

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

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

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

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

This was a virtual Meeting.

Meeting called to order at 7:31 p.m.

**I. ROLL CALL**

Chair Elliott took roll call.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES**

After a review of the minutes from the May meeting, Mr. Christine moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Ms. Feltes. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

Environmental Sustainability Program:

Members: Charles Christine, Chris Cimini, Sandy Feltes, Brian Heljenek, Susan Mudambi.

Ms. Mudambi presented priorities for 2021. See “Sustainability Subcommittee Priorities for 2021” attached. Ms. Mudambi made a motion to approve the recommendations for Environmental sustainability subcommittees priorities for 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Capital Projects:

Members: Marshall Bleefeld, Carol Christ, Nancy Thillet, John Elliott.

PECO TRAIL – Mr. Baker will be in contact with PECO regarding a timeline for the development of the trail. The grant the Township secured for the construction of the trail is time sensitive.

The solar score boards have been installed at Wentz Run Park.

Mermaid Lake MSDP:

Members: Sandy Feltes, Angela Dougherty.

Ms. Feltes provided update.

Online survey received 1256 responses, 88% were Whitpain residents, 94% chose walking and hiking in parks as number one priority. Concept B (Active/Passive) was the choice most people selected.

There was a public meeting on June 7th. The meeting had 90 attendees.

The Consultants have come up with a refined plan using all the input received.

There is a list of four priorities for Mermaid:

1. Remove existing pool and dam
2. This will be a park for all age groups
3. Preserve the history of Mermaid
4. Be good neighbors to the adjoining developments

Ms. Feltes went over the site plan, explaining all the proposed changes to the Mermaid Lake property.

The consultants will present this plan to the Board of Supervisors on July 20th. The project will then enter Phase 3 with a detailed plan to present at a Public Meeting in November.

Ms. Mudambi stated her concern regarding pedestrian access from the surrounding neighborhoods. She requested that pedestrian access be put into the conceptual plan before it goes to the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Mudambi asked Chair Elliott if the Board could provide opinions regarding Arch Street Parcel. Chair Elliott will send out an email poll regarding the Arch Street Parcel and include the four concepts.

#### Deer and Wildlife Management:

Members: Robert Irvine, Alex Simon, John Elliott. Mike Richino is staff liaison. John Ferro from Wissahickon Trails, and Lt. Armstrong from the Whitpain Police Department.

This subcommittee will be renamed Deer and Wildlife Management, to encompass fox and coyote in Township parks. The subcommittee held their first meeting last Monday. The plan is to research what other municipalities and golf courses are doing to control the population of these animals. Mike Richino will be working on writing the Mission Statement.

#### Liaison to Shade Tree Commission (STC):

Members: Charles Christine, Susan Mudambi (alternate). Mike Richino is staff liaison.

Mr. Christine provided update from June 2 Shade Tree Commission meeting. The STC discussed reducing tree order for 2022 giveaway. COVID may have dampened demand for trees this year.

Turnpike reforestation will focus on where Turnpike intersects N. Wales Rd. There is possibility for \$55,000 grant funds for this project. Commission will seek estimate for project.

Discuss approaching WRA to help fund forestation. Trees on sideline of playing fields would provide shade for spectators. No decision.

Discuss plan for tree planting at Centre Square Park. John Casani reported that the STC will have input to plan.

The Tree Ordinance Committee is preparing a report.

STC is developing a presentation to the Whitpain Board of Supervisors on Deer Management. There is some debate within STC regarding recommending deer destruction or deer birth control. The group is leaning toward a combination of both approaches. A STC resolution was moved as follows:

“The Shade Tree Commission recommends Whitpain Township engage in active deer management in accordance with plans of surrounding Townships.” The motion passed unanimously.

STC is considering a survey of recipients of past tree giveaways to determine the survival rate of the trees.

Comprehensive Plan Update Committee:

Members: Sandy Feltes, Angela Dougherty, Marshall Bleefeld.

Mr. Baker stated that the Plan was approved. There will be a copy of the plan at the front desk for the public to review. It will also be posted on the Township website, but due to the size of the file, it will not include the graphics and pictures.

**IV. ADDITIONAL UPDATES**

Whitpain Police and Parks & Recreation Golf Outing, June 21, 2021

The Parks and Recreation Department will be co-hosting the Whitpain Golf Classic on Monday, June 21. They are looking for event volunteers.

Erbs Mill Park

The permit was submitted to L&I, and it’s expected to be approved in the next few days. The construction of the playground is scheduled to start in early July,

**V. FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS ABOUT 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.

Ms. Mudambi suggested that a date be selected for the next volunteer clean-up.

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 22, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Thillet  
Secretary, Park and Open Space Board

Courtney Meehan, CPRP  
Program Coordinator, Parks and Recreation Dept.

## Sustainability Subcommittee Priorities for 2021

As a subcommittee, and as the Park & Open Space Board, our role is to provide information or recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding guiding principles or assumptions, policy or ordinance changes, and funding and program priorities. We take both a short term and a long-term perspective. The following four recommendations for 2021 emerge from a recognition that walkability is consistently the highest priority voiced by Township residents, and that parks, trails, and open spaces are intended for use by people of all ages and abilities.

### 1. Mermaid Development Plan

- High priority of pedestrian and bike access to Mermaid
  - 3 adjacent neighborhoods (Blue Bell Villas 240 houses, Mermaid Estates 95 houses, Shepard Drive 50 houses)
  - Wentz Road and Jolly Rd
    - Wentz Road neighborhoods (235 houses)
    - PECO Trail connection
  - Wentz Run Trail connection (extend existing Jolly Rd sidewalk to go under the turnpike to the Arch St. parcel)
- Fewer impervious surfaces, more meadows and tree canopy, and a healthy stream corridor
- Priority of reduced mowing, low pesticide and herbicide usage
- Environmental sustainability review of all proposed water play and pool areas

### 2. Trail Systems

- High priority of the completion and extension of the Township Trails Master Plan, including the PECO line trail
- High priority for more ongoing, scheduled, and budgeted trail maintenance
- Regular schedule of volunteer trail and stream clean up days 2-3 times a year, in conjunction with scouts and community organizations

### 3. Open Space

- Periodic, proactive reviews of open space identified in the comprehensive plan
  - vulnerability for development
  - potential for easements, protection, or land donations
- Periodic reviews of existing Township open space and parks
  - public awareness, access, and use
  - sustainability of maintenance practices
  - Township energy practices, including potential for solar power, green roofs, etc.

### 4. Biodiversity education and celebration

- More small informational signs about trees in Township parks
- Ongoing website and social media content and programs about ecological topics such as wildlife management, storm water management, and invasive insects and plants
- Annual bio blitz or open space challenge in the fall, in possible partnership with a nature group