

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

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

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

X	Charles Christine	X	Brian Heljenek
X	Chris Cimini	X	Susan Mudambi
X	Angela Dougherty	X	Alex Simon
X	John Elliott	X	Nancy Thillet
X	Sandy Feltes	X	Township Representatives: Kurt Baker, Courtney Meehan

Meeting called to order at 7:32pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Feltes took roll call.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

After a review of the minutes from the January 2022 meeting, Mr. Christine moved to approve the minutes. Motion was seconded by Mr. Heljenek. The motion passed unanimously.

III. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

A. Environmental Sustainability Program

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

Open Space

A new plan for 795 Jolly Road (Parcel D) has been submitted for review by the Zoning Hearing Board. Originally scheduled for review by the Zoning Board on February 17, 2022, the plan review has been postponed. A new date for review is not yet known.

Located near the intersection of Arbor Way/Jolly Road and Union Meeting Road (portion of the Unisys/Arborcrest Corporate Campus), this parcel consists of 26.6 acres of mature woodlands, playing fields, and a walking trail. The plan shows 4 building (34,936 square feet each) with a total building footprint of 139,744 square feet, along with necessary parking, loading and other appurtenances. Mr. Baker agreed to try to get additional details and provide an update for the P&OS Board.

Liberty Bell Trail

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) is working with the Circuit Trails organization. Circuit Trails connect people to regional destinations. They are typically 8-10 feet wide and are intended for multiple uses including biking, walking, and running. The Township is currently revisiting a feasibility study from the 1990s for the Liberty Bell Trail. This trail stretches across thirteen different municipalities, with each municipality being responsible for their section. Ms. Mudambi volunteered to assist with the Liberty Bell Trail project.

PECO Line Trail

The Township is still waiting to hear from PECO before they can proceed. This trail will connect Wentz Run Park to Route 202 (Centre Square Park).

Trailhead at Crescent Line Drive and Montgomery County Community College

Mr. Baker is working on the final design. Plans will include switch back gates, landscaping, and signage. The trailhead is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2022.

B. Mermaid Lake MSDP

Mr. Baker is meeting with consultants who completed Master Site Plan to discuss moving forward with Phase 1 Construction Documents. Phase 1 includes:

- Removal of dam and pool
- Stream bank work, identify flood plain
- Daylighting of small creek
- Design new entrance off Jolly Road
- Pickleball courts
- Improvements to structures for camp program
- Inclusive playground pods
- Estimated cost for Phase 1 is approximately \$6-\$8 million

Phase 2 of the environmental study was completed. Tests confirmed minor ground contamination from old golf course. The Township will go out to bid for remediation and removal. Nothing hazardous to the ground water in the area was discovered.

C. Capital Projects

Members: Nancy Thillet, John Elliott.

No updates.

D. Deer and Wildlife Management

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

Mr. Elliott provided update. The committee unanimously supported a proposed letter from the Shade Tree Commission to the BOS. The letter included a list of best practices for deer population management done by neighboring communities. They are proposing a 1-year Deer Management Pilot Program in Armentrout Preserve. They are recommending archery to control the deer population, and using the model currently used by Wissahickon Trails and Delaware Valley Wildlife Management.

Mr. Christine moved to support the letter and forward to the BOS on behalf of the P&OS Board. Motion seconded by Mr. Heljenek. The motion passed unanimously.

E. Liaison to Shade Tree Commission (STC)

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

Report attached.

IV. PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- April 21 - Earth Day event with School District, Holy Rosary Regional School, and St. Helena School. This event will be held in-person for the first time since 2019.
- April 24 – Tree Giveaway at Prophecy Creek Park
- April 30 – Earth Day 5k and Fun Walk. Members of the P&OS Board are encouraged to volunteer and/or participate.
- May 20 - Drive in Movie at Mermaid Lake Park: Ghost Busters

- May 22 - Outdoor Market at Montgomery County Community College. Event run with Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation.

Visit www.whitpainrec.com for all programs and events.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Adopt-A-Trail

Mr. Baker reviewed several Adopt-A-Trail programs from various other counties and municipalities. All seem to have a one-year adoption period, then subject to renewal. He is planning to develop an Adopt-A-Trial program for Whitpain Township and is hopeful to have a draft finalized for the next meeting.

Meadow Project

The Parks and Recreation Department is hosting an Earth Day 5k and Fun Walk on Saturday, April 30, at Prophecy Creek Park. Race proceeds will benefit Township meadow projects.

Friends of Whitpain Parks

Ms. Feltes, Ms. Mudambi, Ms. Meehan, Mr. Baker held a preliminary meeting.

The subcommittee is researching other “Friends of Parks” programs, specifically relying on guidelines written by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation as a resource. Next meeting scheduled for March 10, 2022.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Cimini
Secretary, Park and Open Space Board

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

FROM: Charles Christine
TO: Park and Open Space Commission
RE: Shade Tree Commission Meeting 02/02/2022

Present: Mike Richino for the Township, John Casini, Edgar David, Celia Cameron, Mark Eberle, Tim Knowles, Andy Meehan. Whitpain Supervisor Joyce Keller also attended.

Reorganization: Edgar David again elected President. Remaining officer election deferred to next meeting.

Ms. Keller reported on Township Environmental Advisory Committee. She noted the function of the Committee is to provide guidance on Township environmental sustenance matters.

Mr. Richino reported the 2022 budget for the Shade Tree Commission (STC) is \$ 92,550.00, down from the 2021 allocation of 104,550.00. No one seemed to mind. There was a discussion of whether or not the STC could move money between designated portions of the STC budget. Mr. Richino gave a guarded and qualified yes, counseling avoidance of excessive moves. There was a weak suggestion that money be moved from the April 24 tree give-away. This was quickly rejected. There was a suggestion that trees not claimed on April 24 be planted elsewhere. This was rejected. The price of tree deer protection material has increased. Mr. Edgar will research to see if a budget move is required.

Mr. Casini reviewed the draft tree registration application. STC members agree the application is excessively complicated and needs simplification. Mr. Casini will work on a revised draft.

Mr. Knowles suggested that money could be reallocated by limiting the Tree Heritage Program. The program is time consuming. There is a concern that this action could impact the Grove City Award which in turn could imperil the Tree City designation. It may be possible to eliminate the Grove City Award without impacting Tree City. Mr. Knowles will research this issue.

Planting plans for Township Parks were reviewed. STC will use Armentrop and Prophecy Creek plans as models for planting all Township parks. Mr. Edgar will walk the two properties to gain information as to desired tree sites. He will need assistance in determining property boundary markers. Mr. Richino will provide aerial photos of the properties showing boundaries.

Erbs Mill: Mr. Edgar and Casini will provide Kurt Baker with suggestions for canopy cover for the park.

Center Square Park: Mr. Edgar reported a problem coordinating his computer program with programs used for Park landscaping. He noted an intent to do planting about the

club house. Mr. Richino cautioned against this due to concern of disturbing drainage and utilities.

Mr. Edgar reported no information on Mermaid Park.

Mr. Edgar requested information on planting the 202 corridor. Ms. Keller said Supervisors will continue to pursue USDA grants for the project.

Township Canopy Restoration: STC has a draft of a request to be presented to Township Supervisors. Ms. Cameron will review the draft to insure it stresses value of trees to the community.

Deer Management: Mr. Richino reported that over a five year period an average of 176 deer nuisance claims and auto collisions have been logged in the Township. STC cast an unanimous vote to lend support to the Whitpain Deer and Wildlife Committee proposal for deer management.