



# **PARKS COMMISSION**

## **AGENDA**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024**

**4:30 PM**

1. Approval of Minutes for November 7, 2023
2. Upcoming Event Dates:
  - a) Just Walk Worcester Go Red Scavenger Hunt at Stephen Decatur Park (self-directed):  
Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> 8 AM to Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup> 5 PM
3. Projects:
  - a) AED Units at Town Parks – Berlin Lion’s Club
  - b) Invasive Species Workshop/Cleanup at Stephen Decatur Park
4. Discussion:
  - a) To add Parcel 52 at Heron Park to the purview of the Parks Commission
5. Other:
  - a) Annual Parks Plan for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 25
    - i) Program Open Space Annual Program for Development
    - ii) Land, Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plans (LPPRP)
6. Comments from the Commission
7. Adjournment

Upcoming Meeting/Event Schedule:

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 4:30 PM – Meeting  
Saturday, March 30, 2024, 10:00 AM – Spring Celebration  
Saturday, April 13, 2024, 9:00 AM – Backyard Buffer Tree Giveaway  
Saturday, April 20, 2024, 9:00 AM – Cleanup Day  
Saturday, May 4, 2024, 9:00 AM – Spring Walk  
Tuesday, May 7, 2024, 4:30 PM – Meeting  
Tuesday, July 2, 2024, 4:30 PM – Meeting  
Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – National Night Out  
Tuesday, September 3, 2024, 4:30 PM - Meeting  
Friday, November 1, 2024, 5:30 PM – Fall Glow Walk  
Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 4:30 PM – Meeting

**Berlin Town Hall, 10 William Street, Berlin, MD 21811**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**410-641-4002 for more information**

Parks Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, November 7, 2023

**5:30 PM      REGULAR SESSION – Berlin Town Hall Conference Room**

**Commission Members Present:** Chair Mike Wiley, Patricia Dufendach, Kristen Gerhart, Sarah Hooper, and Laura Stearns

**Staff Present:** Public Works Superintendent Cody Chesser and Administrative Assistant Kate Daub

**Others Present:** Berlin Horticultural Advisory Committee Member Georgianna McElroy, Resident Lara Mulvaney

This meeting was also broadcast live via Facebook and called to order by Administrative Assistant Kate Daub at approximately 5:30 PM.

Ms. Patricia Dufendach moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 5, 2023. Mr. Mike Wiley seconded, and approval was unanimous.

Ms. Daub began the meeting by asking the Commission members if they would approve of a change to the meeting agenda. She noted that Berlin Horticultural Advisory Committee (HAC) member Ms. Georgiana McElroy was present at the meeting to discuss the HAC's proposed plan for tree planting at Stephen Decatur Park and suggested they allow Ms. McElroy to present the information at the start of the meeting; all Commission members agreed.

Ms. McElroy explained the HAC is proposing the addition of twelve trees to Stephen Decatur Park. She shared that town resident Mr. Edward Hammond has donated White Oak trees and the HAC hopes to add Bald Cypress, Princeton Elms, and Redbud trees as well. Ms. McElroy referred to the aerial map of the park included in the meeting packet and stated the project would include placing Bald Cypress trees along Route 113 as a buffer. She acknowledged that stormwater management and mitigation in the area is important but said she believes there is plenty of space for three Cypress trees. She continued by saying there is a significant amount of dead wood located in the canopy section of the park and recommends it be removed.

Once cleared, Ms. McElroy proposed adding Princeton Elms in its place, as the species is resistant to Dutch Elm disease and would grow well in the area. Due to the possible future addition of a Comfort Station in the park, the HAC recommends putting the Redbud trees in last. She noted the HAC is proposing the addition of Redbuds around the Comfort Station and suggests they wait to do so until construction is complete. Lastly, Ms. McElroy said the HAC would like to add a Bald Cypress tree along the edge of the tree line near the ditch on the west side of the park; she clarified that there is currently a White Pine tree in the area that should be removed. Ms. Dufendach said she recalls a discussion that was had years prior regarding planting in the area between the ditch and Kenwood Court; she said certain species of pine had

been planted but failed. She stated she is not opposed to the Bald Cypress suggested, adding she feels the proposed plan would be a great replacement.

Ms. Laura Stearns said she is particularly interested in the buffer along Route 113 and shared that she feels it would improve the air quality and aesthetics of the park, as well as serve as a safety barrier between the park and the highway. She suggested they consider adding more Bald Cypress trees to the area so that the barrier can run the entire length of the park along the roadway. Resident Lara Mulvaney was present at the meeting and said she is very interested in stormwater management. She explained she has researched the town stormwater report that shows a lot of the highway drainage is both northbound and southbound of Route 113, south of the Berlin Police Station, and part of Decatur Street and confirmed all stormwater from those areas is all draining through the park. Ms. Mulvaney said she would like to suggest the Parks Commission support and encourage the town to discuss a potential stormwater management project along Route 113 with the State Highway Administration (SHA).

Ms. McElroy asked if Ms. Mulvaney's recommendation would require the land to be free from planting until stormwater issues are addressed; Ms. Mulvaney answered that it would likely be a complicated process for SHA to agree to such a project given that the land belongs to the town. However, she said she believes the issue is worth pursuing and thinks the addition of trees is part of the solution. Public Works Superintendent Cody Chesser emphasized that a stormwater management discussion should be had with members of the Water Resources Department and the town's stormwater consultants. He continued by saying the proposed tree plan for the park has no bearing on any stormwater discussions to be had.

Ms. McElroy said the trees can be placed in certain spots to not impose on the existing channel that runs through the park, adding that the new trees will eventually help with stormwater issues in the area. Ms. Dufendach acknowledged the effects stormwater is having on the park but said she does not see why the trees proposed would be a problem in the areas east of the pathway. She said the tree proposal is a wonderful place to start and is excited to explore the possibilities involving the addition of other plants that will only help stormwater management. Ms. McElroy said she hopes the tree proposal will allow the town to pursue a level two arboretum status, adding that certain criteria must be met for accreditation.

Following a motion by Ms. Sarah Hooper to approve the proposed tree plan for Stephen Decatur Park and seconded by Ms. Dufendach, the Parks Commission voted unanimously in favor of the plan presented.

Ms. Daub continued by reporting that pickleball lines have been added to the courts at Stephen Decatur Park. Consequently, she said some of the signs placed on the fence and gate that surrounds the court may need updating. She clarified the "Court Rules" sign and the "Tennis Courts Only" sign specifically may need to be revised due to the addition of lines that now allow for Pickleball play. Following a lengthy discussion, the Commission members agreed that new signs were needed; the Commission opted to move forward with signs that permit racquetball play at the courts and added rules applicable to the various uses of the courts.

Ms. Daub asked the Commission if there was a desire to change the start time of their meetings as they come into the new year; she explained the group is not obligated to meet at a specific time and can alter the time to accommodate the members' schedules. All Commission members agreed that an earlier start time would be of interest and opted to meet one hour earlier. Beginning January 2, 2024, the Parks Commission meetings will take place at 4:30 PM as opposed to 5:30 PM.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Ms. Dufendach asked to revisit the stormwater issues at Stephen Decatur Park. She said she had made a previous complaint to SHA who sent a crewmember that took pictures of the small ditch collecting water from the east side. However, she said she would like to speak with the town about the problem further; she said it is important to address the flooding problems that continue to occur at the park due to the overrun of highway water. Ms. Daub said she would make Water Resources Director Jamey Latchum aware of her concern and ask if any action can be taken.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kate Daub*

Kate Daub  
Administrative Assistant



**PROGRAM OPEN SPACE ANNUAL PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2024**

Source of Funds (for Annual Program Only)

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Project Name, Project Description</u>			<u>Acreage Project</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>State(POS Local Funds)</u>	<u>Federal</u>
BERLIN								
<b><u>Stephen Decatur Park:</u></b>		Map 302	Parcel 873					
Pending	Construction of Permanent Restrooms:			<.5	\$266,000	\$11,000	\$99,000 CPP (Awarded 2021)	\$132.784 LWCF (Invited to apply)
							\$23,216 est. additional funding needed	
Pending	Inclusive Playground			< 1	\$1,024,940	\$55,700	\$969,240 (CPP application pending)	
<b><u>Location TBD:</u></b>								
1	Skate Park Phase I (feasibility report currently underway) – Stormwater Mitigation and “Street” Park Development			< 1	\$250,000	\$25,000	\$225,000	
2	Skate Park Phase II			< 1	\$250,000	\$25,000	\$225,000	
<b><u>Decatur, Henry, Burbage and Heron:</u></b>								
3	Purchase of AED units for each park (4 initially)				\$10,000	\$1,000	\$9,000	
<b><u>Stephen Decatur Park:</u></b>		Map 302	Parcel 873					
4	Partial Conversion of Tennis Court to Pickleball Courts			< 1	\$95,000	\$9,500	\$85,500	
<b><u>Decatur and Heron Parks:</u></b>								
5	Purchase of Water-side Life Saving Devices (approx. 10 total)				\$50,000	\$5,000	\$45,000	
<b><u>Heron Park</u></b>		Map 0025	Parcel 0052					
6	ADA Walking Path from parking to lagoons and around lagoons			+/- 30	\$250,000	\$25,000	\$225,000	
7	Entertainment Venue			+/- 1	UNK			

<b><u>Location TBD:</u></b>							
8	Dog Park			+/- 1	UNK		
<b><u>Heron Park</u></b>		Map 0025	Parcel 0052				
9	Observation Platform(s) over lagoons			< 1	UNK		
<b>TOTALS</b>					<b>\$2,195,940</b>	<b>\$157,200</b>	<b>\$1,905,956</b>
							<b>\$132,784</b>

Berlin Projects							
<b>Captial Improvement Plan:</b>	<b>Location:</b>	<b>Acerage to Acquire:</b>	<b>Develop?</b>	<b>Rehabilitate?</b>	<b>Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Description:</b>
<b>1. Permanent Restrooms</b>	Stephen Decatur Park	0	X		266,000		Completion expected in the spring of 2022 - Bids received were far in excess of available funding; Unknown when project will occur but we are still keeping it on our list
<b>2. Walking Path</b>	Stephen Decatur Park	0		X		55,000	Replacement of existing rubberized path. - Completed 2022
<b>3. Basketball Court Lighting</b>	Henry Park	0	X			95,200	Basketball lights for existing court. - Project currently underway (01.19.23) expected to be complete by mid-February, with "opening" in late winter/early spring
<b>4. Table Tennis Park</b>	John Howard Burbage Park	0	X			27,000	This would include equipment, parking, and landscaping.
<b>5. Playground Equipment</b>	Henry, Deactur Park	0		X	1,000,000		This estimate is for Decatur Park only and is based on a concept currently under review for a Community Parks and Playgrounds grant
<b>6. Dog Park</b>	TBD	TBD	X		????		
<b>7. SAM Boxes</b>	Decatur and Heron Park Ponds	0		X	???		
<b>8. Walking Path</b>	Heron Park	0	X		???		
<b>9. Fishing Pier</b>	Heron Park	0	X		???		
<b>10. Entertainment Pavillion</b>	TBD	TBD	X		???		
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,266,000</b>		



**UPDATED 3/14/23								
<b>Berlin Projects</b>								
The projects below are development/capital plans and do not necessarily include smaller projects included in the Program Open Space Program for Development.								
<b>Capitol Improvement Plan:</b>	<b>Location:</b>	<b>Acerage to Acquire:</b>	<b>Develop?</b>	<b>Rehabilitate?</b>	<b>Estimated Cost:</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Update Jan. '24</b>
<b>1. Permanent Restrooms</b>	Stephen Decatur Park	0	X		266,000		Comm. Parks & Playground in place and LWCF funding pending. Additional funds estimated at approx. \$25,000 needed	Still waiting for LWCF decision on grant.
<b>2. Inclusive Playground</b>	Stephen Decatur Park	0		X	1,000,000		This estimate is for Decatur Park only and is based on a concept currently under review for a Community Parks and Playgrounds grant	Application was not funded. No plans to resubmit.
<b>3. Skate Park Phase I</b>	TBD	0	X		250,000		Feasibility report currently underway to be followed with community input regarding location, design work to include stormwater mitigation and "street" park design	M&C approved location at Heron Park (non-specified beyond expectation of placement on parcel 410).
<b>4. Skate Park Phase II</b>	TBD	0	X		250,000		Expansion and completion of above	
<b>5. Rails and Trails Bikeway *</b>	Along railroad from Heron Park to Evans Road	0	X		1,300,000		Partial design work has been completed and the balance of the design is underway. Funding being sought is from MDOT Bikeways program and the Town of Berlin and Worcester County have committed funds of approximately \$190,000 toward the project.	Application was not funded. No plans to resubmit.
<b>6. ADA Walking Path</b>	Heron Park	0	X		500,000		Development of accessible access from the parking area to the lagoons at Heron Park and around the lagoons.	No further activity
<b>7. Entertainment Venue</b>	Heron Park	0	X		750,000		Construction of an entertainment venue and parking for live performances.	No further activity
<b>8. Pickleball Courts</b>	Stephen Decatur Park	0	X		100,000		Conversion of 1 or 2 (of 4) tennis court(s) to pickleball courts.	We Heart Berlin had lines painted designating pickleball areas. At this time consider complete?
<b>9. Dog Park</b>	TBD	TBD	X		100,000		Development of a dog park.	No further activity
<b>10. Observation Platform(s)</b>	Heron Park	0	X		250,000		Building of observation platform(s) over one of more of the lagoons.	No further activity
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,766,000</b>			
*Not included on POS Annual Plan as funding will primarily be from MDOT								