

## LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

February 1, 2016

Present: S. Galloway, S. Powell, C. Quinn, and M. Merino

### Update Fee Schedule: Recreation Fee-in-Lieu Payments

Ms. Merino explained that Township Landscape Consultant, Tom Comitta, did a cost analysis for park improvements that Council may want to review in conjunction with extending the expiring fee schedule for Recreation Fee-in-Lieu payments. She stated that he is recommending an increase of \$576, which is a much larger increase than usual. Mr. Quinn asked if Council requested the cost analysis to be completed but Ms. Merino did not know. She felt some involvement on the Township's part would have been needed though in order for him to know what to base the study on.

Mr. Comitta arrived at this point in the meeting to present his cost analysis. He reported that it is not uncommon for fee schedules to be reevaluated in Delaware County and that he typically recommends a cost analysis be completed every five years. Mr. Comitta then discussed how he began this analysis, noting he used the most recent census, original documents to determine how the fee was calculated, and projects that are on schedule for development or redevelopment. He then considered how much money would be needed to improve the park system.

Mr. Comitta explained that the packets he provided shows how the parks could be developed and how much the proposed development would cost. He noted that the Township would never be able to catch up to what is needed to fix the parks, as it would cost two or three times the amount received through the recreation fee. His research indicated that a 20% increase to the recreation fee was justifiable.

Mr. Comitta stated he had a conference call with Mr. Clark and Ms. Merino about the park system and possible reductions in the calculated fee. Based off of that conversation, he took Indian Lane out of the plans since the Township does not own that park, has minimal improvements being made at the Roosevelt School, and altered plans at Sleighton Park by removing the gazebo and making a pavilion by the playground instead. He also met with Tyler Arboretum, Riddle Village, and Delaware County Planning Department to determine what additional trails they suggested. He did not hear back from all of them though so he only did the cost analysis based off of what he did know.

Mr. Comitta reported that even with a 20% increase to the fee, the Township would not have enough money for all the desired improvements. That is why Township management applies for grants. While he felt the 20% increase was justifiable, he was not sure if it was realistic from a community relations perspective.

Mr. Galloway asked for more information on his increase recommendation. Since a cost analysis should be done every 5 years, Mr. Comitta recommended a 20% increase for 2016 and then a 3-3.5% increase for each of the next 4 years. Mr. Galloway felt that was too big a jump and thought 10% this year, with an increase of 3-4% for each of the next 4 years was more realistic. Ms. Powell agreed. Mr. Comitta noted that a lot of money was needed for Smedley Park since that park did not have any improvements yet. Ms. Merino commented that there is \$120,000 already earmarked for that park's improvements. Mr. Comitta thought Mr. Galloway could be

correct about the increase amount, but stated it was important to keep in mind that there are problems that need addressing at several parks in the Township, such as rotted guard rails, replacing old trash receptacles, etc. Some of these are more than 20 years old. He also noted that only 60% of Sleighton Park's master plan is completed.

Ms. Powell asked what other municipalities charged for a recreation fee. Mr. Comitta responded between \$3,500 and \$4,000 and stated he felt the Township's fee was fair. Ms. Powell felt the budget should not be based off of needs alone and thought 10% was more justifiable than 20%. Ms. Merino noted a Resolution would be needed to increase the fee.

Mr. Comitta stated he would send a refined packet of the cost analysis with the 10% increase calculated for Council to consider at the first meeting in March. Mr. Galloway asked that the Township get it as soon as possible since this will be retroactively put into place for January 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Comitta noted that he thought the plan for the increases over the next 5 years was fair and in line or better than other neighboring municipalities.

Mr. Quinn asked if Parks and Recreations should be asked to join in on this process. Mr. Comitta and Mr. Galloway both thought that was a good idea. Mr. Comitta asked Ms. Merino to forward the cost analysis to Parks and Recreation for their review and to ask them if they could think of anything he may have forgotten.

Mr. Quinn asked if it would be beneficial to do away with the rule permitting the fee to be waived if improvements are made to parks and recreation; as was the case with the Granite Run redevelopment. Mr. Comitta stated that it was a possibility. They then discussed how the ordinance was written in a way that allows recreational development to go towards the waiver of a fee and that it doesn't always end up being open to the public. Mr. Quinn commented that perhaps the current ordinance should be revised so that it had to be open to the public to allow it to count towards the amount of the fee. Mr. Comitta thought that was a good idea. Mr. Quinn noted he would discuss it with Council.

Mr. Comitta then moved on to discuss the trail system. He reported that Williamson Trade School wants to apply for a traffic signal through PADOT because students are running across Rt. 352 in order to catch the train. If PADOT allows this, then they would permit entrance onto their property to connect to the Riddle Village trails. He also stated that it would be beneficial to require any applicant who comes in for a project and is in the proposed area to require them to put in sidewalks and crosswalks. He reported he would submit this request to the contracted engineers for the Township so their comments can reflect this if necessary. Mr. Comitta stated this was something Mr. Rothe used to do as a condition of approval and the Township needed to continue to do so.

### Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned by Ms. Bradshaw at 6:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Amanda Allen, Recorder