

**CITY OF LEWES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2013**

The regular meeting of the **Lewes Parks and Recreation Commission** was held on **Monday, September 16, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. in Lewes City Hall** in accordance with proper notification with the following present: Chairperson Carol Richardson, Jack Schulze, Dennis Davison, John Feliciani, Louis Papp, Christine Besche, Preston Lee, Matt Carter, Ex-Officio City Councilman Dennis Reardon and Recording Secretary Jackie Doherty. City Council members Bonnie Osler and Fred Beaufait were also present.

A. Call to Order and Opening Comments

Ms. Richardson reported Mayor and City Council appointed Matt Carter, by unanimous decision at their September 9th meeting, to the PRC for a three-year term for Recreation to fill in the expired term of Jon Woodyard. Barbara Hunt was appointed to the Commission for 1812 and Mary Vessels Parks, per Mayor & City Council at their meeting in August, to fill in the expired term of Don Long. On behalf of Barbara Hunt, and per her announcement to Mayor and City Council, she has made the decision not to accept the three-year term appointment at this time. A replacement for this appointment has not been determined at this time

An update on the installed parks signs at Stango, Zwaanendael, 1812 and Mary Vessels Parks: The signs were installed last month, but a decision was made to have the signs lowered to a height of 24" from the ground to the bottom of the sign, and to replace the oval picture on the 1812 Park sign with a more dated cannon photo.

The Dragon Boat Festival was held Sunday, September 15th at Canalfront Park as a fundraiser to benefit Sussex Academy. The festival included a 350 meter Dragon Boat Race with 22 teams participating, vendors and raffles. It was a great success, and many people have commented that the festival was one of the best events the City of Lewes has held.

The 2013 Lewes Summer Music Program "Concerts in the Park" has come to a close and Elena Cooke, the coordinator of that program, has completed the Final Evaluation form and Narrative Report for the Delaware Division of Arts FY2013 grant cycle. On behalf of the City, we thank Elena for all her hard work and efforts in organizing and coordinating the 2013 Concerts in the Park and for making it such a success. Ms. Richardson read Ms. Cooke's report into the record.

After presenting the latest Park Guidelines Draft, at the Mayor and City Council meeting on September 9th, a decision was made to make more changes as noted in the meeting minutes in accordance with harmonizing the draft with current City Code, specifically Chapter 80. The updated draft will be brought back to M&CC at their October 21st meeting.

B. Minutes: Presentation and consideration of the Parks and Recreation regular meeting minutes from August 19, 2013.

ACTION: *Mr. Feliciani made a motion to approve the August 19, 2013 regular meeting minutes as corrected; Mr. Papp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

C. Old Business: There was no old business

D. New Business

1. Presentation and consideration of the PRC recommendation report for Lewes Planning Commission for the Highland Heights major subdivision preliminary plan.

David Kuklish of Element Design was present

Ms. Richardson stated Highland Heights is a proposed 34-lot single-family residential development between W. Fourth Street and Seagull Drive with 18.5 acres. Ms. Richardson read Chapter 177 Sections 1- A and B and Section 11-A and B of the City Code into the record stating the goal of PRC is to submit a recommendation report

concerning the existing tree canopy, landscape and any future site evaluations during the development process. The State Urban Forester did an assessment of the lot on September 10th; *Mr. Feliciani* read the report into the record. Copies of the report were provided to the Commission and audience for review.

Richard Moore, 6 Duchess Court, stated he is concerned about trees being removed, maintaining the tree canopy, consequences of construction, watershed issues, flooding due to tree removal and loss of absorption, loss of wildlife, the length of time it takes to develop a new tree canopy (20 years).

Kim Ayvasian, 312 Pilottown Road, is concerned about the Sussex County 20-foot buffer ordinance and how it applies to the City of Lewes.

Barbara Vaughan, University Drive, stated the developer has indicated that they will maintain the section of trees at Fourth Street, Burton Avenue and Ocean View Boulevard.

Mr. Feliciani stated the center wooded wetland area would not be disturbed.

Brenda Brady, 420 Seagull Drive, is concerned about the trees being taken down for the stormwater runoff plans for the area. Can the City require the builder to replace the trees at the stormwater ponds by planting two for every one taken down to maintain the tree canopy?

Mr. Lee stated he spoke to the manager of the tax ditch into which the stormwater for this project would drain. The manager stated he would want trees removed immediately adjacent to the tax ditch, which runs along the northern property line of the project, to allow him access for property maintenance of the tax ditch.

Joe Hoechner, 305 Seagull Drive, stated the water runoff would not be a problem at the site with water flowing to the retention ponds and to the tax ditch. There is a better chance for the area to dry out if there were fewer trees. The City has no jurisdiction over the trees on private property and it is up to the homeowners to decide.

Mr. Moore spoke again stating this is a community issue and is concerned about sea level rise issues, global warming and the impact on the City in reference to habitat removal with the removal of trees.

Nicole Thompson, Blue Heron Drive, is concerned about the problems with the tax ditch not draining since it borders her property.

Ann Nolan, 13 Blue Heron Drive, is concerned about evacuation on New Road during storms.

Ms. Richardson stated the Parks Commission will consider all comments. The focus is on the trees and tree canopy that exists on the property now.

ACTION: *Mr. Feliciani made a motion to accept the recommendations as outlined in the letter received from the State of Delaware Urban Forester dated September 11, 2013; Mr. Lee seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

2. Presentation and consideration by Davis Bowen and Friedel, Inc. regarding the restroom renovation project at Mary Vessels and Zwaanendael Parks.

Dan Ridgley, of Davis Bowen & Friedel was present to discuss a conceptual drawing for review. The renovations in Mary Vessels will include ADA compliant facilities; provide two restrooms where there is now one; maintain the architectural character of the Historic District in the construction of the building; maintain the existing brick walkway but accommodate to be wheelchair accessible; maintain the existing trees; enlarge the building to be 10' wider; new high-low drinking fountain as described in the Code; cedar siding, burgundy trim; roof cedar shingles. The building will be double the size of the existing and scale is a concern, but the radius is needed for wheelchairs. The height and roof pitch will be the same.

Mr. Ridgley stated Zwaanendael would follow the same plan and elevation but will be a new building; back of building will be 4 feet from the property line with a new foundation. The old building may be used for storage. The plan is for presentation to Mayor and City Council at their October 21st meeting and construction to begin in January or February 2014.

Mr. Papp would like to discuss the walkway location through a major landscape bed.

Ms. Vaughan questioned if there would be baby changing stations. Mr. Ridgley stated there are stations located in both bathrooms.

Mr. Hoechner questioned if there could be a discussion about skylights being installed for natural light.

Ms. Ayvasian is concerned that Mary Vessels is too small for the large building and suggested having two smaller buildings. Also, there are too many signs and bulletin boards in the parks now.

ACTION: Mr. Feliciani made a motion to endorse the conceptual drawing of the preliminary plans for the Davis Bowen & Friedel, Inc. restroom renovation project at Mary Vessels and Zwaanendael Parks to move forward to Mayor and City Council for approval; Mr. Papp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

E. Commission Reports

Canalfront Park: Mr. Lee reported the Dragon Boat event this weekend was a great success. It drew a large crowd which was generally very respectful of the park. They didn't damage any planting and left very little litter. The grass was matted down, but it will totally recover in a week or so. Vendors sold out of food and had to restock from their restaurants. The Friends also ran out of beer and had to restock. There were some parking issues along Pilottown Road and a few other minor issues, which can be addressed if the event is held in the future. There is a post-event meeting scheduled for Wednesday at 9:15 A.M.

A problem has been found with the decking on the Overlook Deck above the restrooms. The wooden sleepers under the decking, to which the decking is attached, have rotted. The decking will have to be removed and the sleepers replaced.

The Friends of Canalfront Park have completed their events for this year. To date they have raised \$37,000, not including the money raised by selling beer and wine at the Dragon Boat event. They may also have another fund raising mailer before the end of the year. They tentatively intend to purchase tables, chairs, and umbrellas for the Overlook Deck, provide funds for the replanting of one of the beds, reserve some seed cash for next year's events and deposit the balance in the endowment fund for the park.

Stango Park: Ms. Besche reported the Children's Learning Garden Committee met on September 3rd and approved a \$400 waste receptacle purchase to match the picnic tables; Mr. Papp will place the order. Activities are planned for the Sunflower Harvest Day and October 18th Fall planting. Mr. Olsen has continued the maintenance in the park. An auger has been purchased to be used for the tulip plantings.

Zwaanendael Park: Mr. Papp reported he has emptied the fountain pond and scrubbed the wall, bottom and equipment to remove all accumulated algae growth. The pond was refilled and added an algae inhibitor to reduce future algae growth. He has continued heavy pruning of hydrangeas in preparation for next year's bloom; met with Patrick Olsen, our landscape maintenance and grass-cutting contractor to discuss various projects for the Fall, in particular, the construction of small beds around each of the newly installed signs and around an electric box, Fall pruning and planting of the Memorial Garden; proceeding with obtaining quotes for re-seeding bare and thin spots in the lawn. This, hopefully, will be done by the end of this month; began planning the conversion to pansies in all flower beds for Fall/Winter color; researched a waste container for the Children's Learning Garden; will proceed to order if approved by the CLG committee.

Recreation: Ms. Richardson reported the whale in Canalfront Park that was broken will be replaced with a jet ski spring rider. The tennis courts resurfacing plan will continue with specification and bidding documents supplied by the U.S. Tennis Association, who were contacted by Mr. Lee. The plan includes lines on the courts for pickle ball. The tennis and basketball signs will be placed on the fence in the next two weeks. Mr. Lee stated \$8,000 has been raised for the bocce ball courts.

Trees: Mr. Feliciani stated he has spoken with the State Urban Forester and the grant should be approved.

George H.P. Smith Park: Mr. Davison reported he had been working with Ms. Besche and the Lewes in Bloom volunteers in the park. Ms. Besche stated they would be returning. Mr. Davison stated he placed wood chips, from a tree that was taken down, along the paths. The Streets Department removed a bench that needs to be

replaced. Ms. Richardson stated she was contacted by someone who wants to donate a bench.

ACTION: *Mr. Davison made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Lee seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Doherty, Recording Secretary
Lewes Parks and Recreation Commission