

**LANCASTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

**Speedwell Forge County Park Advisory Council**

**Meeting Minutes of 04/20/2016**

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

**APPROVED**

Board Members Present

Dawn Darlington

Helen Farrington

Eileen Lieberman

Linda Ferich

David Wood

Jay George

Richard Pohner

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

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The meeting began at 7:00 P.M.

I. Welcome:

A. Linda Ferich was introduced as the new advisory council member representing the Lancaster County Conservancy and replacing former member Tom Stahl. Linda is a stewardship volunteer, PA Master Naturalist and stream testing monitor for the Lancaster County Conservancy. Paul Weiss explained that the advisory council meets twice yearly to discuss the Speedwell Forge County Park in Elizabeth and Penn Township. Having a representative from the Conservancy on council is key as they hold a conservation easement on a portion of the park.

II. Old Business:

A. Dave Wood moved to approve the September 16, 2015 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. Lancaster County Commissioners reappointed member Richard Pohner for another 3-year term, while Linda Ferich has been initially appointed for a 3-year term – both terms will end 12/31/2018.

B. Speedwell Forge Park Updates

1. The Department is *considering* the placement of a port-a-pot in the Speedwell Forge parking lot for a portion of the 2017; this decision will be largely budget-driven. If a unit is placed, it would remain unlocked. The Council recommended that the unit be anchored against vandalism.
2. Council members reported seeing some additional trash in the park. While this is not unusual during fishing season; all park visitors should following the responsible stewardship practice of “carry in/carry out”. Signs have been installed in the parking lot notifying visitors accordingly.
3. A new wooden footbridge was installed on the Loop Trail within the last week. The bridge is about 20-foot downstream from a previously existing one that could no longer be secured due changing stream conditions.
4. Dirt bike activity in the park continues to be evident. Park rangers noted reports on *Lancaster Dirt Bike Club’s* Facebook Page.

C. Other Park Updates

1. Speedwell Forge Lake Dam Update

- a. Kayaking, canoeing and catch-and-release fishing activity continues to grow on the recent re-established Speedwell Forge Lake.

2. Northwest River Trail Update

- a. A National Trails Day event is planned along the trail on June 4 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. The event will start at Columbia Crossing and continue along the trail through Chickies Rock County Park, ending at Furnace Road. The event is free to public, and Lancaster County naturalists will be offering programs along the trail.
- b. This trail has been 20- years in the making, and the 2.5-mile stretch completed this spring provides a vital connection between Columbia and Marietta. The sections of the trail through Marietta and connecting Bainbridge and Falmouth are still under construction at this time.

3. Chickies Rock County Park Update

- a. Up to this point, rock climbing has neither been prohibited nor promoted at Chickies Rock. With the completion of the Northwest River Trail below the Rock, climbing activity has increased dramatically and the Department will be reconsidering its position.

D. New Chief Ranger Update

1. Chief Ranger Ben Arnold was introduced to members. Ben has worked as a fulltime park ranger for four years for County of Lancaster and previously worked for York County Parks. Ben commands a force of four county park rangers who work 365 days a year with park coverage from 7 AM – 11 PM (10 PM in the winter).
2. Ben reported that ring-neck pheasant and turkey populations are growing at Speedwell.
3. In response to council questions, Ben confirmed that coyote and fox hunting is done during the nighttime and is authorized in Speedwell Forge County Park. However, if anyone hears gunshots in the park out of season or rifle shots in the park at any time, they should call Ben at 717-278-6270 or call 911 if after ranger hours listed above.
4. Franklin and Marshall College conducted a fox study in Lancaster County Central Park over the winter and actually captured a picture of a coyote on one of their trail cameras (see attached photo to email).
5. Wood Duck and Pintail boxes were installed in the Conestoga River and Mill Creek in Lancaster County Central Park.

IV. Other Business:

1. Jay George motioned for meeting adjournment at 7:45 P.M. Dave Wood seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved,
2. The next Speedwell Forge Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled for 7:00 P.M., Wednesday, September 21, 2016, at the Penn Township Municipal Building.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah H. Werner, CPS