

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026, AT 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES**

1. Call to Order (Chair)

Adrienne Smythe	Chair
Brian Sokel	Vice Chair
Lee Abberley	Member
Christina Kerper	Member
Robert McGrath	Member
Nick Matteo	Friends of Hillcrest Pond Representative
Neil DiFranco	School District School Board Representative
Grace D'Amico	Student Representative
Robert Goldberg	Commissioner Liaison, Ward 4

2. Approval of Minutes from January (All)

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

3. Administrative Report (J. Murphy)

- Director – new hire Jim Murphy started January 19, 2026.
Comes from Philadelphia Parks and Recreation where he worked for 12 years.

4. Recreation Report (J. Murphy)

Throughout the month of January, Springfield Township Parks and Recreation offered various -programs including 2 Winter Break Camps (GeoVentures Forts & Shelters Camp and a Multi-Sports Camp), and 1 Day-Off Camp (MLK Holiday, Young Artists Camp), Soccer Shots, Floor Hockey, Chess Club, Martial Arts, Yoga, Minecraft Engineering, Speed, Agility and Quickness Clinic, Volleyball, Girls Technical Soccer Training, Adult and Youth Pickleball Clinics, and the Winter Rec Basketball League.

During the month of January, a total of 454 individuals participated in recreational programming.

The indoor Winter Recreation Basketball League is our largest program currently and will run until February 21. Information regarding the Kidz Klubhouse summer camp including employment information as well as registration details was made available on the township website January 29.

5. Park Report (J. Murphy)

- **Bysher Park:** SLLB to replace dugouts at field closest to the Walgreens.
- **Connor James McKelvie Community Park:** Minor vandalism to playground fence (repaired).
- **Henry R. Chiaramonte Park:** No Update.
- **James A. Cisco Park:** Staff securing budget estimates for a new pedestrian bridge.
- **James R. Fulginiti Park:** No Update.
- **Laurel Beech Park:** No Update.
- **Marlow Field:** No Update.
- **Mermaid Park:** No Update.
- **Sandy Run Park:** Quarry closed for the season.
- **Veterans Park:** SLLS planning to install underdrain along Wyndmoor Drive.
- **Wyndhill Park:** No Update.
- **Springfield Township Recreation Center A:** No Issues.
- **Springfield Township Recreation Center B:** Boiler Repaired.
- **Walnut Avenue Master Site Plan Committee:** Master/Framework Plan presented Dec. 8, 2025.
- **Recreation Center Advisory Committee:** Architect and Construction Mgr. contracts awarded.

6. Old Business (All)

Outdoor AEDs Proposal: During the January PRAC Meeting, Kelley Moore, an Erdenheim resident, recommended the installation of AEDs at all Springfield Township parks and facilities, prioritizing parks that see frequent athletic and recreational use, emphasizing the critical role that rapid access to AEDs plays in saving lives during cardiac emergencies. Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator, Brendan

Lash, volunteered to survey surrounding townships to gather insight regarding outdoor AEDs, specifically the cost of installation and maintenance, potential damage and tampering risks, training requirements for use, and liability risks.

Jim Murphy and Brendan Lash presented a summary of the insight and information Brendan Lash acquired from various surrounding townships in Montgomery County, including the following:

- A total of 8 townships responded with varying opinions.
- Those who have not installed outdoor AEDs in their parks shared many of the concerns raised by the Township and the PRAC:
 - Liability risks.
 - Lack of training for those using the devices.
 - Risk of vandalism, theft, misuse, and/or tampering.
 - High cost of device purchase and installation.
- Those who have installed outdoor AEDs in their parks, most notably Lower Merion Township, expressed positive feedback:
 - Emphasized that the potential liability risks are outweighed by the benefits of installing AEDs in parks.
 - Received grant funding to help purchase devices.
 - Have never experienced any vandalism, theft, or misuse, only minor tampering.
 - Solicitors recommended placing signs next to devices explaining the procedures for use and to avoid liability risks.
 - Require regular inspection which for some townships is done by staff, and for others is done through the provider of which their devices were purchased from.

Robert McGrath requested information and statistics regarding lawsuits related to AED use in Pennsylvania. Kelley Moore recommended that the Township pilots an outdoor AED initiative by installing one device at Laurel Beech Park. Brendan Lash was asked to look into the maintenance processes of current AEDs in Springfield Township as well as the maintenance processes of AEDs in other townships. Additionally, Brendan Lash volunteered to research information and statistics regarding lawsuits related to AED use in Pennsylvania.

PRAC unanimously voted to table the outdoor AED recommendation vote until the March 4, 2026 meeting in which they will have more information.

Little League Annual Update Presentations: Representatives from Little League Baseball and Little League Softball conducted their annual presentation of scheduled events and Township facility use.

Matt Pentima, the Vice President of Little League Softball, presented the following information:

- One new board member: Grant Holdren (Coaches Coordinator).
- Currently 241 registrants for spring softball, expecting 30 teams.
- Last year there were 362 registrants and 30 teams.
- Registration closes March 1st.
- Practices begin March 16th.
- April 11th will be Opening Day.
- Playoff begin May 25th and run until the first week of June.
- District 22 Sectional games will be hosted at Veterans Park.

Dan Widmeier, the Vice President of Little League Baseball, presented the following information:

- Expecting approximately 600 registrants this year.
- Last year there were 607 registrants and 61 teams.
- Registration closes in March.
- Practices begin March 16th.
- April 11th will be Opening Day.
- Season concludes in June.
- Tournament season begins in June.
- District tournaments will be hosted at Byshier Park.
- A parking attendant has been hired for Byshier Park.

- Recently removed the existing dugouts at their AAA fields and are actively working to pour new concrete pads and construct new dugouts.

Skate Park Vote: A formal recommendation vote was determined to take place by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee regarding the Springfield Township Skateboard Association's (STSA) project proposal for the development of an inclusive, all-wheels park located at Laurel Beech Park in Wyndmoor where the current playground area sits.

The STSA presented important follow up data to address previous concerns proposed by the PRAC and Laurel Beech Park neighborhood residents:

- Emphasized that a lack of a skate park limited the interests/sports that kids and adults in the Township can pursue.
- Average noise levels at skate parks are comparable to average playground and soccer field activity.
- Having a safe space for kids to skate will prevent safety risks of skating elsewhere such as on the street.
- Shared testimony from the Parks and Recreation Director of Middletown Township and the Parks and Recreation Director of Lansdale who expressed overwhelmingly positive views about their own skate parks:
 - Encourages pro-social behavior.
 - The skateboard community helps maintain the skate parks.
 - Opportunity to run skate clinics and programs.
 - Received positive feedback from the community.

After the presentation, several residents expressed their opposition to the construction of a skate park at Laurel Beech Park, detailing the following items:

- Better location options should be researched.
- Size of the park is too small to house a skate park.
- Kids in other parts of the Township, such as Oreland, would still need to travel a few miles to get to a skate park in Wyndmoor.
- Potential to draw a greater number of nefarious activities.
- ADA compliance has not been prioritized enough with the current renderings.
- Playground downscaling as a result of skate park construction.
- Negative change to the character of Laurel Beech Park and the neighborhood as a whole.
- Potential flooding issues.
- Removal of greenage could pose an issue of conservation.
- Creation of constant noise related issues.

After the presentation, several residents expressed their support of the construction of a skate park at Laurel Beech Park, detailing the following items:

- Promote pro-social behavior among both youth and adults.
- Opportunities to accommodate more than just skateboarding.
- Central location of Laurel Beech Park offers an ease of access for the community.
- Skating is an underserved sport in the Township.
- No place for skaters to go and safely engage in their sport.
- Skate parks offer an outlet for keeping kids busy and social.
- Based on surveys from last year, students express an overwhelming support for the skate park.
- Skating is a multi-generational hobby with a community that polices itself.
- The STSA needs an address to begin fundraising and applying for grants.

Adrienne Smythe clarified that the construction of a skate park at Laurel Beech Park does not mean that there will no longer be a playground there. Jim Murphy presented a petition expressing opposition to the skate park construction at Laurel Beech which contained 29 signatures. Mr. Murphy also expressed that he has received over 20 emails expressing opposition and 7 email expressing support.

Motion made by Brian Sokel to recommend Laurel Beech Park as the proposed site for the Springfield Township Skateboard Association's skate park project to the Board of Commissioners.

Vote: The motion carried by a vote of 4 in favor, 2 opposed, and 1 abstention.

The abstaining member stated their belief that the Board of Commissioners should be the sole authority in determining the specific location of the skate park. And that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee's role should be limited to recommending whether a skate park should be constructed within the township generally.

7. New Business (*All*)

No new business was discussed.

8. General Public Comment (*All*)

Mower Usage Evaluation and Meadow Prioritization: Martin Ryan, an EAC member, proposed for an evaluation of mower usage in the Township to be conducted as an effort to reduce overall usage. Additionally, Mr. Ryan proposed that any volunteering committee members join him in identifying parts of the Township's parks in which meadow-like features could be introduced. Neil DiFranco, Christina Kerper, and Nick Matteo volunteered to walk particular parks with Mr. Ryan to identify possible meadow feature implementation locations.

Skate Park Opposition: A Wyndmoor resident who lives in close proximity to Laurel Beech Park expressed their opposition for results of the skate park vote and felt that the neighbors' views and opinions were not properly heard.

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

No Board Meeting took place in January. The athletic fields may not be ready for the spring.

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

Rob Goldberg spoke on the new planned pedestrian bridge at James A. Cisco Park. This bridge will be ADA accessible. Renderings will be submitted soon, however budget estimates have not yet been secured.

11. Call for Adjournment (*All*)

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 6:30 pm