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## MEETING NOTES

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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:	09/28/2023 7:00-9:00 PM
Re:	Public Meeting #2	Issue Date:	10/30/2023

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### ATTENDEES:

Scott Swichar, East Fallowfield Township (EFT)  
Denise Verderosa, EFT  
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 (PJ) of Simone Collins (SC) led the group through a brief presentation which included the following elements:

- Introduction
- Mission Statement, Goals & Objectives – Draft
- Public Participation Update
- Benchmarking

- Parks, Open Space, Township & School District Map
- Park Service Areas / Gaps
- Potential Open Space & Rec Expansion / Acquisition
- Trails & Connectivity 101
- Conceptual Trail Connections
- Review of Township Community Park Master Plan
- Discussion
- Next Steps

## NOTES:

- Comment: I like all the ideas. My concern is about bike trails; undesirables coming in from outside, security issues.
  - PS: That is often a concern. Crimes do happen on trails, but we don't find it to be higher than in the general community. Also, these connections are local trails – not regional.
  - Comment: I was on bike trails everyday in Colorado when I was younger – I loved them.
  - PS: We will explore more of the off-road trails.
- Question: Is this information posted online?
  - PS: This presentation will be on website. Also feel free to call or email us at SC.
- Question: How many people have taken the survey?
  - PS: About 270 – that is pretty good for a community of this size. We find the web survey is a pretty good barometer.
- Question: Does the survey ask if people actually own property?
  - PS: It asks if they live in the Township. There are not many apartments here, so my guess is that the majority of survey respondents are homeowners – likely to reflect overall renters/homeowners ratio in census. Also, we want to give everyone an equal voice. Renters are not necessarily “transients”. Also of note, DCNR funds are generated by property sales taxes.
  - Comment: It sounds like easements are part of the long-term plan, and those are relevant to property owners, so I'm curious about the weight being given to people whose properties may be subject to an easement.
  - PS: Easements involve a long and complicated process. Ex.: The Beagle Club property has been on the Township's official map as proposed open space since 2018, and nothing has happened yet. The Goosetown Road parcel was on the official map and the Township did buy that. It is a negotiated and long process. As years pass, different boards of supervisors may or may not have interest in pursuing recommendations of this plan.
- Question: What is your (SC's) role?

- PS: We were hired by the Township to plan for things looking at the future of parks and open space. We will give our best advice based on experience and, frankly, sometimes governing bodies take our advice, sometimes not. It is a recommendation. This document will have no legal teeth; it will be a planning guide.
- Question: Is “greenway” a generic term, or is that specific to the Brandywine Conservancy?
  - PS: It is a generic term. We need to look at your ordinances. For example, tree replacement ordinance – we might look at that and make recommendations. These ordinances are especially important along waterways. Township residents have well water, yes? These ordinances protect water quality – trees and other riparian vegetation help to clean and cool water. The Brandywine Greenway plan is a generational plan. Our recommendations may be more specifically about ordinances.
  - Comment: I think our entire township is in the Conservancy’s Greenway.
  - PS: That is a broader plan; I am talking more specifics with protections.
- Question: Can you address acquiring of land?
  - PS: People get concerned about eminent domain. It happens, but it is rare. No official wants to do it. But without it, you would not have schools, roads, etc., for the public good. Realistically, there are all kinds of scenarios. A municipality does not necessarily need an official map. A township can address a landowner and ask if they want to sell. What we are doing with the open space parcel map of potential expansion / acquisition is to address the deficiencies in the Township. By having parks near where people live, there can be close connections. If we identify 5-7 parcels, the Township might acquire one or two; it may be too expensive, or the property owner is not willing, etc. Here’s an example of negotiations with parcels on the official map: if a parcel marked on the official map for future open space is proposed to become residential development by a developer, the Township can negotiate with the developer for more compact units and more open space, etc. There are cases where residential developers create trails/open space that are not taxpayer funded but are open to the public.
- Question: Will the plan have a priority of recommendations? For example, in the park service gaps map, the one to the south of Mortonville Road is not densely populated so would not seem to be a high priority.
  - PS: There may not be priorities for specific parcels for acquisition; there will be more general recommendations in this regard. Other categories will have more specific priorities – park amenities, etc. However, in terms of sites – the brownfield site on Mortonville Road could be considered a high priority because of its high potential for use as open space/recreation (the only permitted use after remediation and monitoring is recreational).

- Question: Regarding bike trails and the Township’s challenging topography, winding narrow roads, etc.; can we safely accommodate use for a growing population?
  - PS: E-bikes are starting to change things – making topography easier to travel by bicycle.
  - Question: What about all bicyclists?
  - PS: PA state law requires a 4’ passing distance. There may not be many options in much of the Township. For example, on Strasburg Road, there may be opportunities to increase the shoulder by a few feet to make it safer to ride, but there may be no room along other areas on Strasburg and other roads.
  - Comment: Yes, the bridge on Strasburg is scary to ride.
  - PS: We will winnow down the routes before the next round.
- Question: Is identifying funding mechanisms in your (SC’s) scope?
  - PS: We will make recommendations. Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) gave over \$70 million in grant funding last year (more than a typical year). Dept. of Community and Economic Development (DCED), Chester County, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) are other sources of funding.
  - Comment: Thinking less about grants and more about revenue stream. What are other municipalities doing? Tax for open space, transfer of deeds, etc.?
  - PS: Here’s an example. We’re working in Upper Mount Bethel Township, they have a nature preserve and trail. They’re small, but they have a fund for acquisition, development, and maintenance. They can match this money to grant funding.
  - PS: In another example, Upper Saucon had an earned income tax referendum – failed at first, but was passed a few years later. The money goes into an open space fund.
  - PS: Another good example is from where I live, in Westtown Township, where residents overwhelmingly voted in favor of a referendum to float a \$22 million bond to help purchase Crebilly Farm.

## Next Steps:

- Upcoming Meetings
  - Public Meeting #3: Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 7:00-9:00PM
  - Public Meeting #4: Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 7:00-9:00PM
- Attendees
  - Please take and share the **Opinion Survey** with friends and organizations:



<https://qrco.de/EastFallowfieldRecPlan-Survey>

- Please provide feedback on the **WikiMap** and share with friends and organizations:



<https://grco.de/EastFallowfieldRecPlan-Wikimap>

- Simone Collins
  - Continue analysis
    - Continue analysis
    - Continue administration/maintenance/programming review
    - Refine Trails Plan
    - Conduct Focus Groups
    - Continue Key Person Interviews
    - 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", written in a cursive style.

Michelle Armour  
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE