

2026-01-13 MTPR Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 2:28 PM

Present: Debbie Marchesani, Kris Belser, Dori Bower, Dan Giacomelli, Patrick Graham, Nicole Tener, Bill Fuller, Paul Kopera, Helene Ratner, Missy Kitzmiller

Call to order 6:01 PM Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Overview

The meeting discussed the 2026 board positions, rotating annually, and the new meeting schedule on the second Tuesday of each month. The 2026 meeting schedule was approved. The fall 2025 events, including tree planting and the holiday open house, were reviewed, noting improvements and issues like traffic and vendor placement. The comprehensive DCNR plan was updated, renaming Cobalt Ridge Park to Supervisor Hannah Paying Memorial Park. The use agreement for community park fields was discussed, emphasizing the need for clubs to pay full electric costs. The tax increase from 1.92 to 3.25 mills will fund capital projects, with a focus on tennis court renovations at Simmons.

2026 MTPR (P&R) Board Positions: Chairperson, Kris Belser; Vice-Chair, Debbie Marchesani; Secretary, Dan Giacomelli.

Action Items

- Add a note to the event planning notes to move Santa indoors or to a defined interior location for next year's Holiday Open House (document idea and preferred location options)
- Update the online comprehensive parks plan to reflect the renamed Cobalt Ridge Park to Supervisor Hannah Payne Memorial Park and ensure all references and versions are corrected online
- Create and add a recurring agenda item for future Park & Rec board meetings to provide regular updates on progress against the comprehensive plan, capital improvement plan, and multimodal plan
- Compile a single website page or resource with links and summary information for all park/transportation plans (township comprehensive plan, parks plan, multimodal plan, Bucks County plan) for public access
- Consider moving the January 27th Teen Talent show to February to accommodate P&R Board schedules better.
 - UPDATE: Email from Paul Kopera on 1/15/26 to the Board and "All Performers" stating *the date of the Teen Talent Show to **Saturday, February 21**. Audition videos are due by Friday, February 13. Joanne Morelli who does a fabulous job managing the Teen Talent Show had to take a few weeks off in January prompting the date change.*
- Patrick to provide a sample summary of electrical monthly savings from updating Community Park LEDs. Current investments having ~20 year payback with a month from Fall 2024 using 12.5Kw at \$0.09 for ~\$1125, compared with a similar month in Fall 2025 of 6.2Kw @ \$0.09 for ~\$558.
- Patrick to obtain paid license for Otter.ai to assist with Meeting Transcription and notes summary for next meeting on February 10th with Sports Organizations.

Approval of 2026 Board Positions and Meeting Schedule

- Motion is to approve the 2026 meeting schedule, moving meetings to the second Tuesday of each month to avoid conflicts with the Board of Supervisors. Motion was made by Missy to approve the new schedule, second by Dori, and all in favor.

- Motion was made by Missy to approve the November 2025 meeting minutes, Deb second, and all in favor.
- *UPDATE 1/16:* On 1/15/26, Paul Kopera emailed Dan Giacomelli the Excel P&R Boart Meeting Attendance sheets which Dan will take ownership and make available.

Discussion on Fall 2025 Events and Construction

- Patrick reported on the fall tree planting, where 12 trees were planted in Cobalt Ridge. Paul discusses the new playground in Cobalt Ridge and the plan to move a footbridge closer to the playground.
- Patrick provided (great) feedback on the holiday open house, noting the ease of setup and the performance of food trucks. Discussed the placement of vendors and the need for better organization of Santa's setup. Improvement for Santa's setup, including moving it indoors with music and adding more vendors. May want to have better traffic management and the potential for a police escort for Santa to avoid confusion and improve attendance. Missy gave feedback to MTPR Holiday Open House in comparison to similar event in Northampton, highlighting the differences in organization and vendor quality. Large Kudo's go to Joanne for her efforts along with Patrick, Nicole, and Paul.

Comprehensive DCNR Plan and Park Updates

- Patrick provided a summary update on the comprehensive DCNR plan, including the renaming of Cobalt Ridge Park to Supervisor Hannah Paying Memorial Park. Approximately 1600 responses received on the survey that went out.
- Team discussed of the challenges of getting signs installed and the importance of proper signage for community parks.
- Memorial sign for Doris Bauer, a long-time volunteer, and the plans for its installation and next steps for the memorial sign project, including coordination with Tim Field and Rodriguez.
- Patrick will be adding an agenda items at every meeting to provide a summary or status for Capital Projects, Comprehensive Plan, Multi-Modal, and Bucks County plans. The MTPR comprehensive plan dovetails off of the Township comprehensive plan. The multimodal plan is between both of those, and overlaps a little bit the capital improvement plan and is internal. The Bucks County plan sits over top of the Middletown comprehensive plan for the entire County.
- Board discussed the approval from December meetings to rename Cobalt Ridge to Anna Payne Park to honor the her efforts as Middletown Supervisor.

Field Usage Agreements

Discussion on Field Usage Agreement efforts from last meeting where Patrick and Dan are using a new AI tool to assist with Middletown Township, Parks and Recreation (MTPR) Maintenance and Usage Agreement (MUA) Modernization. The group requested something to review and present before the start of the next season, but that is dependent on club and sport (LAA and MAA Baseball is Spring, while MAA and LNUSC Soccer is Fall). Discussion on capital improvements by clubs to parks that Patrick is compiling with initial estimates of ~\$180k annually.

A draft Project Definition Pack is being assembled and should be available for next meeting as Patrick and Dan assemble source artifacts, data, and work on parking-lot items:

- Purpose: Update expired Maintenance for Use Agreements (MUAs) for key tenant organizations (LAA/LNUSC and MAA) and create a reusable Township standard template (MUA 2.0) applicable to any Park, Facility, and Organization.
- Initial Parks (Pilot): Community Park and Twin Oaks Park.
- Pilot Organizations: Langhorne Athletic Association (LAA) including LNUSC; Middletown Athletic

Association (MAA).

- Out of Scope: Facilities not directly tied to park field usage and maintenance (e.g., “The Barn,” “Community Center”).
- Success Criteria (high level): Template approved for reuse; updated pilot MUAs ready for approval/execution; park facility inventories and exhibits created and controlled (versioned) to reduce disputes and ambiguity.

Outside of Field usage agreements for clubs for seasonal contracts, fee structure for daily field permits, moving from an hourly rate to a flat rate per field per day. The new system is designed to be more streamlined and transparent, with an average increase of 15-20% for clubs which will be communicated to clubs via email.

Environmental Partner and Capital Projects

Paul and Patrick gave an update on the environmental partner and the **increase in millage rate** for dedicated funding for capital projects. The impact of the tax increase on the budget and the potential for additional funding in future years was discussed along with the potential grant funding for tennis court renovations at Simmons and the importance of planning for future projects. The team agreed to defer detailed discussion on capital projects until the next meeting when more information is available and can outline the next steps for securing grant funding and planning for capital projects in 2026.

Program Report and Early Registration Savings

Winter guide distribution and the success of early registration savings for exercise classes along with highlights the revenue generated from registrations and the expected revenue for the year. The benefits of early registration savings, including increased revenue and better program planning with a seven-day early sign-up policy for classes, inspired by Northampton, to ensure program viability and offer discounts. The new fee structure for field permits simplifies rates to a flat daily fee, resulting in a 15-20% increase for clubs. The ongoing challenges of managing late registrations and the need for better communication with participants is always present and is an accepted risk/challenge that is ever present, emphasizing not penalizing last-minute sign-ups, acknowledging unexpected changes in plans. Team will continue discussions and outlining next steps for improving the registration process and ensuring better participation in programs. Nicole Tener and Patrick Graham discuss the success of the winter guide and the positive feedback received from participants.

Closing Remarks

- For 2026, the team will be looking into using a transcription service to assist with meeting minutes. For this meeting, the Team was using Otter.ai, free version, which limits monthly use, and each meeting is only 60 minutes with only 30 minutes of transcription. Dan will piece together what was recorded and merge with additional notes. Initial expectations were high, and not met, but the team agrees the paid version and additional training and configuration may provide better results. Patrick is looking into obtaining a paid license for use at next meeting.
- The Teen Town Show may be rescheduled to February 28 due to personal circumstances. See Action Items at top.
- Sports Organizations will be invited to next meeting on February 10th and given the expected attendance will move to either Room 220 or the Senior Center with preference on Room 220.

Motion to Adjourn was made at 7:15 by Kris and second by all in the room.