System Board of Directors after thirteen years and for her many years of service as a member of both the Friends of La Mott Library and the Friends of Elkins Park Library.
- c. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for If It's Water, Inc. in the amount of \$12,080.90 for two new handicap lifts to be used at Glenside and Conklin pools.

Mr. Hinson explained that existing lifts were installed in 2010 and no longer work. The recommended replacement is the same model that was installed in the past. He recommended utilizing a company to purchase the lift, rather than through a distributor, since the company will service the lift under a warranty.

The Committee asked Mr. Hinson to look into other lift models that may be less expensive and more appropriate for the conditions at the pool.

- d. Upon motion of Mr. Holland, the Committee unanimously approved a purchase order for Britton Industries in the amount of \$8,975.00 for wood fiber to be used at all outdoor playgrounds.
- e. Upon motion of Mr. Holland, the Committee unanimously approved a purchase order for Buckmans, Inc. in the amount of \$20,000.00 for the pool chemicals order under the municipal consortium contract to be used at both pools.
- f. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Holland, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners a purchase order in the amount of \$19,200.00 for American Pools to clean, paint and prep Glenside and Conklin Pools, condition upon satisfactory reference checks and the addition of acid wash to the written contract.

Ms. Rappoport noted a significant different in prices between the bidders: one bidder included the paint, and one did not, and asked if staff if it trusts the paint it uses and whether there is any warranty on the supply and performance. Mr. Hinson clarified that the Township already has the paint, which was purchased last year.

Ms. Rappoport said she would like to have Mr. Hinson talk to American Pool's references to see if they have satisfied clients, since the Township has not worked with this company before.

Mr. Pransky inquired about the value of the acid wash since it was not included in American Pool's quote. Mr. Hinson said American Water will provide acid wash. Mr. Pransky said it should be included in writing.

- g. Upon motion of Ms. Rappoport, the Committee unanimously approved a purchase order for Ten Trac, Inc. as a professional service in the amount of \$2,875.00 to make repairs at the Roller Hockey Courts at Elkins Park Middle School.

Mr. Hinson noted that the Township leases the courts from the School District.

7. Old Business

- a. Continued discussion on the placement of semi-permanent pickleball nets at Wall Park.

The Committee discussed concerns about balancing the growth in demand for pickleball and the desire not to displace tennis players, particularly since tennis players do not have an organization to represent them. The Committee suggested allowing Cheltenham Pickleball to utilize one tennis court, rather than the two proposed for semi-permanent play.

Ms. Rappoport made a recommendation to use two courts for semi-permanent pickle ball courts for the coming year, conditioned on the provision of a cost estimate for the construction of a new tennis court at Wall Park. After some discussion, Ms. Rappoport rescinded her motion.

Brian Malloy of Cheltenham Pickleball questioned why the group is being penalized because it is an organized group. He said there are other tennis courts to use in the Township, but no other pickleball courts in the Township. He added that, based on his experience, there are not a lot of tennis players.

Dan George of Cheltenham Pickleball agreed that one tennis court is a good start (it can be used for two pickleball courts). He asked the Committee to determine what measures it would like to see to bring a level of confidence that this move will be appropriate and not displace tennis players.

Mr. Pransky said he received numerous complaints about the condition of the tennis courts.

Mr. Holland said that if the data shows the Township that the Township should expand pickleball, then it should consider whether Wall Park, or another location, is most appropriate for the use. Mr. George agreed with Mr. Holland and added that he would like the opportunity to meet with the Township to discuss strategic planning to help manage the growth of the sport.

Fred Milbert, resident, said he is a tennis player and that two pickleball courts will not interfere with tennis.

Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Upon recommendation of Ms. Rappoport, the Committee recommended by a 6—1 vote that the Board of Commissioners permit Cheltenham Pickleball to convert one tennis court at Wall Park for semi-permanent pickleball and to work on a strategic planning effort to find a solution to help Cheltenham Pickleball grow (Ayes: Areman, Holland, Norris, Pransky, Rappoport, Zygmund-Felt. Nays: Brockington).

8. Announcements – None.

9. Citizens' Forum – None.

10. There being no further business, upon motion of Ms. Rappoport, the Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 p.m.



Robert Zienkowski
Township Manager

Per Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager