

**LANCASTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

**Speedwell Forge County Park Advisory Council**

**Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2018**

**7:00 P.M., Penn Township Municipal Building**

**APPROVED**

Board Members Present

Dawn Darlington  
Helen Farrington  
Eileen Lieberman  
Steve Mohr, Jr.  
Richard Pohner  
Daniel Schaeffer  
Boyd Sponaugle, Jr.

Others Present

Lancaster County Department of Parks & Recreation:  
Paul Weiss, Parks & Recreation Administrator & Officiator  
Deborah Werner, CPS, Senior Secretary/Public Relations Specialist  
Benjamin Arnold, Chief Park Ranger

PA Game Commission:  
Wildlife Conservation Officer Gregory Graham

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The meeting began at 7:00 P.M.

I. Welcome

II. Old Business

- A. Richard Pohner moved to approve the September 2017 Advisory Council Meeting Minutes as submitted while Dawn Darlington seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved and will be posted online at [www.lancastercountyparks.org](http://www.lancastercountyparks.org).

III. New Business

A. Advisory Council Member Updates

1. Daniel Schaeffer was introduced as a new Advisory Council member replacing David Wood as Dan purchased Mr. Wood's Penn Township home. Dan works at Tait Towers and is a fishing and hunting enthusiast. Paul gave Dan background information about the Park and the Advisory Council:

*Speedwell Forge Park*

- i. Speedwell Forge Park is 415 acres in size and was created by the County in the mid-1990s via the acquisition of several adjacent properties.
- ii. In addition to a perpetual conservation held by the Lancaster County Conservancy, mostly in the wetland area surrounding Hammer Creek, the Park also includes numerous acres of successional woodlands and two separate agricultural tracts (totaling approx. 120 acres of land) which are leased to local farmers.
- iii. The County's objective for the Park, as recommended by the Advisory Council and established in the County's Park and Open Space Plan, is to maintain the area for passive recreation including hiking, birdwatching, environmental education, hunting, etc. Facility development is limited to features needed to support such uses (parking areas, trail development, etc.).

## *Advisory Council*

- i. The Advisory Council was established in the late 1990's to conduct Natural and Historical Inventories of the Park that would then determine its future use(s).
  - ii. While the meetings are open to the public, the Council consists of members recommended by the Parks Dept. and/or the Council itself and appointed by the County Commissioners. Current members include local municipal officials and Park neighbors as well as representatives from the Lancaster County Conservancy, the PA Game Commission and the PA Fish and Boat Commission.
  - iii. The Council is advisory in nature. It does not make binding decisions but rather works with the Parks Dept. to make recommendations that Park staff can present to the County Commissioners for consideration.
  - iv. The Council continues to meet twice per year and over the last several years has been instrumental in addressing issues such as re-zoning of park land, acquisition opportunities to expand the Park and use of Park land to aid in efforts to re-establish the nearby Speedwell Forge Lake (owned and operated by the PA Fish and Boat Commission) after the compromise of the dam at W. Brubaker Valley Road.
2. Advisory Council Members Dawn Darlington and Eileen Lieberman have been confirmed by the County Board of Commissioners to serve additional 3-year terms ending 12/31/20.

## B. Speedwell Forge Park Updates

### 1. Hunting

- a. Chief Arnold reported that, while raccoon and fox hunting would be permissible under Park hunting regulations, the Park closes at dusk and no hunting is permitted after that time. This comment followed a discussion amongst members living close to the Park about hearing gunshots at night.
  - b. Spring Gobbler Season runs from April 28 through May 31 and neighbors may hear and see increased hunting activity in the Park during this time.
  - c. Members living close to the Park reported concerns about other adjacent property owners target shooting in the Park.
  - d. Paul re-affirmed that the Department relies upon and appreciates any information provided by neighbors and Park users in helping to address hunting issues. Reports of illegal or questionable hunting/shooting activity should be reported to the Park Rangers at (717) 278-6274 or 717-295-3605.
2. Infestation of Ash trees by the Emerald Ash Borer has become apparent in Speedwell Forge County Park. Consistent with Parks Dept. policies regarding EAB management in passive parks such as Speedwell Forge, infested Ash trees posing a threat to public safety or property (i.e. trees located along trails, parking areas, roads, etc.) will be removed by Park staff. Infested trees in remote areas where there is no sanctioned public access or nearby infrastructure will be managed by attrition.
  3. Several dying Oak Trees along trails have been removed from Speedwell Forge County Park as well. There is no epidemic impacting these trees; their death was simply a result of natural mortality.

## C. Other Park Updates

1. PA Game Commission Officer Gregory Graham led a conversation on Chronic wasting disease (CWD):
  - a. CWD has been present in PA since 2002 and affects the brain and nervous system of infected deer, elk and moose eventually resulting in death. PGC cannot eradicate CWD but can only manage it.
  - b. Earlier this year, the Game Commission established Deer Management Area (DMA) #4, which includes the northeastern quadrant of Lancaster County.
  - c. At present, Speedwell Forge Park is currently just outside the boundary of DMA #4. Should this change, Officer Graham will notify the Parks Dept. and relevant information will be posted in Speedwell Forge Park and on the Parks Department's website.
2. Park staff have already removed a significant number of EAB infested Ash Trees along the Conewago Recreation Trail. Over the winter, a tree removal company was hired to remove approximately 180 Ash trees in Lancaster County Central Park and Buchmiller Park that were near Park facilities, roads and/or trails. By pro-actively removing these trees, the Parks Department was able to use proceeds from the sale of the wood to offset removal costs.
3. New reservation software was implemented by the Parks Department at the beginning of 2018. This software allows the public to sign up for programs, check on pavilion availability, rent garden plots, and purchase pool memberships online. To complete any of these activities users can simply visit [www.lancastercountyparks.org](http://www.lancastercountyparks.org) and use the online links on the right side of the page.

#### IV. Other Business

- A. Paul did a PowerPoint presentation the Spotted Lanternfly: a new invasive insect that attacks grape vines as well as fruit and hardwood trees. Printed information about steps to reduce the spread of the Lanternfly was also distributed to Council Members.
- B. The next Speedwell Forge Advisory Council Meeting is Wednesday, September 19, 7:00 P.M., at the Penn Township Municipal Building.
- C. Helen Farrington motioned for meeting adjournment at 8:26 P.M. Eileen Lieberman seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah H. Werner, CPS