



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:	05/22/2023 7:30-9:30 PM
Re:	Committee Meeting #1	Issue Date:	07/28/2023

ATTENDEES:

Scott Swichar, East Fallowfield Township
Peter Simone, Simone Collins (SC)
Pankaj Jobanputra, SC
Michelle Armour, SC
Kate Clark, Chester County Planning Commission
(Please see attached sign-in sheet)

MEETING SUMMARY:

PRESENTATION

Pete Simone (PS), Michelle Armour (MA) and Pankaj Jobanputra of Simone Collins (SC) led the group through a brief presentation which included the following elements:

- Introductions of Project Team and Experience
- The Importance of Planning for Current Needs and Future Growth
- Project Schedule and Scope
- Public Participation

- Committee Meetings, Public Meetings, Focus Group Meetings, Key Person Interviews, Web-Based Public Opinion Survey, WikiMap
- Existing Data and Plans
- Site Photo Tour

NOTES:

- Nina Pietro – resident to be added to Steering Committee.
- Brainstorming
 - Committee Member (CM): **Fact** - The existing master plan for the other half of East Fallowfield Township (EFT) Park includes fields. I like this plan. Someone suggested that we need a tot lot.
 - CM: **Fact/Question** - On the Comprehensive Plan, there were proposed connections to the Chester Valley Trail (CVT). I thought CVT was in Exton?
 - Peter Simone (PS): It's planned to go into town; into Coatesville.
 - Kate Clark (KC): Plans are to connect to existing terminus of the CVT all the way across the County, we have plans on website, individual municipalities are listed.
 - PS: If we connect to the train station, we will connect to the CVT as well.
 - CM: **Comment** - When I attended this month's Township meeting, my understanding that this plan is about trails. What you (SC) presented was a very broad plan, quite overwhelming; went from something narrow to something broad. Narrow down concepts, goals. My understanding was something very narrow, now something very broad.
 - PS: SC will help you figure out where you're going, maybe we will send out scope to everyone; it is very broad. SC will be very efficient. This plan is to be a blueprint for the future.
 - CM: **Comment** – In the Flats in Coatesville, there has been discussion for years about the Velodrome (bicycle destination).
 - PS: I have read that it is moving forward; seemed like it was almost definite.
 - CM: Will it be open to the public?
 - PS: We are working on a plan in Upper Macungie where the Trexler Velodrome is located. If it happens, will it be good?
 - Kate Collar (KC): At the County level, we received a land development plan for it.

- PS: Seems like a real project. The one in Trexlertown can be used by the public at certain times.
- CM: **Goal** – Would like to see all open space in the Township clearly labeled, regardless of use.
- CM: **Comment** – Concerned about passive improvements; do not have a large budget for maintenance
 - PS: We try to be conscious of maintenance money; there is a balance. Passive Open Space costs less to maintain. For example, the Beagle Club site likely has many invasive plants which are not of high value.
- CM: Thinking about preserves, like White Clay Creek.
- CM (Park and Rec Chair): **Goal** – Would like to see improvements to EFT Park – pond dredging, ADA access, trails improvements (steep trails).
 - PS: We specifically ask about the park on survey.
- CM: **Question** – Do we have an idea of how many people use the park? Should that be looked into?
 - PS: We could get volunteers to do counts; depending upon weather, there will be different numbers.
 - Scott Swichar (SS): We look at the parking lot to do counts. When we see the lot is full, the question comes up; do we need more parking?
 - PS: Other thing that will affect this is if you create additional facilities, like a dog park, which can increase usage. Let's use existing resources well. We will benchmark other communities with comparable populations and socioeconomic data; we will compare EFT to these other communities' parks and open space systems. There are also published standards for active recreation. These will give you a "temperature" as to how EFT is doing. There are no standards for passive recreation. We will work with the Committee and the Township to see what other people are doing.
- PS noted that in Solebury Township, Bucks County, 39% of the land is preserved from development.
- CM: **Question** – Solebury has preserved their land as is?
 - PS: Yes, this requires having money, because you're getting tax break and not developing land. West Bradford floated a bond issue for \$26 million to purchase the old hospital site for open space.

- CM: **Question** – Do police have clickers that tell you how many people drive on road? Maybe have that?
 - CM: **Question** – Years ago, they did road surveys; do they still do that?
 - PS: Nowadays they will do a traffic impact study. Traffic grows a little bit every year, and the pandemic changed many things; if you have an office-type job you are likely working from home. My guess is that nothing we propose will radically increase traffic. Let's say you have some active sports fields; you may have a peak on a Saturday.
- CM: **Fact** - Downingtown dog park is often packed.
- CM: **Fact/Question** – You (SC) mentioned “maintain”. Caln Township has an open space management plan. Will you give recommendations to maintain what we will do? Can the Township adopt what Caln has and tailor it for use here?
 - PS: Depending on the facility, maintenance varies. Many communities, like Kenneth Square, have a recreation authority; they've taken over maintenance. Every community does it differently.
 - SS: **Fact** – Public Works maintains parks.
 - PS: The Township will probably need to bring in seasonal labor. SC can give you ballpark for maintenance costs. Maybe you want to separate numbers. Many communities go to a percentage of Earned Income Tax (EIT) to help fund parks and rec. Not a perfect formula. We will come up with a list of priorities and how to fund it moving forward.
- CM: **Comment** – I do not think you have the police property on the list of Township properties.
 - PS: Yes, we will add that; it might make sense to consolidate.
- CM: **Question** – Does the Township maintain the open space that it has now?
 - PS: Not much is happening on the Goosetown Road property. There likely are invasive plants, spotted lantern flies, deer, etc.
- CM: **Fact** – Deer are a problem in this Township. If you want natural areas to have high ecological health, you need to do management.
 - CM: **Concept** – At some point, maybe culling them is a strategy.
- PS: Does the Committee have ideas as to where connections might be?

- CM: **Fact** – We are poorly connected. We designed a connector from the east to the west side of the park, with a bridge and paved trails. It was very expensive.
- CM: **Question** – Understanding park paths better – what about bike paths? Is there a cost to the Township?
 - PS: Yes, there is a trade-off. Do you want a connection and want it to be maintained, or keep a natural trail? The number one issue is safety; trails need to be designed to standards so they are safe.
- CM: **Question** – How do you make a bike trail on Route 82?
 - PS: We will give you examples; a “Trails 101.” Depending on how much right-of-way is available, you can have an improved shoulder, then bike lane, then protected bike lane. Cyclists are permitted on all roads except limited access highways and motorists need to give them 4 feet of clearance.
- CM: **Fact** – We have a train station on the border of EFT and Caln; Thorndale Station. What was the rationale of creating a trail connection to Coatesville?
 - PS: Whoever did the master plan probably saw Route 82 as a direct route, but we will look at Thorndale.
 - CM: **Comment** – Think Ott chose Coatesville maybe because it is an Amtrak station.
 - PS: You have residential neighborhoods where some may go to Caln and others use Amtrak.
- CM: **Question** – Will people have facilities to charge e-bikes?
 - PS: We are planning for the future, and things will change. Our office is in Norristown, and the connection from the Schuylkill River Trail to the Chester Valley Trail was recently completed across the street from our office. We see continuous growth on the trail. The trail from Valley Forge National Historic Park to Philadelphia took 25 years. We (the U.S.) are in the infancy of bike trail planning; Europe is decades ahead.
 - CM: **Comment** – In Europe, the cities and towns are much more accommodating to bicycles.
 - PS: We are bike trail advocates. The points you brought up about safety are important now.

- CM: **Partners** – Modena and Caln should be partners. The West Chester Road open space site butts up to Caln. There is a development there, and the road ends going toward the junction with us at Eagleston Blvd.
 - PS: We did the transportation plan for Caln.
 - CM: **Partners** – Put in all neighbors as partners.
- PS: The Comprehensive Plan is a big document; in that goes this Recreation Plan, this is part of the Comprehensive Plan.
- CM: **Fact** – Being consistent with Landscapes3 is important. The Brandywine Greenway followed the trail shown on the Official Map.
 - KC: The Brandywine Conservancy did a plan.
 - PS: Brandywine Greenway Plan is a visionary plan. The “rub” comes in when you have to acquire hundreds of easements. If we can make something safe on the Creek along the brownfield site, it would be a great recreational addition.
- CM: **Fact** – The proposed Misty Loop Trail goes near an exceptional value stream; there are some areas of high value.
 - PS: Trails come in all types. If an area has high ecological value, not every trail will be paved; some can be earthen paths. Not every trail can be made ADA accessible. The facility needs to be designed to fit the environment.
- CM: **Partners** – PECO, DCNR, Chester County Natural Lands Trust should be partners.
- PS: If the Beagle Club property were preserved as open space, a conservation easement could be placed on it. Natural Lands Trust is an expert at this.
- CM: **Fact** – There’s a 99-year lease on Equivine Farm, on Strasburg.
 - PS: We will look at it.
- CM: **Fact** – Goosetown Rd property has restrictions on use: (gazebo/parking only).
- Brainstorming Cards
 - Goals
 - Master Plan
 - Facts
 - West Chester Road is a short-cut
 - Existing Master Plan for EFT Park
 - Future Velodrome destination

- Police Property
- Deer hits on West Chester Road
- Concepts
 - Comprehensive Plan proposed connection to Chester Valley Trail
 - All open space clearly labeled
 - Passive recreation/low maintenance
 - Preserves
 - EFT Park: ADA-accessible playground
 - EFT Park: Pond renovation
 - EFT Park: Walkway improvements
 - EFT Park: More parking
 - EFT Park: Police car/traffic counter
 - Take traffic impacts into consideration
 - Open Space Management Plan
 - Deer culling
 - Connectors needed
 - EFT Park: DCNR grant – bridge and paved trails
 - Trail improvements – cost \$
 - Safe bike routes (ex. Route 82)
 - Thorndale train station on border w/ Caln
 - E-Bike facilities (and security)
 - Coatesville train station (Amtrak)
 - Brandywine Conservancy Trail Plan
 - Misty Loop Trail as low-impact foot path
 - Misty Loop Trail runs along high value stream
 - Equivine Farm
- Partners
 - Caln Township
 - Modena Borough
 - All neighbors
 - DCNR

- Natural Lands Trust
- PECO (partnership grant)
- Next Steps:
 - Upcoming Meetings
 - Committee Meeting #2: Wednesday, June 14, 2023 @ 7:00-9:00PM
 - Public Meeting #1: Monday, June 26, 2023 @ 7:00-9:00PM
 - Committee (to-do)
 - Review draft survey and provide additional feedback via email by Monday, June 5. (Survey will go “live” on June 26)
 - Simone Collins (to-do)
 - Continue project mapping
 - Continue to review existing plans and reports
 - Refine Web-Based Opinion Survey
 - Finalize WikiMapping site

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 #1 - May 22, 2023, 7:30 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teri Dickerson Dickinson	Chairman Park & Recreation Committee	tad411@comcast.net
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tanner Burns	Member of Environmental Advisory Committee	tannerburns1011@gmail.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jeanne Berlin	Member of Environmental Advisory Committee	berlinx5@gmail.com ; berlinx5@comcast.net
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