

**WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP PARK AND OPEN SPACE BOARD
MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Members Present (attendance indicated by an “X”):

X	Marshall Bleefeld	X	Brian Heljenek – Alternate
X	Carol Christ	X	Robert Irvine
X	Charles Christine	X	Susan Mudambi
X	Chris Cimini - Alternate	X	Alex Simon - Alternate
X	Angela Dougherty	X	Nancy Thillet
	John Elliott	X	Township Representatives: Kurt Baker, Courtney Meehan
X	Sandy Feltes		

This was a virtual Meeting.

Meeting called to order at 7:34 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Feltes took roll call.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES

After a review of the minutes from the February meeting, Mr. Christine moved to approve the minutes. His motion was seconded by Mr. Irvine. The motion passed unanimously.

III. DISCUSS SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Environmental Sustainability Program: Trails, parks, and open space. Charles Christine, Chris Cimini, Sandy Feltes, Brian Heljenek, Susan Mudambi.

Capital Projects: Working with the budget and presenting to other board members. Marshall Bleefeld, Carol Christ, Nancy Thillet, John Elliott.

Mermaid Lake MSDP: Sandy Feltes, Angela Dougherty.

Deer and Geese Management: Robert Irvine, Alex Simon, John Elliott. Mike Richino is staff liaison. Additional members include Lt. Bill Armstrong of the Whitpain Police Department, and John Ferro from Wissahickon Trails.

Liaison to Shade Tree Commission: Charles Christine, Susan Mudambi (alternate). Mike Richino is staff liaison.

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee: Sandy Feltes, Angela Dougherty, Marshall Bleefeld.

IV. DISCUSS PLANS FOR DEVELOPING “FRIENDS OF” TYPE GROUPS UNDER ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE AS PART OF PLANNED COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Once established, the subcommittees will recruit residents to volunteer and serve on the committee. The goal is to have this completed by the end of the year or early 2022.

V. **UPDATES**

Mermaid Property

Ms. Feltes provided an update for the Mermaid Lake Committee. A meeting of the Mermaid Comprehensive Planning Committee was held on 3/11/21. The consultants presented four initial concepts which were: Concept A: Passive Recreation; Concept B: Clustered Active Recreation; Concept C: Dispersed Active Recreation; and Concept D: Limited Active Recreation. The concepts envisioned different amounts and locations of open space and active recreation within the main portion of Mermaid and the additional plot across Arch Street Road. The types of activities discussed were indoor athletic facility, indoor/outdoor event space, pool, open meadows, retention, and removal of “mermaid lake”, trails, fitness areas, game courts, open play fields and a spray park. Also discussed were potential traffic issues and buffers from residential areas. The consultants will narrow the four concepts to three concepts and present them at a public meeting scheduled for April 12, 2021.

Shade Tree Commission

Mr. Christine provided Shade Tree Commission update. The Grow Ambler Greener organization would like to plant trees in both West Ambler Park and West Side Park.

Shade Tree Commission 5-year plan: Whitpain forests as “carbon bank”. Whitpain as “carbon neutral” township; no further details provided. Re-forest turnpike corridor.

Canopy Study: Currently collecting information. Whitpain has lost 300 acres of canopy over the last 10 years.

Mermaid Lake Park: Plant trees on unused lot across Jolly Road next to turnpike.

Development proposed: Arborcrest – 133 townhouses on site zoned for institutional research will clear 11 acres of woodland. This may violate Whitpain Woods Protection Ordinance. Motion to oppose Arborcrest Development passed unanimously.

Planting Plan for Centre Square Park: scheduled for 2021.

Centre Square Park Inclusive Playground Construction

Mr. Baker is working with the consultants to get the application to the Montgomery County Conservation District submitted for expedited review. Once approved, the Township will go out to bid on Phase 1A for removal of the dead trees and invasive plants. The Township will be working with the Shade Tree Commission to make the area more sustainable.

The Township will begin researching playground manufacturing companies to design pod 1. The goal is to start construction of pod 1 by March 2022.

The Township will be going out for proposals from consultants for Phase 2 which is the development and construction preparation and oversight of pods 2 and 4. The Township received a \$250,000 DCNR grant for this project and has four years to complete the work, in addition they will be researching capital campaign ideas.

Trails

PECO Trail - The results of PECO’s Power Grid Study should be completed in September, which will determine if the Township can move forward with the trail construction.

All other trail projects are ongoing.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Comprehensive Recreation Plan Update

Mr. Baker invited the Park and Open Space Board to the Comprehensive Plan Update meeting on April 6, at 6 pm. Ann Toole, of Toole Recreation will be presenting the draft plan. This plan will include the consultant's evaluations and recommendations for the department for the next ten years pertaining to recreation, parks, open space, and trails.

Earth Day

The Parks and Recreation Department is planning Earth Day events for the community. On Thursday, April 22, at 5pm, there will be a Crossways Trail walk. Attendees will meet at the trailhead parking in the Montgomery County Community College parking lot and walk to the bridge and back, approximately 2 miles.

On Sunday, April 25, the Shade Tree Commission will be hosting their Tree Giveaway event at Prophecy Creek Park. The giveaway will start at 8am and trees are available on a first come, first served basis to Whitpain Township residents.

On Sunday, April 25, from 12pm-2pm, there will be a park clean-up at Prophecy Creek Park. Volunteers should bring work or gardening gloves, wear long pants, and long sleeve shirts. All other supplies will be provided. This is an opportunity to enjoy the park and walk the mown trails. There is a tentative Blue Bell Rotary Club Tree Dedication Ceremony before the park clean-up at 12pm.

Lastly, the Parks and Recreation Department is coordinating with the Wissahickon School District and the Parochial schools for an Earth Day video contest. Winning videos will be posted on the Township website during the month of May. There will also be a tree planting ceremony the week of April 19, at Shady Grove Elementary.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 26, 2021, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Thillet
Secretary, Park and Open Space Board
Department

Courtney Meehan, CPRP
Program Coordinator, Parks and Recreation