

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 2026, AT 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order (*J. Murphy*)

Adrienne Smythe
Brian Sokel
Lee Abberley
Christina Kerper
Nick Matteo
Neil DiFranco
Charles Wattley
Grace D'Amico
Rob Goldberg

Chair
Vice Chair
Member
Member
Friends of Hillcrest Pond Representative
School District School Board Representative
School District Representative
Student Representative
Commissioner Liaison

2. Approval of May Meeting Minutes (*All*)

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee unanimously approved the May minutes.

3. Administrative Report (*J. Murphy*)

First, it was noted that the Township Administrative Building will be transitioning back to regular office hours, Monday-Friday from 8am-4:30pm starting next Tuesday September 8th. Erdenheim Civic Association will again be hosting the Township's annual Community Day event which will be held on Sunday October 4th from 10am-1pm at Cisco Park.

Updates were given on several Parks and Recreation projects starting with the new recreation center. The Design Development Phase is complete. While the design is largely solidified, constructability details will still need to be established through the Construction Document Phase. The 50% CDs were submitted on July 31st which included updated design drawings and outline specifications. These updates are largely influenced by the Value Engineering exercise the leadership team participated in to help maximize the overall project value. Different aspects of the project were analyzed with the goal of reducing unnecessary costs while also maintaining or enhancing the performance of those aspects of the facility. The exercise, which was done over two meetings, targeted value opportunities in the design finishes and building envelope as the mechanical, electrical and plumbing elements are already scaled back and minimal in a recreation center design. Ultimately, 6 design modifications were approved, resulting in just over \$100,000 in savings compared to the original drawings. Some upcoming tentative milestone dates were noted including the submission of the 90% CDs on September 30th, 100% CDs on October 30th, and presentation of the CDs to the Board of Commissioners on November 9th. Bidding is expected at the end of the year with demolition tentatively expected at end of March 2027 and completion of the project in April 2028.

Next, an update on the Tank Car Site/Walnut Ave Park project was given. Surveying has commenced but had to be briefly paused while the Public Works department completed the removal of top layers of brush and vegetation from the site to give surveyors a better line of sight and understanding of the site topography. This was done to help increase their ability to obtain more accurate data during the ongoing surveying process. Bid specifications for the abatement of hazardous materials and demolition of existing onsite structures are expected by the end of the month. The abatement contract is tentatively expected to be awarded in October with the process beginning in the November-December range. The demolition of existing onsite structures is tentatively expected to start shortly after completion of the abatement process, sometime in early 2027.

It was noted that McKelvie Park was identified as potential location for the proposed skatepark based on The Skatepark Project's Best Practices Guide 5 primary criteria for site selection, a rubric was developed to measure five township parks based on these criteria. A survey was sent out to all property owners within 500ft of McKelvie to obtain feedback. The rubric and survey results were submitted to the BOC for review, and the topic was discussed at their August 10th workshop meeting. A potential motion to vote on McKelvie as the location for the proposed skatepark, with parameters set by the BOC, is likely to take place at the September 9th BOC meeting.

The final update was regarding the two projects recommended to the BOC by the PRAC in May 2026, the Spartan Lacrosse Club's construction of an equipment shed and rebound wall as well as the Community Canopy Project's riparian buffer plantings at Mermaid Park. Both projects were approved by the BOC. The Township is currently waiting on the Spartan Lacrosse Club to review and sign the Maintenance Agreement drawn up by the Township Solicitor, the club is hoping to start construction this fall. The Community Canopy Project has three planting dates scheduled to complete their project (9/24/26, 10/3/26 & 10/4/26). The September 24th planting has two corporate sponsors in order to hopefully get the bulk of the work done. The remaining two dates will be open to volunteers from the public to assist with planting.

An overview of the fall program schedule was relayed to the committee with it being noted that the full schedule is on the Township website and RecDesk.com

4. **Recreation Report** (*J. Murphy*)

A recap of the summer programming provided by the Parks and Recreation department was given. Forty-three unique summer camps were offered from June-August with 882 total participants. Several other programs continued throughout the summer including; yoga, martial arts, Soccer Shots, gymnastics, baby goat yoga and track & field. A total of 149 people participated in those programs.

It was noted that the Summer Concert Series went well despite a few weather-related postponements. A survey was also conducted amongst concert goers to help improve upon the series moving forward.

5. **Park Report** (*J. Murphy*)

- **Bysheer Park:** No Update
- **Connor James McKelvie Community Park:** Basketball courts resurfaced and relined, new team benches and safety pole pads installed, recommended as a potential skatepark location
- **Henry R. Chiaramonte Park:** No Update
- **James A. Cisco Park:** Approximately 80 ft of Gabion Basket added
- **James R. Fulginiti Park:** No Update
- **Laurel Beech Park:** No Update
- **Marlow Field:** No Update
- **Mermaid Park:** Morris Arboretum's Urban Forestry team completed the Level II Tree Assessment as part of Springfield Rotary Club's project to gain arboretum status for the park. Chosen by PA Environmental Council for potential meadow installation
- **Sandy Run Park:** No Update
- **Veterans Park:** No Update
- **Wyndhill Park:** No Update
- **Springfield Township Recreation Center A:** No Update
- **Springfield Township Recreation Center B:** No Update
- **Walnut Avenue Master Site Plan Committee:** No Update
- **Recreation Center Advisory Committee:** No Update

6. **Old Business** (*All*)

No old business was discussed

7. New Business *(All)*

SLLB Proposal:

Vice President Dan Widmeier presented on behalf of Springfield Little League Baseball's proposal to install sod on the infield of the Junior's field at Bysher field. SLLB is hoping to expand/revive their 13–14-year-old program. The Junior's field is the only remaining field at Bysher that does not have infield sod. Mr. Widmeier noted that the addition of sod would help with storm water runoff along Bysher Ave. Adrienne Smythe asked if the SLLS program still uses the field, the program does not. Lee Abberley suggested a flyer be posted along Bysher Ave to notify the neighbors that the project is under consideration by the BOC.

Neil DiFranco made a motion to recommend the project to the Board of Commissioners. PRAC members voted unanimously in favor.

SOS Native Wildflower Meadow Update:

Alex Klinger presented an update for Springfield Open Space's Native Wildflower Meadow project at Veterans Park and made a request to post educational signage related to the project on site. The project was a 250sqft lawn converted to a pollinator habitat. It was funded by SOS and a grant from the Hardy Plant Society, site preparation and plant installation were done in partnership with the nonprofit group JourneyWork.

Ms. Klinger detailed the project's timeline starting in May 2026 with site preparation and planting day through September 2026 with potential upcoming events promoting the project. The Native Wildflower Meadow was designed for biodiversity with 256 individual plants planted covering 13 species, all of which are native to the northeast. The species were also selected for continuous bloom and ecological value. Images were shown of the growth of the project over the first 90+ days. Ms. Klinger noted the positive community impact, citing strong volunteer turnout for planting day and ongoing watering/maintenance and assistance provided by the nearby condo association.

The next step in the project is to install educational signage to promote the benefit to pollinators and highlight specific plants within the meadow. Ms. Klinger noted that SOS has a designer ready to draft and create images for the signage. A location for the signage as well as whether it would be mounted on current signage polls or as a stand-alone were discussed. It was agreed upon that a stand-alone sign, either in the meadow or very nearby would work best to effectively promote the intended educational points. It was also noted that the signage should abide by Township regulations.

Adrienne Smythe made a motion to recommend the installation of educational signage pertaining to the Native Wildflower Meadow, pending review and approval by the Director of Parks and Recreation. PRAC unanimously approved the motion.

Wyndhill Park Projects:

Susie Ratsavong, Pat Ehret and Matthew White presented their concept for park improvements at Wyndhill Park. Ms. Ratsavong started by detailing the history of the park as well as its connection to the surrounding community both now and in the past. Ms. Ratsavong's time as the Commissioner's Liaison to PRAC led to a rough draft of a park-by-park assessment which, along with interacting with neighbors, were the genesis of some of the current ideas for the future of the park. The overall design concept would be for a walking path to connect Hartwell Lane to Flourtown Ave through the park to help increase accessibility to and utility of the park. As well as the addition of a center "square" that could provide communal/program opportunities and additional English garden style/shade tree plantings along the path and in the park.

Mr. Ehret then spoke about his initial involvement, which was to install a memorial bench and tree for his daughter, Gretta, as he raised his family right near Wyndhill, spent many hours there with his kids and that his daughter, Whitney, currently lives nearby with his grandchildren now frequenting the park. It was also his hope to fundraise to make a few improvements to the current playground. Mr. Ehret led the original fundraising efforts to install that playground in 2001. This past spring the two ideas merged into one overall concept. A "neighborhood huddle" at the park saw mostly positive feedback with the main concern being some hesitation for an asphalt path. Matthew White spoke about his emotional investment in the park because of the role it played in his family growing up. He wants to help honor his father and other community members. The group's goal at the meeting was to get the PRAC members' approval of the overall concept as

well as any feedback, in the hopes to begin fundraising and putting together a concrete design plan in the near future. Township engineer Tim Woodrow put together a simple sketch of the design concept for the walking path and center “square” that was used to help visualize the overall idea.

The PRAC members’ feedback was positive with Lee Abberley suggesting a more organic nature like feel to the playground additions. Ms. Ratsavong noted that the playground is near the end of the lifecycle. Mr. Ehret reiterated that currently the plan is to add a few playground features not a whole new structure. Brian Sokel expressed his support for the concept and added the idea of leaning into a memorial garden while possibly adding a memorial brick option along the path. Ms. Ratsavong mentioned the group will likely be pursuing a 501c-3 non-profit Friends Group to help facilitate the fundraising efforts and that a key part of the plan will be ongoing maintenance of the gardens and trees. Christina Kerper agreed with Mr. Sokel’s memorial brick idea as it can present a lower cost barrier to honor family and/or community members. She also mentioned exploring the idea of pervious asphalt to help alleviate that concern. After the discussion Ms. Ratsavong thanked the members for their feedback and said the group would move forward with having a concrete design plan put together incorporating the suggestions, begin the fundraising efforts and explore the 501c-3 status. With the intent of bringing all of those back to the PRAC for review within the next few months.

8. General Public Comment *(All)*

Ms. Klinger gave comment on the Springfield Township’s Board of Commissioners likely vote on a motion to propose McKelvie Park as a potential location for a pocket skatepark during their Workshop/Business Meeting on Wednesday September 9, 2026. Ms. Klinger handed out, to all PRAC members, a sheet she put together detailing her opposition to the process and McKelvie Park as the potential location for a Township skatepark. She emphasized her support for a skatepark in general just not at McKelvie and asked that more time is taken for the PRAC and the BOC to review and possibly weight the Best Practices Rubric for Skatepark Site Selection developed by the ad hoc committee tasked with examining potential Township properties to locate the skatepark as well as conduct other feasibility studies related to site specific concerns (ex. noise, tree, stormwater, etc.). Neil DiFranco stated the skatepark conversation has been going on for five years, has now moved past the PRAC and the decision is ultimately up to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Sokel agreed with Mr. DiFranco’s comments. Ms. Klinger reiterated her hope for the BOC to delay the motion to vote, and it was suggested that she attend the September 9th meeting to voice her concerns.

9. School District Report *(N. DiFranco)*

Mr. DiFranco started by informing the PRAC that the school district has redesigned its website and that it is live and operational. The newsletter for the new school year was published on August 27, 2026. The middle school project is close to completion, while the field will not be ready for use until spring 2027. The first meeting of the school board was held on August 18, 2026, where the board voted to approve the easement for the Harston Woods trail. The next school board meeting will be on September 15, 2026

10. Commissioners’ Report *(R. Goldberg)*

Commissioner Goldberg reiterated the likely motion to vote to propose McKelvie Park as a potential location for a pocket skatepark during their Workshop/Business Meeting on Wednesday September 9, 2026

11. Call for Adjournment *(All)*

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 6:30 pm