

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL  
PALISADES INTERSTATE PARK  
NEW JERSEY SECTION

March 9, 2017

A meeting of the Citizens Advisory Council, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, New Jersey Section, was held on March 9, 2017 at the Park Headquarters, Alpine, N.J. The meeting was called to order by Chair Kevin Tremble at 1:50 p.m. Present were CAC members Daniel Chazin, Susan Gordon, Martha Lieblich and Kevin Tremble, and Assistant Superintendent Chris Szeglin.

1. Minutes. The minutes of the January 19th meeting were approved as corrected.

2. Chairman's Report. Kevin Tremble reported on the following items:

a. Groundbreaking Ceremony for New LG Building. Kevin Tremble reported that he attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the new LG building in Englewood Cliffs in February. He noted that the event was attended by dignitaries from LG Electronics, as well as the other litigants in the court case against LG that had been settled. Kevin Tremble stated that, during the event, he had conversations with John Taylor, LG's Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications, regarding potential cooperation between LG and the Park on environmental issues. He also pointed out that, at the ceremony, the Mayor of Englewood Cliffs stated that we are now all "cliff-keepers."

b. Bergen County Parks Technical Advisory Committee. Kevin Tremble reported that a public meeting on the Bergen County Parks Master Plan was held at the Fort Lee Historic Park on February 7th. He stated that the meeting was attended by about 20 people, including representatives of the Bergen County Historical Society, and that a number of the people who attended made comments regarding the preservation of historic sites on county parkland. Daniel Chazin commented that he might have attended that meeting had he been advised that the meeting was being held on that date.

c. Ramapo College Pilot Program. Kevin Tremble reported that, at the February Commission meeting, he spoke to the Commissioners about the environmental education program in the Park that is being presented by Angela Cristini of Ramapo College. He noted that the Conservancy has provided \$5,000 to

fund an intern for the program. He also pointed out that, until now, a half-day program that focused on the river has been offered, but that several school districts have requested a full-day program, which would include a land-based component. Kevin Tremble noted that some changes are currently being made to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the Park and the College regarding the program, and he stated that he expects this document to be signed in the near future. Chris Szeglin stated that the Park might possibly be able to make some space available for use by the organizers of this program, but that he has not been informed of the program's needs as to space.

3. Members' Reports. The following reports were presented:

a. Tallman Mountain Library Display. Kevin Tremble noted that the exhibit is currently on display at the Fort Lee Public Library, where it will remain until the end of March.

b. Archiving of CAC Minutes. Daniel Chazin reported that he has given Chris Szeglin a flash drive with electronic copies of all CAC minutes from 2014, 2015 and 2016 and that these minutes have been copied onto the computer at Park Headquarters. Susan Gordon stated that she believes that she has paper copies of some minutes which she prepared when she served as Secretary of the CAC. Chris Szeglin said that he would post CAC minutes on the Park's website as soon as they are approved. Daniel Chazin agreed to send Chris Szeglin the final version of the minutes of the January meeting, which had just been approved by the CAC.

c. Sailings of A.J. Meerwald. Martha Lieblich reported that the *A.J. Meerwald* will be visiting the Park this year on July 13-16, and she stated that she has obtained the necessary permits from the Park for the visit. She noted that she would need parking permits for those attending the Sunday sail, since they would be returning to the Park after dark.

d. Proposed Reuse of Bloomer's Bathhouse by Hudson River Fisherman's Association. Susan Gordon commented that the Hudson River Fishermen's Association has been seeking funding from the Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund for a proposed reuse of the Bloomer's Bathhouse at the Englewood Boat Basin. She noted that projects located in a state park are apparently not eligible for this funding, and she asked Chris Szeglin to clarify whether the New Jersey Section of the Park is considered a state park for this purpose.

Chris Szeglin commented that Gil Hawkins of this group has a vision to create a mixed-use space in the old Bloomer's Bathhouse, and he stated that the Commission

might be prepared to agree to this concept if the group were able to raise sufficient funds to restore the building, and provided that the building would have some public use component. He noted that this group had originally presented him with an ambitious plan for reuse of the bathhouse that included a glass atrium, which he believed was inappropriate for the Park and which he rejected. He explained that the current plan is to add a second story to the building (which had only a single level as originally built), since a single floor would not provide sufficient room to allow for any public space. Chris Szeglin pointed out that the Commission is a bi-state entity and commented that a strong case could be made that the New Jersey Section of the Park should not be considered to be in the same category as every other state park.

4. Sampling at Boat Basins. Kevin Tremble noted that, at the February Commission meeting, Jim Hall reported that the cost of the sampling required for the hydraulic dredging that the Park has historically done is very high, while the cost of sampling for mechanical dredging is much lower. Chris Szeglin explained that hydraulic dredging has a much greater impact because it churns everything around and adds energy, while mechanical dredging just scoops up sediment and puts it in a barge. He stated that the cost of sampling for mechanical dredging is probably about one fourth the cost of sampling for hydraulic dredging. He also commented that mechanical dredging would have to be done by an outside contractor and that the process would have to be supervised by an inspector, and he pointed out that mechanical dredging uses geobags which would have to be placed in the parking lot, which would result in other issues. In general, however, Chris Szeglin stated that no matter which method is chosen, the Park would incur very substantial costs for dredging. He also noted that, under the new rules, it might not be possible to dredge the entire basin at one time, and the costs of dredging might approach \$5,000 per slip.

Chris Szeglin pointed out that the results of the sampling for the Englewood Boat Basin indicated some contamination. He stated that Jim Hall will probably provide more specific numbers for the next Commission meeting.

5. Budget. Chris Szeglin reported that although the New Jersey Section of the Park received sufficient funds this year from the State of New Jersey to meet its budget, this was only a one-year fix for the budget, and the funding for the budget of the New Jersey Section will have to be renegotiated in future years.

6. Park App Map. Chris Szeglin reported that Sean Donato has developed a Park app map, which is being tested by the staff, and that he is also working on the Android version. He noted that the information for the app was taken from the website, and he pointed out that the app is still being tested and is not yet available

to the public, but should be available in the near future, before the hiking season starts. He also noted that the app will be available for free, and he pointed out that the app will have the capability of obtaining the hiker's location in terms of latitude and longitude, which will be very helpful in the event that a rescue is called for.

7. Management of Open Space West of the Parkway. Daniel Chazin reported that Chris Connolly of the Trail Conference has raised some questions regarding the management of the various parcels of open space along the Palisades west of the Parkway. He explained that the county owns a 40-acre parcel south of the New Jersey Alpine Boy Scout Camp, and that the camp itself is about 90 acres in size and that it is owned by the State and leased to PIPC, which in turn leases it to the Northern New Jersey Council of the Boy Scouts of America. North of that, he explained, is the 400-acre New York Alpine Boy Scout Camp, owned by the Greater New York Councils of the Boy Scouts of America. Daniel Chazin also pointed out that the Scouts have sold two parcels of land on the western face of the Palisades that were formerly part of the New York Alpine Boy Scout Camp. An 84-acre tract, now known as Rockleigh Woods Sanctuary, was acquired by the Borough of Rockleigh in 1975, and the 134-acre Lamont Reserve, located in the Borough of Alpine, was acquired jointly by the County of Bergen, the Borough of Alpine and the Borough of Rockleigh in 1996.

Daniel Chazin explained that groups of cyclists have established unofficial bike trails that connect the various parcels described above, and that Chris Connolly of the Trail Conference has been involved in conversations with interested parties regarding the issues posed by these bike trails and other problems involving the management of these properties. He stated that he would report further on this matter at the next CAC meeting.

8. Reconstruction of Alpine Approach Road. Chris Szeglin reported that, two weeks ago, the contractor started work on the reconstruction of a deteriorated portion of the Alpine Approach Road. He stated that the contractor originally estimated that the work would take about one month, but that a number of issues have developed during the course of the construction, and that the completion of the project has already been delayed by about one week.

Chris Szeglin explained that about 50 feet of stone wall collapsed on the first day of work, and he stated that the contractor has expressed concern about the stability of the slope. As a result, he stated, the Park has engaged a consultant to determine the stability of the slope. Chris Szeglin showed the CAC members a photo of a section of the road that had been excavated.

Chris Szeglin pointed out that the section of the road being reconstructed is in the area of the 2005 rock slide, where the road had been repaired on an emergency basis. He stated that it now has become evident that the repair work in 2005 could have been performed in a better manner, and he noted that the contractor will now build the new roadway on a concrete foundation, to provide additional stability. Chris Szeglin stated that while he still hopes that the work will be completed by May 1st, at this point he is not confident that this deadline will be met.

9. Parking Area at Alpine Headquarters. Noting the fact that additional overflow parking spaces for the Alpine Headquarters are located beyond the gate on the Alpine Approach Road that is now kept locked because of the construction along the road, Daniel Chazin questioned whether adequate public parking is currently being provided for the Alpine Headquarters. In response, Chris Szeglin pointed out that there is an additional hard barrier a little further down on the road, and he stated that when many visitors are expected (such as when court is being held), the gate is left open so that people can park on the grassy areas on the sides of the road beyond the gate.

10. Date of Next Meeting. The next CAC meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 20th.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel D. Chazin  
Secretary