CARLISLE PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

The Carlisle Parks and Recreation Board held a meeting on August 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following board members were present: Chairman Bob Schmidlein, Whitney Baker, Eric Oakman and Michael Smith. Jordan Heckman, Pam Fowler and Katie Maxwell were absent.

Guests in attendance were Barb Adams, Jane Rigler and John Kohler. Parks and Recreation Director, Andrea Crouse, Parks and Recreation Secretary, Melinda Hench, and Public Information Coordinator, Stephanie Taylor, were also present. Borough Council Liaison, Brenda Landis, was absent.

CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Schmidlein at 7:07 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT
Barb Adams – Request for Pickleball Lines at LeTort Courts
Director Crouse explained the rise of pickleball in the Borough of Carlisle. In 2017, following a series of meetings with local pickleball players, the borough renovated the LeTort Park tennis courts to create two dedicated pickleball courts and one multi-use court lined for both tennis and pickleball. Interest in pickleball has continued to grow since that time. In November 2019, Barb Adams and Diane Easley, Ambassadors for the USA Pickleball Association, and Mike Kline spoke with Parks and Recreation staff about converting the remaining tennis court at LeTort Park to four pickleball courts to meet increasing demand for pickleball. Rollaway pickleball nets would be used. Andrea is a proponent of retaining the tennis court at LeTort since tennis players continue to use it and those are the only lighted courts owned by the borough.

Recently, Barb and Diane announced that an anonymous donor has offered to pay for repainting lines on the remaining LeTort tennis court to accommodate tennis as well as four pickleball courts. They asked if the borough would budget for the purchase of rollaway nets at about $250 each. Pickleball player, Jane Rigler, clarified that Barb would prefer that the borough purchase four roll-away nets.

Barb added that the new pickleball courts would run north and south and be set back from the tennis net. In Barb’s opinion, this configuration would make the lines less distracting for tennis players, especially if they are painted much lighter than the tennis lines. Also, this would create a more ideal set-up for pickleball since players would not have to use the tennis net, which is higher and wider than a pickleball net, providing certain limitations for pickleball play. Barb thinks this is a compromise that would satisfy players of both sports.

Tennis player John Kohler offered his input. He believes there should be a long-term strategy to increase pickleball courts in Carlisle rather than the proposed plan which would create more pickleball courts, while denigrating the experience of tennis players. The plan would result in many more lines on the tennis court and be very distracting, especially since tennis is such a fast-
moving sport. Another concern is that if just one of the four proposed pickleball courts was occupied, tennis could not be played. He believes many tennis players prefer playing at the LeTort court because it is a great venue with shade. John also had concerns about pickleball players leaving the rollaway nets in place on the courts. He forsees the potential for conflict between tennis and pickleball players.

For the sake of new board members, Bob explained why LeTort Park was chosen as the site for the borough’s pickleball courts. The initial proposal was to convert two of the Mooreland tennis courts to pickleball. A few residents in the area of Mooreland Athletic Field strongly protested placement of the pickleball courts there, primarily due to noise. Andrea said funding also played a big role in the decision. Valley Meadows Park was another site which was considered, but resurfacing the macadam basketball court would have cost approximately $55,000 - $65,000 and would likely have been scheduled several years out. Since there were already plans in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget for the LeTort courts to be resurfaced, it made sense to choose that venue and pickleball courts were created much sooner than they would have been otherwise. The cost to resurface the LeTort courts, reline them and add chain-link fence came to about $32,000.

Andrea is currently seeking prices for the CIP budget to resurface the north courts at Mooreland Athletic Field in the next five years. Resurfacing the courts is projected to cost approximately $85,000, depending on materials used.

Jane Rigler spoke of the social nature of pickleball and how important it is to have pickleball courts grouped together at one venue. Barb mentioned the popularity of Parks and Recreation’s pickleball tournaments at LeTort Park and how much better they could be with additional courts.

Eric Oakman said he is in favor of long-term planning for pickleball courts. Andrea explained that the cost of future maintenance must be considered as well as the cost of new facilities.

A motion was made to table the discussion until the September 3, 2020 Parks and Recreation Board meeting. The motion carried. Baker/Oakman

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES
Minutes of the June 4, 2020 meeting were presented and approved. Oakman/Baker

DIRECTOR’S REPORT
Stuart Community Center Reopened
Following the departure of the homeless shelter, the Parks and Recreation Department has returned to the community center and is open to the public. Staff completed a Health and Safety Plan which covers issues such as masking, social distancing, sanitation and capacity limits. Staff is accepting facility reservations and program registrations. Business has been slow so Parks and Rec revenue is down considerably. Summer Day Camp is underway, but enrollment has been low. Although efforts were made to promote the Memorial Park Playground, including holding registration at the park on two separate days, the program was cancelled due to lack of
enrollment. Summer programs, which had been cancelled earlier in the summer have been rescheduled, with some programs relocated to outdoor venues. The Summer Artist Series was completed. All concerts were presented virtually.

Proposed Ordinance to Ban Fireworks
At the August Borough Council workshop, the council approved the draft and advertise of an ordinance to ban fireworks in borough parks, streets and public right-of-ways. This ordinance will benefit Parks and Rec since park maintainers have recently spent many hours cleaning up fireworks debris in the parks. The public will have time to review the draft before Borough Council votes on the ordinance. Staff is working on creating “No Fireworks Zone” signs to post at Mooreland, Heberlig-Palmer and Memorial Park where fireworks have been a big problem.

NEW BUSINESS
One board member asked about the Parks and Rec budget process and how next year’s budget will be impacted by lower revenues. Andrea said the operating budget is already very lean, but will probably need to be trimmed even more. She explained that the borough uses a 5-year plan for capital improvements. Each year, department heads propose capital improvements to the Borough Manager five years in advance. It would be very unusual for an item to be placed in the capital budget the following year. The Borough Manager prioritizes the items, and the budget is then presented to Borough Council. Andrea encouraged the board to consider the recreation needs of the community, but also explained that when a community group proposes a new amenity, they generally must be willing to raise a large portion of the funds. Cumberland Youth Cycling Development’s desire for a pump track is one such example.

OLD BUSINESS
Vultures Roosting at Thornwald
Eric asked if the vultures had been eradicated at Thornwald Park. Andrea had planned to have the vultures removed by the Department of Agriculture in March, just as the pandemic hit. After talking with the Borough Manager, the project was postponed due to the cost.

Shade Tree Committee
May 31, 2020 was the deadline for property owners to complete street tree work required by the 2019 Shade Tree Survey. To date, about 25 property owners have not completed their street tree maintenance. Due to the challenges of the pandemic, the Shade Tree Committee extended the deadline to December 31, 2020. Staff is in the process of sending notifications to those property owners.

ADJOURNMENT
Following a motion, the meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m. Baker/Oakman

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board will be held on September 3, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Stuart Community Center. Any member who is unable to attend the meeting is asked to notify Andrea Crouse.