



MEETING NOTES

Project:	East Fallowfield Township Open Space, Recreation & Environmental Resources Plan Update	Project No.:	23002.10
Location:	East Fallowfield Township Building 2264 Strasburg Rd, East Fallowfield, PA 19320	Meeting Date/ Time:	12/07/2023 7:00-9:00 PM
Re:	Committee Meeting #5	Issue Date:	12/14/2023

ATTENDEES:

Scott Swichar, East Fallowfield Township

Peter Simone, Simone Collins (SC)

Pankaj Jobanputra, SC

Michelle Armour, SC

(Please see attached sign-in sheet)

MEETING SUMMARY:

Pete Simone opened the meeting with an update on developments with the Connell site on Mortonville Road.

- The Township has applied for an LSA grant to conduct a Master Plan study for the property. Matching funds are **not** required for this grant.
- The consultant (SC) and the Township have reviewed the Site Control Plan and have been in communication with the property owner, who also inspects and maintains the site, to gather information on the conditions of the site, required maintenance and monitoring.
- Discussion:
 - Committee Member (CM): Are there specific environmental due diligence reports available?
 - PS: Yes. **Scott Swichar to share with the Committee.**

- Needs to be maintained in perpetuity, inspected 1x/year (Connell's inspector currently goes out 2x/year.)
- CM: There is a report out on brownfields in the Delaware Valley. It shows that the majority of these sites have very little instance of harm. Some of these sites are being selected for mixed use. What is the reason for selecting the Connell site for recreation uses?
 - PS: This site is restricted to recreational uses, as mandated by the EPA . Also, with site constraints required to protect the integrity of the site "cap", building foundations would not be feasible on this site. In addition, residential uses must comply with a higher standard. Other factors include the site's location within the floodway/floodplain and the presence of wetlands.
- PS: One question to consider - If the Township does not acquire this site, who could? For example, what if the Brandywine Conservancy took this site and created a place for bird watching site.
 - SS: As of our most recent conversations, the Brandywine Conservancy is not interested in acquiring the site – it is not in their plan.
- CM: Would the woodlands on the site be in jeopardy if the Township gets this grant?
 - PS: No, due to the high presence of floodplain and wetlands; we are not sure that trails could even be put in on the wooded portion of the site.
- CM: Would the fencing have to be ugly? The current chain link fence is not appealing.
 - PS: No, there are options. For example, at Wissahickon Park in Whitpain Township, on the former Bo-Rit superfund site, we are specifying a black estate-style fence. The purpose of the fence is to allow the site to be secured in instances such as post-storm inspections.
- CM: This is a conversation for all stakeholders involved in this site.
 - PS: Conducting a Master Plan study would give the opportunity for that conversation.
- CM: Regarding the parcel in Modena – does Modena need to be consulted?
 - PS: No, Connell does not have to consult with Modena. Also, it is not uncommon for a Township to own parkland physically located within another municipality.
- CM: How much would the wear and tear of traffic (parking lot, kids running around) affect maintenance needs? How much maintenance would be required for active sports fields? How expensive would this be?
 - PS: We do not have a number; but yes, maintenance would be involved.
 - CM: I do not think that is good.
 - PS: We respect that opinion. Consider, however, that the Township currently has no sports fields.
 - CM: There are other sites to consider (which are not contaminated).
- CM: Have there been any P.R. issues with the site in Modena?
 - PS: We are not sure. However, with a site such as this, there is likely to be community concern. For example, at the site in Whitpain Township, "capping" the contaminated material was the only feasible solution. Some in the community wanted the contaminated material trucked out of the site, but this was not feasible. Due to the volume of material and the nature of the

contaminant, this would have created more disruption and increased risk of exposure. Any contaminated site will cause concern. On the other hand, there are hundreds of brownfield and superfund sites that have been repurposed safely.

- CM: I see both sides – the community does not want to bring kids there, and this Committee is hesitant to support this.
- PS: Education is key. People are afraid because they do not know the facts.
- C: How much effort will be required to make the site viable to the public (and ultimately make maintenance worthwhile)?
- CM: When was the last time EPA was involved in the site?
 - PS: We do not know off-hand.
- CM: It looks to me like taxpayers will be hit with the costs of maintenance. Even if we get the grant, the people will be saddled with the maintenance. Maybe in the future we could take this on, but perhaps Connell should sit with the site for now. We are trying to find positive things about this site, which has a volatile history – but at what cost? Is there other land to look at? I think we jumped the gun on this grant application. We said at the last meeting that people are not interested in this site.
 - PS: Submission of the application was approved by the Township.
- PS: Whitpain Township received a large grant for their site because the government is very interested in getting these lands back into use. Maintenance will be required for any new site, whether contaminated or not. We need to consider this community's needs for recreational facilities and open space. We (SC) advocate for open space and its benefits, but this does not mean that you will follow through on all recommendations. SC and Chester County believe open space is valuable to the community, but someone will have to pay for it.
- CM: Considering the fact that stormwater issues continue to increase on Brandywine Creek; if we buy this property, and it erodes and washes contaminants downstream, then the Township would be responsible for that.
 - PS: Ida was the worst storm that we have had, and even then, the damage was minimal. It is true that there could be a more catastrophic storm event in the future.
 - CM: The Township should engage an environmental attorney to weigh in on this.
- CM: If DCNR is so eager to fund these projects, why do they not purchase these sites?
 - PS: DCNR does not deal with small sites. They work on the scale of State Parks.
 - CM: The Brandywine Conservancy is not interested and the County is not interested; I find it interesting that no one else wants to purchase the site.
 - PS: I doubt that a private entity would purchase this site.
 - PS: A question to consider - Years down the road, will the successor to Connell be as responsible a landowner/steward? I would personally trust the government more with this responsibility.
- CM: What are the contaminants on site?
 - PS: PCBs (and lead), which are common in rail yards.

- PS: We can include in the plan that we held this discussion. If you decide not to move forward with this site, we might recommend removing it from the Township Official Map (as proposed open space).

Peter Simone (PS), Pankaj Jobanputra (PJ), and Michelle Armour (MA) led the group through a presentation which included the following elements:

- Public Participation Update
- Benchmarking Review
- Projected Facility Needs
- Potential Open Space & Rec Expansion / Acquisition
- Revised Proposed Trail Connections
- Discussion
- Next Steps

Note: This meeting’s purpose is to come to a consensus agreement on what to include in the draft plan regarding park improvements, acquisitions, and the overall trails plan.

NOTES:

Public Opinion Survey Update

- CM: Why is the pond “unfishable”? There used to be a chainsaw manufacturer in that area, which was deemed a hazard. Could something have infiltrated and poisoned the pond?
 - CM: The pond has not been poisoned, from what I have seen. We have been monitoring the pond; it is shallow and has low oxygen levels due to sedimentation. There has been no money to maintain the pond, and it needs to be dredged.

Community Benchmarking

- CM: Are these communities comparable to East Fallowfield? We are a bedroom community – many of these benchmarking communities have businesses.
 - PS: These are all communities from Pennsylvania and nearby. They were chosen based on their comparable populations, geographical size, population density, and income. While some of them are more developed than East Fallowfield, they serve as a comparison for what facilities other like-municipalities have provided their communities. It is not an exact science but is a point of consideration if the Township wants to be competitive in attracting and retaining residents.
- CM: Do we want to compete with these communities, or is there something else that sets this community apart and attracts residents?
- PS: A question to consider when looking at the population projections for the Township - do you want to provide facilities for the growing future population?

Projected Facility Needs

- Former Middle School / New Elementary School (K-5)
 - CM: The School District (SD) did put the easement for a side path on their plans for the new Elementary School.

- CM: A sidewalk is proposed on the site plan along Route 82 only.
- CM: Does anything prevent the community from using SD fields?
 - PS: Maybe. Their plans currently show one football field and one baseball field. We suggested that they could have more than one of each. This could be a partnership between the SD and the Township.
 - CM: If someone is injured on SD property after school hours, who is liable?
 - PS: The SD would not be liable per the PA Recreation Act, as long as property is reasonably maintained.
- Community Park
 - CM: The original master plan showed the driveway to the secondary parking lot (current gravel overflow lot) turning toward the lot closer to the park entrance. This would help to prevent pedestrian/vehicular conflicts within the park.
 - PS: The topography here may make this infeasible. This is something that would require a closer study.
 - CM: There is a stormwater management (SWM) facility at the corner of Strasburg and Route 82 – near the pickleball location on this image. We would have to manage around that.
 - PS: These images are diagrammatic only and would change in actual design. We would need to factor in SWM in any case.
 - CM: Can swales be shown down by the pickleball/volleyball courts?
 - CM: Could a sports field be placed in the open field at the east side of the park? We have discussed placing a ballfield there and using the existing hill as spectator seating.
 - MA: Solar orientation is a consideration. A little league ball field could likely be placed here in the proper solar orientation and with minimal grading. A soccer field would be a tighter fit if oriented per recommendations and would require more grading.
- Potential Township Building Site
 - CM: I think the plan is for this site to be ½ municipal complex and ½ preserved as open space. Do ballfields qualify as open space?
 - Scott Swichar: Did you account for SWM in this concept?
 - Ps: No, not at this stage. There are different ways to address SWM, such as subsurface facilities under the parking lot, which would economize space.
 - C: Do ballfields require SWM?
 - PS: Yes. This site's pre-development state would likely be counted as meadow, and going from a meadow condition to lawn would require SWM.
 - PS: We will add dedicated parking for the park portion of the site.
 - CM: Could the parking be shared by both the municipal complex and the open space portions of the site?
 - PS: Yes. We would likely need more than what is shown here (approximately 40 spaces).
 - CM: That seems like a lot of parking – would that much be necessary?
 - PS: There are parking requirements for buildings, with number of spaces based upon building square footage. However, the number of spaces provided for parks/open space is at the discretion of the designer/planner. We prefer to be conservative in

our estimates, erring on the side of providing “placeholders” for more, which can be reduced if deemed unnecessary.

- West Chester Road parcel
 - PS: We will show the disc golf with an outline only for the next presentation, to demonstrate to the public that disc golf has minimal impact and can be done within woodlands.
 - CM: Are there restrictions on this property? I believe it was deeded by the HOA to the Township with restrictions on use.
 - **Scott Swichar to check in to deed restrictions and inform SC.**
 - CM: There is no parking shown on this diagram – should there be parking here?
 - PS: Perhaps the best place would be on the curve of Brinton Drive – 10-15 spaces?
 - PS: Consider adding a single unit restroom here. There are many options – automatic locking, etc.

Potential Open Space & Rec Expansion / Acquisition

- Parcel 1 – Strasburg Rd. behind Weaver Mulch
 - CM: This site does not smell great (mulch operation)
 - CM: There is a shallow pond (not in great condition)
- Sisk farm
 - CM: Do you know the topography of this site? It is hilly in places.
 - PS: This can be worked around through grading and creating “benches” to provide level areas for facilities.
- Pond/Barn property Buck run
 - One owner here cut down trees along Dennis Run where someone had planted riparian corridors.
- Elem school site
 - Meadow area to west (clearing) was used by children at school for field day. Fox hunts come through here.
 - Conserved property around the site is privately owned and is up for sale.

General Comments/Questions

- PS: Going forward, the Committee will need to discuss recommendations for sidewalks.
- PS: SC to send the Chester County Return on Environment (ROE) report to the Committee.
- Committee Meeting 6 – In the case of inclement weather, SC will notify Scott who will notify the Committee. The Committee is open to holding the meeting virtually, if necessary.

Next Steps:

- Upcoming Meetings
 - Committee Meeting #6: Thursday, January 25, 2024 @ 7:00-9:00PM*
**In case of inclement weather, meeting to be held virtually.*
 - Public Meeting #3: Thursday, February 29, 2024 @ 7:00-9:00PM
 - Committee Meeting #7: Thursday, April 25, 2024 @ 7:00-9:00PM
 - Public Meeting #4: Thursday, May 30, 2024 @ 7:00-9:00PM

- Committee
 - Provide feedback to SC on items in the Committee Meeting #5 presentation.
 - Public Meetings Schedule Flyer – distribute digital and printed copies.
 - Online Public Participation Postcard – distribute digital and printed copies (Public Opinion Survey and Wikimap QR codes)
 - Share and collect printed copies/submissions for the Public Opinion Survey.
- Simone Collins
 - Finalize Draft Plan
 - Finalize Trails Plan
 - Draft Report and Recommendations
 - Conduct upcoming Committee Meetings
 - Prepare for next Public Meeting

This report represents the Professional's summation of the proceedings and is not a transcript. Unless written notice of any correction or clarification is received by the Professional within ten days of issue, the report shall be considered factually correct and shall become part of the official project record.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Armour". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Michelle Armour
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

East Fallowfield Township Open Space, Recreation & Environmental Resources Plan Update

Committee Meeting #5 - December 7, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Committee	Role	Email
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wilson T. Lambert	Chairman Board of Supervisors	wlambert@eastfallowfield.org
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Domboski	Chairman Planning Commission	mike.domboski@comcast.net
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