

**Towamencin Township
Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting
September 20, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Attending:

Joseph Meehan
Nancy Becker
Michon Blake
Dave Sponseller
Todd Fisher
Laura Smith, Towamencin Supervisor, BOS Liaison to OSPAC
Don Delamater, Township Manager

Absent:

Jim Roberts
Dr. Richard Costlow
Peter Murphy

Chairman Meehan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
Members Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

OPENING COMMENTS

Mr. Meehan welcomed the new Township Manger Mr. Don Delamater who is initially attending all advisory committee meetings to personally meet the committee members and become familiar with the business of the committee in his new role with the township. Mr. Meehan thanked him for attending. The Committee looks forward to working with him.

Mr. Meehan noted that he met with Mr. Delamater on Friday September 17th to get an update on items which might be of interest to this Committee. Information from that meeting is included in the individual items as they are discussed by the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Only one person from the public attended this meeting. Her name was Kristin Warner. She expressed interest in the Committee's work with the Township and wanted to attend to find out more.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Meeting July 12, 2021, and August 9, 2021

Mr. Meehan noted that the minutes of two previous meetings are up for approval by the Committee. Ms. Becker made a motion to approve the minutes for both the July 12, 2021, meeting and the August 9, 2021, meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Blake. The committee voted to approve the minutes of both meetings as written and distributed.

OLD BUSINESS

a. TST / Standguard/Township relationships issues

Mr. Meehan said Mr. Delamater had an update on this and since he was present, he asked him to provide it to the committee.

Mr. Delamater said he met with Matt of Standguard and planned to have a meeting with StandGuard, the TST executive staff, and the Township. He said at this meeting, they will discuss how it all should work with all the parties to keep the pool running smoothly.

He said Stanguard wants to continue to run the pool and the Township recognizes that without StandGuard they have no pool operator/manager. The OSPAC Committee members agreed and noted that such a meeting is great step in ensuring that the pool operation continues smoothly.

Mr. Sponseller mentioned that the TST had been contacted by Brooke Neve and asked to meet. Mr. Delamater said this meeting is related to budget and nothing else. While on the subject of the pool budget, Mr. Fisher said that at the planned meeting with Standguard they should be asked about the data they are obligated to supply the Township each year, which to his knowledge has not been provided. Mr. Meehan acknowledged this issue be probed but it should not get to the point where it unnecessarily strains the relationship between the Township and Standguard.

Mr. Meehan asked Mr. Delamater if the Pool budget falls under the OSPAC budget. Ms. Becker said many years ago it did.

b. Friends of Fischer's Park

Mr. Meehan said the Township has gotten six responses to its request for Friends of Fischer's Park. One was from a Boy Scout looking to get involved while also looking for an Eagle Scout project to pursue. Another was from the scout leader of a troop of girl Scouts looking to get involved and help with winter work off site like building birdhouse which they could the install in the spring. The predominant interest of the others was gardening and landscaping projects.

Mr. Meehan said he has prepared an email to be sent to each letting them know we are working on getting the volunteers organized and projects lined up. He will be sending this email after he has reviewed it with Mr. Costlow who had volunteered to be the coordinator of the volunteers. Ms. Blake asked if Mr. Hillmantel of PW has been included in the coordination. Mr. Meehan said he had been asked for a list of projects the group could work on and he replied with a list of projects.

Mr. Meehan mention that in his conversation with Mr. Delamater on Friday, Mr. Delamater presented the idea of installing a message/announcement kiosk in Fischer's. The Committee thought this was a great idea. Mr. Delamater explained that he thought having a central information point in Fischer's would be an alternative to the banners that are frequently hung along the park fences along busy roads. While focusing on driving, the banners are difficult to read and get the

full message. A kiosk managed by the Township would afford residents time to read them in detail and get updates. He also mentioned this would be a good Eagle Scout project. Mr. Meehan felt the kiosks should be of sufficient size to include many items such as park maps, locations of other parks etc. as well announcements of interest to residents. This idea will be brought up with the “Friends of Fischer’s” group.

c. Closing or realigning Kriebel Road – Internal Meeting

Mr. Meehan said that while looking at a draft Fischer’s Park Master Plan prepared years ago, he saw in the draft a proposal to change the alignment of Kriebel Road so that it intersected with Springer Road further to the northeast along Springer. He presented a handout showing this draft realignment. He was showing this to the Committee to get their thoughts on this as another alternative to connect both pieces of Fischer’s Park with a Kriebel Road crossing.

Mr. Delamater said although he is not completely familiar with the topography along this alignment, his first thought is that this would be costly since it seems to involve at least one stream crossing and anew stretch of roadway. Ms. Smith offered that there might be funding mechanisms available such as RCAP. Others commented that this particular funding assistance is difficult to obtain and takes a long time and many steps to approval.

Mr. Fisher asked if there has been any change in the BOS thinking about full closure of Kriebel Road between Bustard and Springer Rds. Ms. Smith said that is not an option that is favorable to the BOS and “it would be an uphill battle”.

Mr. Meehan said he brings up this different alignment because he felt this issue of connecting both sides of the park has been discussed for many meeting with no forward progress. He wants to see it move forward and with budget recommendations being discussed next month he would like to have a recommendation included in the budget for this issue. The recommendation with the most promise at this point is to have McMahan Associates follow up on their concept plan review of realignment of approximately 700 feet of Kriebel Road and develop a preliminary design. With a preliminary design the details of the realignment could be better evaluated, and the costs refined.

The committee discussed accidents and accident history along this stretch of Kriebel Road as a justification for spending the money on a realignment. Mr. Meehan said this realignment was to prevent accidents where there is currently no know history of pedestrian accidents.

The Committee will keep this item in mind when deciding on budget recommendations.

d. Status of recommendations made to staff on Review of “2021 Below the Line” budget items.

Mr. Meehan updated the committee on the status of the recommendations made at our July 12th meeting which were then passed on to the Township staff. At last Friday’s meeting, Mr. Delamater said the recommendations are to be reviewed by the Finance Committee and this will occur in the

near future. The OSPAC Committee will have to wait for their action. Mr. Delamater said he will keep the Committee informed of their action.

e. Towamencin Day 2021 September 11, 2021

Mr. Meehan thanked everyone from the Committee who helped out that day. He said it was a beautiful day and noted that the parking areas were full, showing a good turnout. He congratulated Cortney Marengo and the Special Events Committee for their hard work making the event a success. He also noted that in 2022 the event will take place in May and not September.

f. CFA Event with Senator Mensch

Mr. Meehan said based on the comments he heard, the event on July 29, 2021, acknowledging Senator Mensch's help in obtaining a DCED grant to be used for preparing a Master Plan for Veterans Memorial Park was a success. The weather was threatening but the event was finished before the rain started. He thanked all who came out and supported the event as well as those who took part including a revolutionary war soldier re-enactor and Fiona Hodgkins who sang the national anthem. A framed flag was presented to Senator Mensch by the Township supervisors.

g. Water Fountain Update

Mr. Meehan noted that a "bottle fill" water fountain has been installed at the Meadow View pavilion in Fischer's Park and is now operational. The new fountain also allows for leaning down and getting a drink the traditional way.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Trail washout caused by Ida.

Mr. Meehan noted to the Committee that there was a small washout of the trail leading from Kriebel Road to the bridge caused by the flooding in the area associated with hurricane Ida. Mr. Delamater said the public works crew had recently completed repairs of this washout as well as others at Fischer's Park.

b. Requests for consideration in the 2022 budget

Mr. Meehan noted that the Township budget for 2022 will be prepared over the next several months. He said the workshop for the OSPAC budget items is set for October 20, 2021 with all requests for consideration be completed by October 15th.

He briefly reviewed the items that the Committee recommended be brought "above the line" at our July 12, meeting. These items are pending review by the Finance Committee and by the BOS. If not approved, he suggested they be reviewed again by this committee to see if we want to ask for them again in 2022. In addition, he asked if there were any other items that should be included. Three items came up. The first being some action to address further study and advancement of a safe pedestrian connection of portions of Fischer's Park on opposite sides of Kriebel Road. The second was the planting of trees throughout the Township and the third was to add another element of the Grist Mill into the 2022 budget in addition to the request for a pavilion. The intent of both these was to reserve funds pending the announcement of the DCNR and DCED grant awards for

the 2021 applications. The Committee's final recommendations will be discussed and decided at our October 10th meeting.

TOWNSHIP PARKS GRANTS UPDATES

a. Regarding the TA Trail from Valley View to Trumbauer Road, on August 12, 2021, bids were received for this project. Doli Construction was the low bidder at \$750,744. When the bid is combined with other project costs, the total exceeds the grant maximum by \$13,853.84. The BOS gave approval for covering these added costs at its August 25, 2021, meeting. The contract award has been approved both by the Township and Township legal.

The anticipated notice to proceed for construction is set for the end of October 2021 with completion by late fall of 2022.

b. Master Plan Preparation is underway for Veterans Memorial Park using grants from DCNR and DCED. An open house asking for public input was held by Simone-Collins (S-C) on September 14, 2021. The Veterans Committee attended in force and unfortunately only one individual from the public at large attended in person and one took part through zoom. Likely insufficient advertisement of the meeting contributed to the poor attendance although it is understood that unless a controversial issue is being discussed, meetings such as this are historically poorly attended. The next public meeting will be held in January 2022 and the Veteran Committee and S-C will make extra effort to increase participation.

S-C is now preparing a township resident survey about the park which will be sent out in October and available for response until March 2022.

With there being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10.

The next OSPAC meeting is on October 11, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph F. Meehan
Chairman, Open Space Advisory Committee