

DANVILLE BOROUGH PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 9, 2017 MEETING

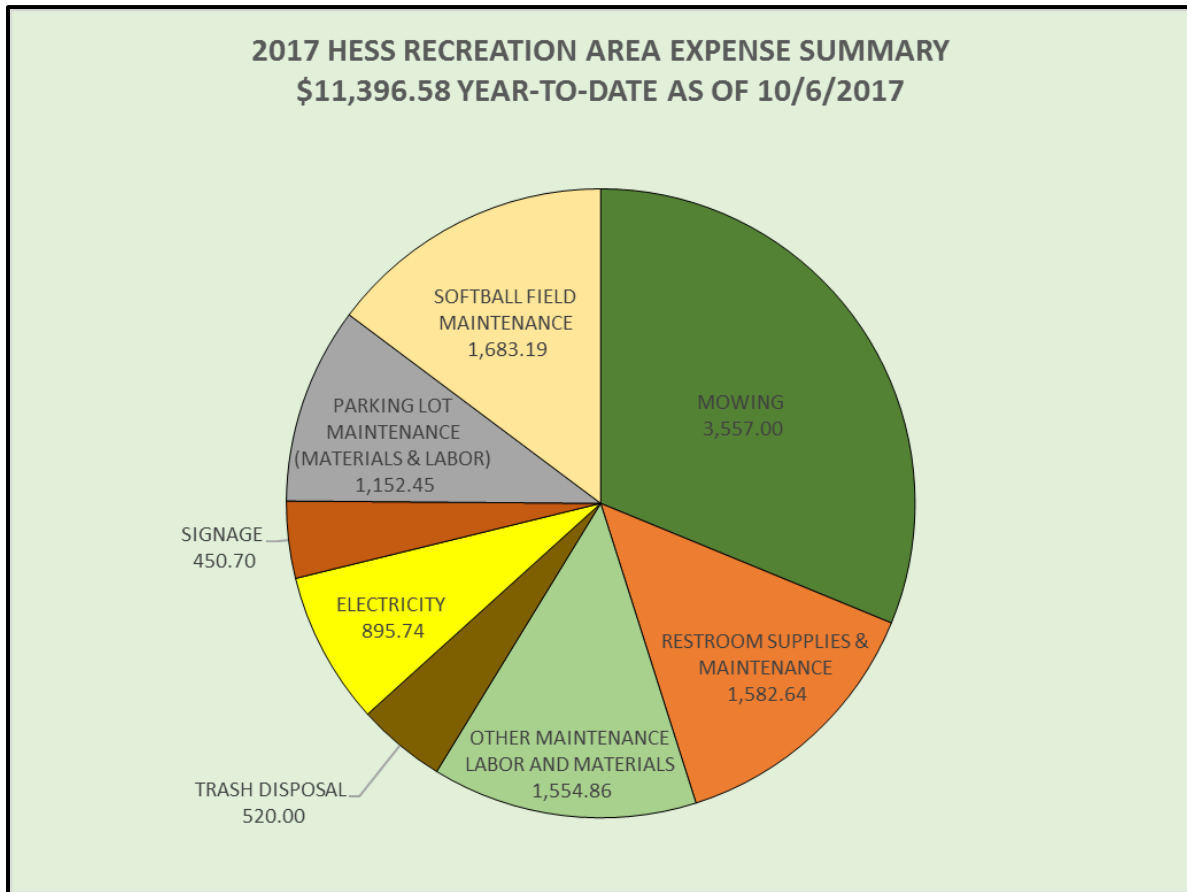
MONTOUR AREA RECREATION COMMISSION

PROPOSED HESS RECREATION AREA MAINTENANCE CHANGES

Per the terms of the Lease Agreement between the Borough of Danville and the Montour County Recreation Authority, dated March 25, 2002 and amended on April 8, 2010, and a related agreement between the Montour County Recreation Authority and the Montour Area Recreation Commission (MARC), MARC is responsible for all maintenance and upkeep of the Hess Recreation Area, the ‘Old Railroad Bed’ and the J. Manley Robbins Trail (hereafter the Hess Recreation Area).

As agreed, MARC has maintained and improved the Hess Recreation Area and its amenities, including the trails, restrooms, pavilion, skatepark, baseball field, softball field and other features, but today finds itself facing an increasingly challenging budget shortfall for the site and for its operations as a whole. The difficulties are threefold, as documented below.

- 1) As illustrated in the chart below, as of 10/6/17, MARC has spent \$11,396.58 year-to-date to operate and maintain the site. MARC anticipates a year-end total maintenance cost of roughly \$12,700.



- 2) MARC's operating costs at the site are typically partly offset by user fees paid to use the site's baseball field, softball field, pavilion and other features, but those fees have declined significantly this year and are not expected to rebound in 2018. In particular, usage of the site's softball field and baseball field have decline dramatically in recent years, particularly in 2017, and MARC sees no sign of the trend changing in coming years. Year-to-date, MARC has received \$1,855 in user fees for the Hess Recreation Area. For reference, MARC received \$2,725 in user fees at the site in 2016. As a result, MARC faces a 2017 budget deficit for the site of roughly \$11,000.
- 3) MARC is anticipating significantly higher maintenance expenses in 2018 to make up for maintenance that was deferred in 2017 because of a lack of funding. Specifically, MARC anticipates roughly \$2,500 in labor and material expenses to improve the softball field infield, \$750 - \$1,500 in labor and material expenses to repair the dugouts and fencing for both the baseball field and softball field, \$500 - \$1,000 in labor and material expenses to repair the wooden park fencing and \$1,500 in labor and material expenses to improve the gravel parking lot surface. MARC believes the park access road is in need of chip and tar resurfacing (last done in 2011), but has no reliable cost estimate for the work.

MARC anticipates continued funding challenges in 2018 and beyond and expects that usage of the Hess Recreation Area baseball field and softball field will continue to decline as groups move to the recently improved facilities at the Washies' Ballfields and the Echo Fields at the F.Q. Hartman Recreation Area. Usage of the park's trail system, skatepark, pavilion, restrooms and other amenities are expected to remain steady or increase. As a result, MARC requests the permission of the Borough of Danville to make the following changes at the Hess Recreation Area to reduce future maintenance and operating costs at the site and to bring the facility more in line with public demands:

- A) Remove the dugouts and fencing for both the baseball field and softball field, converting the softball field infield to grass. The scrap value of the metal fencing may offset the costs of the labor required to perform the work.
- B) Replace the existing wooden fencing along the parking lot with large boulders left over from the 2011 Hess Recreation Area road reconstruction project. The existing wooden fencing is badly deteriorated and a safety hazard to children who climb upon it. Boulders would require no maintenance and have been used effectively at other MARC-operated properties.
- C) Reduce the area of the fields being mowed from roughly 9.5 acres to 6.5 acres, allowing roughly 3.0 acres of grass to revert to natural vegetation. This would bring the maintained lawn area more in line with actual public demand, allow for special events to continue to use the site and cut annual lawn care expenses.



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Changes would be made as soon as reasonably possible after approval by Danville Borough Council and after any necessary permits or permissions have been secured.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Stoudt
Director, MARC
10/9/17