

Elizabethtown Community Park

A Brief History



**Elizabethtown
Borough**

Phone: 717-367-1700

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The Elizabethtown Area Chamber of Commerce is credited with founding Community Park and donating it to the Borough in 1950. To this day the Borough maintains the park and continues to seek grants and funding sources for maintenance and enhancement of the property.

Elizabethtown Community Park



Park Founding

While the Elizabethtown Area Chamber of Commerce introduced the idea of a community park at the June 21, 1932 Borough Council meeting, it was not until 1951 that Council accepted the property, adopted an Ordinance creating the park, and appointed the first Park Commission members. Since that time the Borough has continued to maintain and improve the property which was originally owned by Anna Mary Kalbach.

*** Important Dates**

June 21, 1932

Chamber members TH Ebersole, SG Hershey, DH Martin, JN Olweiler, and Ira Risser introduce park project to Borough Council on land previously owned by Anna Mary Kalbach.

November 21, 1950

Chamber President, Ray Miller, donates the Park to the Borough.

June 19, 1951

Council adopts ordinance creating the Elizabethtown Community Park and appoints the first Park Commission Members; Mary Chronister, RF Clemens, Paul Herr, J. Edwin Hershey, Wilbur Weaver.

June 21, 1951

Grantors named in the ordinance creating the park and accepting the donation include JK Garman, Levi C. Hershey, SR Hershey, JN Olweiler, and IH Stauffer.

** Information gathered by researching Borough Council minutes*

Park Improvements

Early improvements to the Park included installation of a comfort station, laying out paths and walkways, grading for shelters /pavilions, and creation of a softball field. Infrastructure improvements were made to water and sewer lines, and in 1951 Ray Miller donated flood lights and the Girl Scouts donated a flagpole. The Borough continues to seek ways to improve the park including ongoing stream bank restoration work and State grants awarded in 2013 for pathway improvements, play equipment upgrades, and safe crossings between the separate segments of this linear park.

For more information on Elizabethtown Community Park call the Borough Office at 717-367-1700 or visit the Borough's website at (www.etononline.com).

Elizabethtown Borough

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ELIZABETHTOWN PARK HISTORY

6-17-30

Motion Edgar R. Herr, second J. K. Freymeyer, Councilman Hershey, Freymeyer and Burgess Aymiller were authorized to offer to the Chamber of Commerce the use of vacant lot now owned by the Borough on South Poplar Street for a playground for the children.

6-21-32

Messrs. J. N. Olweiler, Ira Risser, T. H. Ebersole, S. G. Hershey and D. H. Martin representing the Chamber of Commerce appeared before Council and presented the newly developed project of purchasing a tract of land lying within the Borough for future park site. They told Council there is now an opportunity to purchase this land and could be held over and improved as funds become available. Their object was that probably council could see fit to purchase same or if not what assistance might come from council either in purchasing or maintaining the tract. Mrs. S. F. Hershey and Daisy Kline representing the Business and Professional Women's Club being present stated that their club was heartily in favor of the movement and will support same. Other civic organizations have expressed their eagerness to lend support.

Motion Frank Breneman, second Edgar R. Herr, it was ordered that the secretary reply to the local Chamber of Commerce complementing the Chamber of its efforts to purchase a 13 acre tract of land from Mary Kalbach for the purpose of developing a Park site, also stating that Borough Council is heartily in favor of such movement, but in financial support of this project council cannot now promise any assistance whatsoever.

8-17-32

Book C31, Page 00498

Anna Mary Kalbach property transferred to the Trustees of the use of the Citizens and Borough of Elizabethtown.....

9-19-33

A communication was read from Ira L. Risser, Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Park and Playground association in which a plea was made for support in the development of park and playgrounds. On motion Allen A. Hertzler, second Harry Rohrer, the communication was received and the secretary instructed to acknowledge same.

5-14-34

A communication from L. C. Hershey was read asking Council to donate to the Park and Playground Association the secondhand terra cotta pipe reclaimed from Market Street by contractor Swanger. Motion Harry Rohrer, second Allen A. Hertzler, the 12 in. used terra cotta pipe was donated to the Park and Playground provided they remove same from storage lot at no expense to the Borough.

2-19-35

A communication was read from the local Chamber of Commerce, Levi C. Hershey, Secretary, stating that available funds for the development of the town park and playground are exhausted; and requested council to appropriate \$100.00 for labor and upkeep of the development for 1935. The secretary was instructed to acknowledge the communication, and to advise the Chamber that on account of indebtedness incurred in the street improvement program in the past year, cuts in various appropriations have been necessary, and that under these circumstances, council was not in a position to add any new appropriations to the budget.

4-16-35

A group of citizens namely, I. H. Stauffer, J. N. Olweiler, L. C. Hershey, Ira Risser, Wayne Aungst and J. H. Buch representing the Chamber of Commerce appeared before council and in numerous addresses asked that council seriously consider their offer to lease to the Borough of Elizabethtown all of the Park and Playgrounds property for a term of 10 years. The purpose being to fill requirements of the Public Works Division in order to apply for Federal aid in developing this project. The immediate improvements are grading athletic fields, tennis courts, excavation wading pool, excavation and laying walks and dredging lake. The approximate cost to the Borough will be \$300.00 to \$500.00. On motion H. H. Rohrer, second W. L. Hess, the president of council was instructed to appoint a committee of council to work along with the park and Playgrounds committee in working out details concerning an application to the Public Works Division at Lancaster for grading and developing of the park grounds and to consult the Borough Solicitor as to the legality of the Borough leasing this property. President Herr appointed H. H. Rohrer, chairman, Allen A. Hertzler and Amos B. Drace, as the committee.

4-26-35

A Petition from the local Rotary Club was read in which they urged Borough Council to take necessary action to procure aid from the Federal Government to develop the park grounds. After considerable discussion H. H. Rohrer offered the following resolution, seconded by Allen A. Hertzler.

Whereas, Federal Funds are about to become available for the construction and development of public projects and whereas the Chamber of Commerce through its park Committee along with the Rotary Club have petitioned the Council of the Borough of Elizabethtown to apply for funds for the construction and development of the Public Park and Playground in the Borough of Elizabethtown; and whereas the deed for this property now held by the following named Trustees: Levi C. Hershey, J. K. Freymeyer and S. G. Hershey contains the following provisions, viz;

“The parties of the Second part agree that any indebtedness placed against the herein conveyed premises may be paid off at any time or from time to time by civic organizations of individuals, or by the Borough authorities of the Borough of Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, Pa.; and when all indebtedness existing against the herein conveyed premises has been paid off, the parties of the Second Part will convey the above described premises to the Borough of Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, Pa., as and for a public park or playground.”

Resolved, that the proper officers of the Borough Council be authorized to apply to the Public Works Administration for federal funds to construct and develop an athletic field on the said park and certain other improvements such as sidewalk grading, grading for tennis courts, dredging for pond, etc.; that the Borough provides and hereby appropriates sufficient money, not to exceed the sum of \$500.00, to be used for cost of materials, tools, repairs etc. as may be necessary.

9-17-35

Special Committees:

Councilman Rohrer reported that plans have been received from Harrisburg showing proposed grading plans for athletic field and tennis courts for the park and playgrounds. Several days ago L. C. Hershey, J. N. Olweiler and himself interviewed C. A. B. Zook, District director under the Works Progress Administration and Lancaster and presented the said blue prints, so that application for W. P. A. assistance may be made. When the applications blanks are ready for signature they will be forwarded.

2-18-36

Park Committee:

Chairman Drace stated that not much work has been done on the Park grounds owing to inclement weather. So far about \$70.00 was expended for tools and equipment.

The Appropriation Ordinance was read the third time. On motion C. S. Fisher, second W. L. Hess it was ordered that action be taken on third and final reading. All members voted favorable expecting H. E. Ream, who favored the Ordinance excepting the item of \$500.00 appropriated to Improvement of Park and Playground. He is opposed to the way money is being spent on a project of this sort.

4-21-36

J. N. Olweiler, representing the Chamber of Commerce, appeared before Council, stating that he was informed that the Public Works Administration are allowing labor costs to evacuate space for the erection of a comfort station in the public park, and also a wading pool, if the proper officers approve change in project. Present Herr signed the necessary papers which will also have to be signed by the Treasurer of the Borough.

1-4-37

J. N. Olweiler, along with other members of Chamber of Commerce appeared before Council, accompanied by Mr. Foltz, W. P. A. Engineer. They asked Council's approval of a new project meaning an expenditure of approximately \$2000.00 for W. P. A. labor for excavation pond and comfort station site, grading for walks, and terracing on the park grounds. On motion W. L. Hess, second C. S. Fisher, it was ordered that Council agree to sponsor the Chamber of Commerce on the new park project for additional W. P. A. labor, and that there will be no outlay of money by Borough Council excepting the use of Borough truck.

1-11-37

Messrs. Foltz and Sherrick, W. P. A. Engineers, were expected to arrive here tonight from Lancaster relative to preparing application for additional funds to complete several projects on the Park and Playground, but they failed to arrive.

On motion Allen A. Hertzler, second C. S. Fisher, it was ordered that after this week the Borough truck shall be furnished to the W. P. A. Project to haul dirt from Park and Playground grounds to North Spruce Street fill. Driver to be supplied by W. P. A. labor. Members voting favorable were Hess, Fisher, and Hertzler. Ream opposed.

9-21-37

L. C. Hershey, representing the Park and Play Grounds Committee, stated that the Elizabethtown Water Company is running a water line to the new Comfort Station, now under construction at the Park, and that they will do this work free of charge. Mr. Hershey asked that Borough Council waive the opening charge for the ditch to place this water line. On motion C. S. Fisher, second C. R. Frey, it was ordered that no charge be made to open the street for the installation of water line to the new Comfort Station.

Mr. Hershey further stated that the Park and Play Grounds Committee are about to put on a drive for funds to liquidate the indebtedness on the real estate. He gave a report of what surrounding Boroughs are doing in support of Play Grounds, and asked Council to consider a donation.

11-12-41 Deed to Trustees?? Book K35, Page 00318 – no documents available.

11-17-42

Messrs. I. H. Stauffer and J. K. Garman, Trustees of the Park and Play Grounds Association, appeared before Council and asked for an additional appropriation for 1943. Heretofore \$150.00 was appropriated and they are asking for an increase to \$450.00.

6-20-44

Mr. Olweiler also wondered whether the Borough Council would consider placing macadam floor in the pavilion of the park grounds provided the park and playground association pay for same.

3-19-46

He (Burgess) also brought before Council a request from the American Legion Junior Softball League for permission to use the lot recently purchased from Mary Reese for the purpose of playing ball, rather than use the park diamond since that is not so well adapted for softball playing.

1-21-47

The Burgess also brought out that just as soon as it is possible to do so the Reese lot fronting along West High Street should be graded and made ready for soft ball playing.

5-20-47

He (Burgess Olweiler) also stated that it has been too wet to prepare the soft ball field and that so far no work has been done.

7-22-47

The Burgess also stated that he has received numerous complaints relative to weeds and thistles in uncultivated lots some of which are privately owned and others belonging to the Parks and Playgrounds.

6-15-48

On motion, E. L. Hartman, seconded, J. G. Groff, it was ordered that the committee get permission from the property owners to install a storm sewer line in and through their respective properties from East Park Street to the creek. These property holders are Isiah Bashore, Frank S. Spickler, Walter Frey and Parks & Playgrounds.

11-21-50

A letter was read from Joseph Gingrich, chairman of a dinner program which is to be held at Baker's Diner on December 14, at 6:30 p.m. as a testimonial dinner for the Park Trustees. The Elizabethtown Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the dinner and invited Borough Council to be their guests.

Ray Miller, President of the Chamber of Commerce, appeared before council and stated that the town park is now clear of debt and that they would like to turn it over to Borough Council and a gift. He said that he believed the Burgess has the authority to appoint a Park Commission which would be approved by the Council for the Administration of the park. He thought that such a body would be able to keep the park in better condition than it has been in the past and that it would be available for use of all the citizens. Mr. Horner, who accompanied Mr. Miller, indicated that he had all the deeds to the property and that he would be able to assist the Borough Solicitor in getting the deeds prepared to formally transfer the property on December 14 at the testimonial dinner. Mr. Kettering moved that we go on record in favor of this generous gift of the Elizabethtown Park Property from the Chamber of Commerce, subject to the Borough Solicitor's advice and Councils review of the condition of the gift. This motion was seconded by Mr. Hartman and passed.

2-20-51 Deed to Elizabethtown Borough Book S41, Page 00008.

2-20-51

Mr. Mueller attended the council meeting and reported on the progress of the title to the park. It was discovered that the drawing which Mr. Mueller had did not include the comfort station which is located on the north side of East Washington Street. He suggested that it might be well to govern the park by appointing a recreation board composed of at least five persons. These persons would hold office for five years and would be arranged so that the term of each man would expire in different years.

3-20-51

The Chamber of Commerce stated that they are anxious to complete this transaction so that the Borough Council would have time to get the park in condition for the summer season. They also recommended a number of citizens whom they thought would be suitable to serve on the park commission. The Chamber of Commerce has some funds available which they will turn over to the borough to rehabilitate the park.

4-17-51

It was reported that the deeds for the community park would be ready for the next meeting. The secretary should have Mueller prepare the ordinance for the administration of the park, including the procedure for selecting of a park commission. It was suggested that O. E. Proctor contact the school board for their recommendations for this commission.

5-15-51

Ray Miller appeared before council for the Chamber of Commerce. He stated that the deeds for the park are now completed and they are ready to be recorded and that Jack Horner will have them recorded. He also reported that there is over \$1000. In the park fund which the Chamber of Commerce is willing to spend for the park improvement. O. E. Proctor moved that we accept the park property and have the deeds properly recorded. Motion was seconded by Mark Basehore and passed.

Public Works:

E. L. Hartman reported that there was a lot of work to be done at the park and main difficulty was in obtaining enough help. Mr. Groff suggested that council meet at the park to see what work should be done.

Mr. Proctor reported that he had contacted several individuals to serve on the park commission and that he has the consent of two persons whom he will recommend to council.

The ordinance to accept the Elizabethtown Community Park to provide for a park commission was read. It was moved by E. L. Hartman that the rules of council be suspended and the ordinance be passed for first and second reading. Motion was seconded by Joseph Kettering and passed. A roll call vote was taken and all members voted in favor.

6-19-51

The ordinance establishing the Elizabethtown Community park was read and it was moved by E. L. Hartman and seconded by Chester Engle that this ordinance pass its third reading. On a roll call vote all voted favorably. Mr. proctor reported that he had contacted a number of persons to serve on the park commission and the following persons had agreed to accept: Wilbur Weaver, R. F. Clemens, Paul Herr, J. Edwin Hershey, and Mrs. Mary Chronister. It was moved by E. L. Hartman that these persons be appointed to terms of office as follows: Wilbur Weaver, five years; R. F. Clemens, four years; Paul Herr, three years; J. Edwin Hershey, two years; and Mrs. Mary Chronister, one year. Motion was seconded by Chester Engle and passed. The secretary was instructed to contact these people and ask them to be at the fire hall at 8:00 on June 25th to be sworn-in by the burgess.

6-21-51

An Ordinance

Establishing a recreation place for the citizens of the Borough of Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to be known as "Elizabethtown Community Park."

Be it Ordained and Enacted by the Borough Council of the Borough of Elizabethtown, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and it is hereby ordained as follows:

Section 1. There is hereby dedicated to the public use as a recreation place which shall hereafter be known by the name "Elizabethtown Community Park", so much of the land now owned by the Borough of Elizabethtown of Elizabethtown, lying in the said Borough of Elizabethtown, as was acquired by a deed between Levi C. Hershey, S. R. Hershey, J. K. Garman, J. N. Olweiler, and I. H. Stauffer, grantors, and Borough of Elizabethtown, Grantee, dated February 20, 1951.

Section 2. The development and management of "Elizabethtown Community Park" is hereby rested in a Recreation Board, as provided by the Act of Assembly.

Section 3. The said Recreation Board shall consist of five members, of whom at least four shall be citizens of the Borough of Elizabethtown.

Section 4. The said Recreation Board shall have no power to pledge the credit of the Borough of Elizabethtown nor to make any contracts, agreements or commitments whatsoever, which may be binding upon the Borough of Elizabethtown.

Section 5. The use by the citizens of the Borough of Elizabethtown and its vicinity, of "Elizabethtown Community Park" shall be regulated and controlled by the Recreation Board hereinbefore mentioned subject, nevertheless, to the rights of the Borough of Elizabethtown.

Ordained and Enacted this 21st day of June A. D. 1951

John G. Groff, President of Council

7-10-51

All of the members of the borough park commission were present at the meeting except Mrs. Chronister. Mr. Mueller lead a discussion concerning the operation of this body and made a number of suggestions as to how it should operate. He felt that the park commission should be given sufficient authority to operate the park so that they could feel that they were really accomplishing something. However, he pointed out that the park commission is responsible to borough council and can only function as their agent and that large items of major additions to the park should be undertaken only after borough council has been consulted.

7-17-51

Paul Herr, president of the Park Commission, appeared before council with several requests. First, that they be given part of the borough appropriation for operating the park; second, that speed limit signs be erected in the park area for 15mph., third, repair the sewer line which goes from Washington Street to the two family dwelling, and fourth, correct the drainage of surface water which runs down from the alley above the rest rooms. Chester Engle moved that the borough turn over \$500 of the appropriation to the park commission. Motion was seconded by O. E. Proctor and passed. A motion was also presented by E. L. Hartman giving the Park Commission authority to collect all income from the park and to account for the same. Motion seconded by Joseph Kettering and passed. Mr. Herr reported several donations being offered for the park including a flag pole by the Girl Scouts and two flood lights by Ray Miller. E. L. Hartman moved that the Park Commission be authorized to accept these donations. The motion seconded by Chester Engle and passed.

8-21-51

Park Commission:

Paul Herr, President of the Park Commission reported that they are making application through the Department of Interior to put a wading pool in the stream which runs through the town park. Before this could be forthcoming, the site would be inspected by the state and tests of the water would be made. He asked council to repair the sewer lines which cross this stream since they both are in need of repair to eliminate waste which is getting into the stream. The Park Commission intends to put in new bridge which will be located over the sewer line running from the park house to Washington Street. They will need the balance of their appropriation in order to carry out this work.

10-16-51

Paul Herr, president of the park commission, reported that there was considerable property damage done in the town park by Halloweeners. He requested that speed limit signs be placed in the park area. He said that the park commission had a number of things which they wished to do this year yet and would like the balance of their appropriation. O. E. Proctor moved that the balance in the park fund be turned over to the commission. Motion seconded by E. L. Hartman and passed.

1-15-52

Paul Herr, president of the park commission appeared before council with the request for a substantial appropriation in order to carry out the work which should be done at the park during the coming year. His report included a detailed list as well as the cost of the various items which they are considering. The total proposed expenditures amounted to \$3995. After referring to the borough code, section 2703, it was discovered that only 1 ½ mills of the assessed valuation may be used in any three year period for the maintenance and improvement of the park. Therefore, if the amount requested would be given the park commission, there would be practically no money available from the borough next year. After considerable discussion, it was decided to give the whole problem further study and the secretary was instructed to contact Solicitor Mueller for further clarification for this section of the code. Mr. Herr also pointed out that the sewer line running from the park house over to Washington Street is in need of repairs. Mr. Boozer said that as the line is now run, there is not sufficient fall; therefore in cold weather the line freezes and breaks. The Public Health Committee was instructed to look into this matter and bring a report to the next meeting.

2-19-52

A letter was read from solicitor Mueller regarding the amount of money which could be appropriated for the borough park. He indicated that 1 ½ mills of the real estate assessed valuation is the maximum that could be provided during the three year period and that the repairs and alterations to the park house should be considered in this amount.

Paul Herr, president of the park commission, asked the council for guidance regarding the park house. He said that they had approval from the rent control office to charge \$25.00 a month rent but were having some difficulty collecting this amount. Council suggested that he go ahead and collect the rent by whatever means necessary.

4-15-52

In accordance with the suggestion of Solicitor Mueller it was decided to waive the usual zoning fee charge insofar as the permit to the Park and Playground Commission is concerned and their check No. 50 in the amount of \$4.00 was returned to Paul S. Herr, President of the Elizabethtown Community Park.

5-20-52

Mr. Paul Herr, President of the Park Commission, again stated that the Commission has not, as yet, been able to locate several deeds to portions of the Park property. Since all parties whose names would appear on the missing deed are living, it was suggested that these parties sign an affidavit stating that the land was actually transferred to the Borough Park.

Mr. Proctor moved and Mr. Risser seconded a motion to reelect Mrs. Mary Chronister for a 5 year period from June 1952 on the Elizabethtown Community Park Commission. Motion carried.

6-17-52

The resignation of Prof. R. F. Clemens as a member of the Elizabethtown Community Park Commission was read. Prof. Clemens stated that due to a change of positions he would not be available for the many duties that the Commission requires. Council authorized the Secretary to reply to the communication, thanking Prof. Clemens for the excellent service rendered while a member of the Commission.

8-19-52

Secretary notified Prof. Wm. R. Barnhart that he had been appointed a member of the Elizabethtown Community Park Commission to fill the unexpired term of Prof. R. F. Clemens who resigned. It was suggested that Prof. Barnhart contact Burgess Schwanger and take the Oath of Office.