

**Towamencin Township  
Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 16, 2022  
Meeting Minutes**

**Attending:**

Joseph Meehan  
Nancy Becker  
Michon Blake  
Dr. Richard Costlow  
Todd Fisher  
Dan Vaitis

Laura Smith, Liaison Board of Supervisors

**Absent:**

Peter Murphy  
Dave Sponseller

This meeting was held at Fischer's Park. The main focus of the meeting was to look at potential sites for relocating the bocce courts. Chairman Meehan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**OPENING COMMENTS**

Mr. Meehan noted for the minutes that a group of women bocce players were present at tonight's meeting. They had come to provide their input on the proposed sites for relocating the bocce courts in Fischer's Park.

Mr. Meehan also noted he had met with Mr. Delamater, the Township Manager, on May 13, 2022. Mr. Delamater provided him with updates on items that would be of interest to the OSPAC, and his update information will be included in the items as they are discussed this evening.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Meeting of April 11, 2022**

Mr. Meehan asked if there were any comments or concerns about the minutes of the April 11, 2022 OSPAC meeting as drafted and distributed. There were none. Mr. Costlow made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Blake seconded the motion. All Committee members voted to approve the minutes. These approved minutes will now be posted on the Township website.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Meehan passed the following information regarding the status of ongoing projects that are of interest to the Committee.

**Kriebel Road Trail – Valley View Road to Trumbauer Road (TA Trail Grant)**

Mr. Delamater said "behind the scenes" work on the pedestrian bridge for this trail are ongoing. The contractor is waiting until the bridge design and fabrication dates are known before mobilizing to begin actual construction. The contractor does not want to mobilize and then wait for the bridge work and have to mobilize a second time. A status meeting is held every two weeks with the inspection consultant and the contractor and Mr. Delamater also attends. He continues to push to move the

project forward as the bridge design is working its way through PennDot. Fabrication of the bridge is expected to take about 12 weeks once the design is approved. During these meetings the inspection budget is monitored and is being managed to stay within the budgeted cost.

- **Kriebel Road Trail II PECO Power lines westward along Kriebel Road toward Fischer's Park.**

The Township applied for a grant for 2022 Montco 40 Funds to match the previous Montco 40 grant already made to the Township for this trail. The county is processing and reviewing the grant applications and Towamencin is waiting to hear about its application.

- **Grist Mill Park DCED Grant Application**

The BOS approved a resolution to move forward with a DCED grant application to provide matching funds for improvements at Grist Mill Park. Simone- Collins is preparing and will submit the application on behalf of the Township. It is due before May 31, 2022.

- **Shade Sails at Fischer's Park Tot Lot**

Mr. Delamater took the proposed design coming from the OSPAC to and got cost quotes from "COSTARS" Competitive purchasing through the Pennsylvania Department of General Services. The quotes were \$94k for five shade sails and almost \$70k for three sails. These costs are for purchasing the sails only and installation cost would be additional. Further, installing the sails is specialized work and the Township has not been able to find a contractor who could install them. Another complication is the recollection that the tot lot is located over the Fisher's Park former swimming pool and there is concern that broken concrete from the pool demolition would be encountered while installing the sail's foundations. The foundations are said to need to be about thirteen feet deep.

The committee questioned the depth of the needed foundations which to the group seemed excessive. It was recommended this be confirmed.

The idea of sails to provide shade at the tot lot seems to encounter problems at every turn. The Committee began thinking it might be more cost effective and less problematic to just erect a "metal roof" structure over the entire tot lot. The OSPAC suggested this be investigated as an option. Mr. Meehan said he would pass this thought to the Township staff.

- **Towamencin Day 2022 - May 21, 2022**

Mr. Meehan mentioned that Towamencin Day 2022 on May 21, 2022, was approaching and the OSPAC committee would be sharing a table with the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). Ms. Blake said she would be able to be at the OSPAC table to help out.

- **Do Not Feed the Ducks Signs**

Mr. Costlow who was looking into wording for a sign to be posted near the fishing pier, said he has narrowed his suggestions down to four signs but because of tonight's meeting being at Fischer's Park and not having his computer here, he could not share his suggestions with the committee. He will share them at the next OSPAC Meeting.

- **Native Tree Trails**

This item was tabled for discussion at a future meeting.

- **Look at Potential Bocce Court Sites**

Mr. Meehan noted that at the last meeting, the Committee because of the ongoing drainage problems at the existing bocce courts in Fischer's Park, a suggestion came from public works it might be better to relocate them to an area of Fischer's Park with better drainage. The meeting tonight is being held at Fisher's Park to look at potential sites. Several sites were proposed by Committee members and also by the women's bocce players.

The women also suggested sites at Bustard Park but those were “squeezed into” some areas of that park and seemed to overlap onto areas used by spectators adjacent to the TYA fields. These were dismissed as not desirable because of this infringement on TYA “space”.

Mr. Meehan made an evaluation sheet to be used by everyone as the Committee and the women bocce players look at the sites in Fischer’s Park. It listed eight criteria for a new location. They were:

- Adequate size (About 80’ Wide by 120 long, which included adequate space around the perimeter of the court playing area.
- Adequate slope and drainage
- Shade
- Close to restrooms
- Close to parking
- Water available
- Approaches (Walkable, ADA compliant, not steep)
- Environment (Not close to kids activities, relatively quiet)

The group reviewed four potential sites. They were:

- The present location adjacent to the stable pavilion
- East of the Carriage pavilion (between the pavilion and Bustard Road)
- In the overflow parking area, (beyond the paved parking lot and facing east toward the large ballfield)
- Along the south side of the main path leading toward the pedestrian bridge and south of the Arneith entertainment center

The group went to each site and while there, discussed thoughts about each. Individuals then marked the evaluation sheet with numerical “scores” with 10 being the best and 0 being the worst. At the end of the meeting, the score sheets were collected and are attached.

The group started at the present court location. At this site there was a long discussion about the problems with these courts and how they got to the point where they do not drain and when they do eventually dry, the surface was not playable because marks left in the surface hardened and were difficult to remove.

The ladies who have played on these existing courts for many years (likely about six to eight years) said there was never a problem with this site until recently. The only thing they could think of that changed recently was work done to the court’s surfaces. They said the court location, and grade conditions around the courts have not changed from when there were no water problems.

The group walked and looked at four possible relocation sites and evaluated each with a “score sheet”. Positives and negative shown in parenthesis below.

- The present location adjacent to the stable pavilion. (Con: Drainage problems, very little shade Pro: Used for many years, in “core area of park”, good overall location)
- East of the Carriage pavilion - between the pavilion and Bustard Road – (Con: Noisy, close to road, no shade, close to kids activities at Carriage Pavilion Pro: good sized area)
- In the overflow parking area, - beyond the paved parking lot and facing east toward the large ballfield - Con: no shade, would take away from overflow parking area, accessibility from parking, out of the “core” park area Pro: Large, relatively flat area, should drain well)
- Along the south side of the main path leading toward the pedestrian bridge and south of the Arneith entertainment center (Con: Tight area, challenging accessibility from bathrooms and parking, adjacent area is wet Pro: some shade, in “core area”)

The conclusion after reviewing the alternates was that the existing site was the clear winner as the best site for the courts. This showed up in the score sheets as well as the general consensus that the current location is the best location for the courts in Fischer's Park. It is just a matter of addressing the drainage and court surface issues. The other options were less desirable and there was no clear agreement on which of those might be a second choice.

The Committee recommends revisiting solutions to the water issue at the present location and get some other opinions from others on solutions, suggesting a landscape architect and a contractor be asked for their opinions that would be more practical but just as effective as those that have come from discussions with CKS. (CKS was looking at a retaining wall, underdrain, tree removal, regrading...a complicated and likely costly solution) Simone-Collins and Rich Marino were suggested as individuals that could give valuable opinions.

The Committee also said they are willing to help in pursuing solutions at the existing site.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Budget Items for 2023**

Mr. Meehan mentioned to the OSAPC Committee members that 2023 budget discussions are fast approaching and we need to begin thinking about 2023 budget requests. He asked the Committee members to think about what items we would request for 2023 so that we have enough time before the budget meetings with the BOS to get accurate cost quotes for our requests. He said the Committee needs to be distilling thoughts over the next months in preparation for the 2023 Open Space and Parks budget and prepare a well thought out list of items to request.

With there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM

**The next OSPAC meeting is on June 13, 2022**

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph F. Meehan  
Chairperson, Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee