

**Towamencin Township
Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting
October 11, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Attending:

Joseph Meehan
Nancy Becker
Jim Roberts

Dave Sponseller
Todd Fisher
Dr. Richard Costlow

Laura Smith, Towamencin Supervisor, BOS Liaison to OSPAC

Absent:

Peter Murphy
Michon Blake

Chairman Meehan called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
Members Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

OPENING COMMENTS

Mr. Meehan noted that on Friday October 8th, he met with the Township Manager Mr. Delamater who provided an update on items that the Committee has been following and others that would be of interest to the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Meehan welcomed Kristin Warner, an interested resident to the meeting and introduced the members of the Committee who had not attended the last meeting which she also attended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Meeting of September 20, 2021

Mr. Meehan asked for a motion from the Committee for approval of the minutes of the September 20, 2021, meeting. Ms. Becker made a motion to approve the minutes for the September 20, 2021, meeting. Mr. Fischer seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the minutes as written and distributed. Mr. Costlow also asked that the list of items mentioned in the minutes be added to the official minutes of the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Status of recommendations made to staff on “Review of 2021 Below the Line budget item.

Mr. Meehan updated the Committee regarding its recommendations made to the Township staff for raising the below the line items originally held “below the line” in the 2021 budget. Additional impact fee funds from the Wambold Road warehouse development have now upgraded those items

and added them into the 2021 budget. Getting approval on these would allow them to move forward as soon as approved by the BOS.

Mr. Meehan said the items recommended by the Committee have been reviewed by the Township Finance committee and following are the results of that committee's action.

- *Shade sails at Fischer's Park tot playground and at the bocce courts.* Finance Committee (FC) Action: Recommend proceed, estimated amount of \$40,000.
- *Construct a pavilion at Grist Mill Park.* FC action: Not recommended. Recommend this item be held in reserve pending announcements of awards of the DCED and DCNR Grants for Grist Mill Park improvements which also included the pavilion.
- *Add a playground at Morgan Way Park.* FC Action: Recommend proceed, estimated amount of \$35,000.
- *Create a parking area at Kibler Meadow Park.* FC Action: Recommend proceed, estimated amount \$15,000.
- *Remove dead trees along trails and at edge of park woodlands.* FC Action: Recommend proceed, estimated amount \$35,000.
- *Plant new trees in various Township Parks other than Fischer's Park.* FC Action: Not recommended. Recommend an overall tree plan be developed and presented.
- *Advance the drainage improvements to the bocce courts at Fischer's Park.* FC Action: Not recommended. Requested more details on the scope of work and costs.
- *Upgrade the Township Park Entrance Signage starting with Fischer's, Grist Mill, Bustard Rd, and Butch Clemens Parks.* FC Action: Not recommended. This is an item that requires more discussion and input from the BOS.
- *Begin utility infrastructure installations at Butch Clemens Field.* FC Action: Recommend proceed. Estimated amount \$50,000.

Mr. Meehan noted that the FC recommendations will now go to the BOS for their acceptance and approval.

The Committee discussed the possibility of additional impact fees coming from future developments in the Township. Ms. Smith noted that there are several other developments that will be coming in the future. She said she expects these will also provide some impact fees but nothing like the Core 5 Warehouse development on Wambold Road.

b. Friends of Fischer's Park

Mr. Meehan noted that on October 6th, he and Mr. Costlow met with the Public Works Director, Dave Hillmantel to discuss putting the Friends of Fischer's Park (FOFP) volunteer group to work. They discussed items of work that were available immediately. Mr. Hillmantel said one was pressure washing the Stable Pavilion. Mr. Costlow has arranged to have some of the bocce group who also volunteered as FOFP, perform this work the week of October 18th. Mr. Hillmantel will provide the pressure washer and instructions on its use. Mr. Costlow said he still needs to get the

waiver signed by the volunteers before they do any work and asked that the blank forms be sent to him. Mr. Meehan will send the forms.

Mr. Meehan said he received a notification that Tim Gallagher has volunteered as a FOFP. Mr. Gallagher has recently retired, and he wants to keep busy. He worked for many years maintaining facilities at Arcadia University and other similar institutions. Mr. Meehan felt with his experience and enthusiasm he will be a great addition to the volunteer group.

Another item discussed in this meeting was an item that came out of the Finance Committee review of the below the line items. It was for planting more trees in Township Parks. The FC committee did not approve this item and said a Township-wide tree plan for all parks should be developed first. Mr. Meehan suggested having Mr. Gallagher lead this effort with the OSPAC Committee giving him some criteria for such a plan. The OSPAC discussed such criteria. It concluded that new trees should enhance the park setting aesthetically, provide shade, not be planted in any play areas and not be located under any power lines. They should also be hardwood trees of the species recommended by the Township Public works department. Costs and caliper were also discussed. This will be discussed further at future OSPAC meetings.

c. A pedestrian trail crossing Kriebel Road to connect the north and south portions of Fischer's Park

Mr. Meehan said he felt a determination on how to make this connection has been discussed at many meetings but a decision on what is best has not been pinned down. He said in the 2022 budget requests he will recommend on behalf of the Committee that the Township budget funds to have the Township Engineer look at the options at a higher level from concept stage but not a design level and make a recommendation on a preferred option. This will be followed in future meetings.

d. Update on meeting of swim team representatives and the Township officials regarding finances

Mr. Sponseller who attended this meeting as a swim team representative provided a summary of the meeting and the outcome. He said they reviewed swim team finances and cost imposed by StandGuard on the swim team. He said the review showed that over the past years since StandGuard has taken over the pool management the costs being borne by the swim team have been steadily increasing while at the same time the swim team has been prevented from fundraising (selling food at swim events as they have been in the past). The restriction on selling food is a result of an exclusivity agreement StandGuard has with the pool food vendor.

There is a \$5,000 to \$8,000 increase in the costs being paid by the swim team since StandGuard began and continued increases will not be sustainable to the swim team.

The swim team is trying to mitigate costs and one way is through insurance waivers for lifeguards during practices when coaches who are lifeguard certified are present. The swim team is also asking for help from the Township. Maybe the Township could fund the lifeguards. The swim team noted that the Towamencin Team is the only one in the league that pays for pool time.

The Township participants said they understand the situation. The Township Manager is going to arrange and coordinate a meeting with all parties involved and try to come to an agreement that will be acceptable to all parties; the swim Team, StandGuard and the Township. This is expected to occur in November 2021. Mr. Sponseller said in his research he found that a large financial benefit has come to the Township with StandGuard leasing the pool and managing it. At the same time an additional financial burden has disproportionately fallen on the shoulders of the swim team with the additional costs being passed on by StandGuard. He feels this not right and he has a problem with it and is trying to get the Township to be open to help take some of the burden that has been placed on the swim team.

Mr. Meehan said from the discussions, the OSPAC seems to support the request of the swim team but not to the detriment of the lease agreement with StandGuard. StandGuard is a business and as has been said at previous meetings the swim team and/or Township cannot interfere with their running their business.

Since it appears the Committee supports the position of the swim team, Mr. Costlow asked if the OSPAC should make a formal recommendation to the BOS to provide financial assistance. Ms. Smith said she is the liaison of this committee to the BOS and as such she will bring the message to them and strongly advocate in the budget that some accommodation be made to help with the swim teams financial losses. She said this is her goal. Mr. Meehan noted that the OSPAC deals with pool facility issues but does not want to get involved with the operational issues except for informational purposes.

Mr. Sponseller said he felt the swim team meeting with the Township Officials was productive. However, with there being no commitment on providing financial help, the swim team was not totally happy with the outcome.

NEW BUSINESS

a. 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 requests is set for October 20, 2021 with all information to be used at the workshop being sent to the township no later than October 15th so it can be printed and distributed to the Supervisors and staff.

In addition to the “below the line” items from 2021 which are still pending, he asked for the committee’s consensus on other items to be requested in 2022 budget.

The committee felt the scope of work for the improvements to the bocce courts as requested in 2021 was misunderstood and this item should be resubmitted adding all the information supporting the scope of work and costs. Mr. Costlow said he will work on getting this information together. Other suggestions were to add pickleball courts to Grist Mill Park in addition to the pavilion which the Finance Committee said should be held until the outcome of the DCED and DCNR grant awards for 2021 are announced. The pickleball court funds could also be held in reserve pending the grant awards.

Another critical item is setting aside the funds necessary to “match” the MONTCO 40 grant for design and construction of a trail along Kriebel Road from the existing trail end near the PECO powerline crossing to the site of the former Hanks house in Fischer’s Park. Without the match, the MONTCO 40 grant is in jeopardy. Another priority item is preparing an engineering analysis of the Kriebel Road crossing to connect the portions of Fischer’s Park.

Mr. Meehan said that on behalf of the Veterans committee he would recommend performing a Ground Penetrating Radar survey at both the Tennis-Lukens Cemetery and the Methodist Episcopal cemetery behind the Holiday Inn. Such a survey would be beneficial in determining the locations of graves near or even outside the property lines at each cemetery for planning purposes and also help in determining how many graves were present at each. Another item he suggested be included was the erection of a fence around the Methodist Episcopal Cemetery. The area in the parking lot adjacent to the cemetery is used as a gathering are for users of the Holiday Inn and it seems the gatherings don’t respect the cemetery boundary since there is no boundary there. This is evidenced by litter and trash in that area of the cemetery. Mr. Costlow mentioned looking into the same for possible indigenous burial sites. No one knew of such sites in the Township. Mr. Costlow said he would check on such sites in the Township.

Mr. Meehan mentioned making improvements to a neighborhood park. Specifically Drinnon Park, which has a playground in its open field but there is no ADA access to the playground. Moms with strollers need to cross over long stretches of grass to get to the playground. He suggests the Committee recommend impervious ADA compliant walkways from Tennis Circle and Drinnon Way along with improvements to the playground.

Mr. Meehan also suggested installing a Kiosk message board at Fischer’s Park. This is a low-cost item and could be built and installed as an Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Sponseller noted that the pool facility needs new lane line reels. The ones being used now are about 20 years old and need constant maintenance. The Committee agreed to request replacement reels in the budget request.

Mr. Costlow suggested pickleball courts that are not dependent on the grant awards. The committee suggested again requesting that the tennis court at Heebner Way be converted into a pickleball court ...or two. This will be added to the budget request for 2022.

Mr. Meehan asked if there were any other suggestions for the 2022 budget. There were none.

The committee accepted these suggestions a recommendation to be made for the 2022 budget.

TOWNSHIP PARKS GRANTS UPDATES

a. Regarding the TA Trail from Valley View to Trumbauer Road. The construction notice to proceed is set for late October with completion expected by late fall of 2022.

With there being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45.

The next OSPAC meeting is on November 8, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph F. Meehan
Chairman, Open Space Advisory Committee