

New Castle City Playground Committee Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard, New Castle, DE

Members Present: Suzanne Swift, Chair
Brian Mattaway
Judy Guttenplan
Nermin Zubaca
Matthew Eide

Absent: Andre Jerry

Ms. Swift called the Playground Committee meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

A motion to begin the meeting was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the November meeting was deferred until the January meeting.

Playground Equipment Update

Ms. Swift distributed two flyers:

- Proposed amendment to the zip line – Parents have reported that children are coming up the ramp and blocking children going down the zip line, and requested that a stairway coming from the back is added so everyone is moving in one direction. A quote was received of approximately \$10,000. ONCOR will be applying to the Trustees for a grant, and if awarded, those funds will be applied to have the playground updated to make it safer. The grant application deadline is December 31, 2023. Ms. Swift stated that she confirmed with Kompan that the new stairway will not interfere or overlap with any other equipment spheres.
- Proposal for rubberized surfacing – Ms. Swift explained the reason for this proposal is that mulch is difficult for wheelchairs to traverse. One bid to rubberize the entire playground was received at a cost of approximately \$500,000. A suggestion was made to create rubberized paths within the playground to accommodate wheelchairs. Additional pricing will be obtained. Ms. Swift opined that the zip line area might not need to have a rubberized pathway. Ms. Guttenplan noted that adults may need wheelchair accessibility in the playground. Ms. Swift noted that there are ADA grants available. She added that she is investigating things that the committee needs to be aware of regarding rubberized surfaces and will report back to the committee. Mr. Zubaca suggested that Federal grants be investigated in addition to State grants. Ms. Swift said she hopes to have two bids by the next meeting: one for a full rubber surfacing and one for partial rubber surfacing. In response to a question from the assembly, Ms. Swift opined that one company had a 7-year warranty for the rubberized surface, noting that mulch needs to be replaced every year. Mr. Zubaca opined that if the rubberized surface needs to be repaired or replaced every seven to 10 years, the cost could be much more than re-mulching every year. Ms. Swift recommended that the cost of mulch be determined. Ms. Guttenplan suggested that

the committee visit a park using a combination of mulch and rubber. Mr. Zubaca stated that he did not feel comfortable in making a decision as to which equipment is more appropriate for individuals with disabilities. He added that his preference is to completely rubberize the playground surface area. He suggested that input be obtained on this matter. Mr. Mattaway suggested that a family or group with knowledge be invited to visit the playground and offer their opinions and suggestions.

Neighborhood Playgrounds Update

Ms. Swift introduced Mr. Eide. Ms. Swift expressed her hope that Mr. Eide would take the lead on gathering feedback and recommending what the Bull Hill community would like to see in its playground. Discussion included incorporating adult equipment in the community parks.

Public Comment

Randy Snyder – 127 East 3rd Street

Mr. Snyder introduced himself and expressed interest in becoming involved with the Playground committee.

Mr. Mattaway welcomed Mr. Eide to the committee and thanked Mr. Snyder for attending and offering his help.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Swift called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion was unanimously carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer