

Hello, My name is Heidi Shatz, many of you know me as the Powell Parks and Recreation Chair. Most of you know that I am a Registered Nurse but my first degree is in Parks and Recreation Management with a minor in Adventure Education.

At the last board meeting that I was unable to attend I was made aware that some of you put forth that Recreation was not an essential part of this township. Today, I want to highlight the ESSENTIAL role that recreation plays in our township and why it deserves our attention and investment.

Physical Health: Engaging in recreational activities is vital for improving physical fitness, reducing the risk of chronic diseases, and promoting overall physical health, which in turn contributes to a healthier community. Our community.

Mental Health: Recreation provides an essential outlet for relaxation and stress relief, which is crucial for mental well-being. It helps reduce anxiety, depression, and stress levels. In my life the trails have been essential in my fight for my mental health while going through breast cancer, and then when my brother in law died by suicide. I cannot tell you how many times I have walked and biked the trails and just wanted to get outside to clear my head. So please do not tell me that recreation is not essential.

Social Benefits: Recreational activities foster social interaction, strengthening relationships and building a sense of community. Moving to this community as a newcomer is hard. Parks and Recreation activities not only offer our community opportunities to connect but helps new residents find a sense of belonging.

Quality of Life: Recreation enriches life by adding variety, fun, and a break from routine. It allows individuals to explore new interests, learn new skills, and experience personal growth, enhancing the overall quality of life in our township. I am able to take my mother with me on the accessible Thomas Rock Trail and for the first time my mother was able to see the Northern Lights made possible from the platform at Burns Landing. It was an amazing night and I was so grateful for the forethought of accessibility.

Building Community: Recreational activities and events bring people together, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Our community concerts, work bees, celebrations (such as Christmas Lighting and Egg Hunt) provide social interaction and build strong, supportive networks, making our township a more connected place and adds a sense of belonging.

Beautifying the Area: Community-driven recreational projects, such as the soon to be community garden, the native garden, our pocket parks, Thomas Rock, and Draver Park and now the completion of Burns Landing enhance the aesthetic appeal of our neighborhoods. These activities not only improve the environment but also instill pride and ownership among residents, creating a more vibrant and attractive community space.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant increase in outdoor recreational activities. Biking, hiking, and walking became more popular. This surge in outdoor recreation has underscored the importance of accessible and well-maintained public spaces for community health and well-being. We saw this in our community with the increase in trail usage and the high attendance at our first concert post covid. We had the best attendance by far that night.

In conclusion, investing in recreational activities and facilities is not just about fun and games. It is about fostering a healthier, happier, and more connected community. It is about creating spaces where residents can thrive physically, mentally, and socially. And it is about ensuring our township remains a vibrant and attractive place to live.

Thank you for considering these points, and I hope this board will support the Millage that Powell Township Parks and Recreation has put forward. This is about our ENTIRE community. I hope we can put past grudges behind us and all get on board with making our community a better place to recreate for all ages and abilities.

Heidi Shatz