

**Towamencin Township
Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting
July 8, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Attending:

Joseph Meehan
Todd Fisher
Michon Blake
Dr. Richard Costlow
Dan Vaitis
Joe Rumsey
Robert DeHaven
Katie Cleary, Township Special Events Co-ordinator

Not attending:

Dave Sponseller
Nancy Becker
Laura Smith, BOS Liaison to Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Meehan at 7:00 PM

All present participated in the pledge of allegiance.

OPENING COMMENTS

Mr. Meehan noted that he records the audio of the meeting for his convenience in preparing the minutes.

Mr. Meehan said he met with Mr. Kraynik, the Township Manager, on July 3, 2024, to get an update on items of interest to the Committee. Mr. Meehan said he will note the update comments to the Committee as the individual items are discussed in tonight's meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Township residents other than the Committee were in attendance and there were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF OSPAC MINUTES – Meeting of June 10, 2024

Mr. Meehan asked for comments or corrections, if any, to the draft minutes of the June 10, 2024, meeting, which he sent to the Committee members prior to tonight's meeting. Dr. Costlow asked if the Goals and Objectives were to be further discussed at tonight's meeting. Mr. Meehan said yes, this topic is included in tonight's agenda. The Committee had no other questions or comments on the motion and the Committee voted all in favor of approving the minutes as drafted.

OLD BUSINESS – Updates

Grist Mill Park Facility Improvements

Mr. Meehan said he received an e-mail from Peter Simone of Simone Collins (S-C) saying they're waiting for CKS to provide their last minute engineering information, and once S-C received the information they can wrap up bid documents in a week or two. Mr. Kraynik said the Township wants to have one final review of the plans and will be placing this item on the July 24th agenda for presentation to the BOS. Mr. Meehan said he expects the plan will include everything that had been discussed for inclusion in this plan at the last few OSPAC meetings. Only two items remained to come out of the final plan from S-C, and those were the type of fencing around the playground and the final estimated cost of the project. The bid documents are going to be structured with "add-on" items which would allow for removal of some items if bid costs came in way over budget, without jeopardizing the remainder of the project.

Regarding Grist Mill Park, Mr. Meehan asked the TYA reps for a clarification on concerns of the soccer program director about access to field 2 which is where the new facilities are to be constructed. Mr. Vaitis said the question was not about having the use of that field but getting access passed the construction to field 1 which will still be an active field. After a discussion and clarification of what was meant, there was not a concern from TYA about use of field #2, only getting around it to play on field #1. The discussions concluded this will not be a problem.

Connector Path from Spring Valley Rd. to the Valley View -Trumbauer Rd. (VV-T) Trail.

Mr. Meehan presented some photos he took showing some connector trails in other municipalities that were similar to the connector proposed for a trail from Spring Valley Road to the Valley View Road to Trumbauer road trail. He said he would like to use these in a meeting with the neighbors on either side of the proposed trail to better put their minds at ease about what a trail could look like. Further work on what was discussed in the June OSPAC meeting on this connector trail is continuing.

Concept Plan for Pickleball Courts at Butch Clemens Park

In Mr. Kraynik's update he said a meeting is to be held with a representative of the Clemens Food Group (CFG) to explore options concerning access from CFG's entrance drive into Butch Clemens Park for pickleball courts. Prior to that meeting, Mr. Meehan said he will meet with Mary Stover (CKS) and Dave Kraynik (TT) to pass on the OSPAC's thoughts on the site and access to it, which have been discussed at OSPAC meetings. The Township obtaining access from CFG would be solution to a major hurdle in constructing pickleball courts at Butch Clemens Field.

Green Lane Soccer Fields

The action on the soccer field plans remains with CKS as they respond to concerns from the Montgomery County Soil Conservation District (MCSD) regarding a NPDES permit for the proposed soccer field plan for regrading at Green Lane Park.

New Tree Planting Opportunity

Mr. Meehan noted a new tree grant opportunity from the 2024 Healing the Planet Grant Program funded by the GIANT grocery store company. The program funds the trees, and the applicant provides the labor for planting. He said TYA has agreed to work with the Township to provide labor for planting about 20 trees at Green Lane Park to provide shade for spectators watching ballgames there. The Township applied asking for funding in the amount of

\$3,595.00. Announcement of awards is to be made in August and if Towamencin is successful, trees will be planted this fall.

Goals and Objectives

Mr. Meehan said his intent is to get the Goals and Objective completed by the end of the year and to discuss these when we had time and didn't have other pressing items to discuss at a meeting. Tonight, we have other items we want to discuss so we will skip the Goals and Objectives discussion this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

Bocce Court Scoreboards

Dr. Costlow has been looking into scoreboards for the bocce courts to help finish off their construction. Public works has been busy and not able to construct the scoreboards until the fall or even the winter. The bocce players would like to have a Grand Opening event sometime this summer and wanted to include the scoreboards. Dr. Costlow took on the task of getting them made sooner by finding a bocce player who was willing to make the scoreboards at no cost for his labor, only the purchase of the needed materials. The volunteer's name was Tom Levandusky. He was present at this OSPAC meeting to discuss the scoreboards and answer any questions.

Prior to the OSPAC meeting Dr. Costlow sent, by email, three scoreboard proposals for discussion and comment at tonight's OSPAC meeting.

Tom and Dr. Costlow described each proposal in detail and provided a cost for the materials for each. They were looking for a consensus on one the Committee preferred which Dr. Costlow would then approach the township asking for approval to move forward with making two of them and having the Township install them.

The committee reviewed the scoreboard proposals. On two of the proposals, pegs were inserted into holes beneath a number along the scoreboard, indicating each team's score. On the third, balls mounted on cables and "clicked" into grooves at the numbers to indicate the score. The Committee consensus was that the two scoreboards using pegs were problematic when you must keep track of the pegs when being used on public courts or having players bring their own pegs. Also discussed were the following:

- making the scoreboards "kid proof" but that was not a big concern.
- Painting or not painting the scoreboards (Black numbers on white background was preferred)
- Taking the scoreboards down over the winter (Taking them down was considered not practical; if anything, covering them rather than taking them down was preferred since there is occasional play even in the winter)
- Where to locate them in the courts (behind the court ends or along the sides of the courts. This needs to be discussed with Public Works)

From the conclusions reached, Dr. Costlow made a motion “that the Open Space Committee recommend option three (3) from the proposals for bocce court scoreboards and that we communicate that recommendation to the Township with the additional recommendation to install these scoreboards as soon as possible after they are completed”. Mr. Vaitis seconded the motion. There were no questions or comments. All Committee members voted in favor of this motion.

Mr. Meehan cautioned that since the OSPAC has no authority regarding funding projects, this recommendation also needs the Township’s approval for reimbursement for the materials for the scoreboards. Dr. Costlow said he will send an email to Mr. Kraynik and ask for his approval before moving forward. Tom said he will update details and the cost of proposal three (3) based on tonight’s discussions and send them to Dr. Costlow for his use in the email he will be sending to the Township.

Changes to Bleachers at Soccer Field # 1 at Grist Mill Park

Mr. Vaitis on behalf of the TYA soccer program asked the Committee to consider a recommendation to change the location of the bleachers at Grist Mill Park soccer field #1. The present location of the bleachers limits the flexibility to laterally change the footprint of the play area causing the turf to be worn out by the intense play in certain areas, for example in front of the goals.

He requested that the OSPAC request the township move the bleacher from the Jacobs Woods side of the field to the Allentown Road side and along with the one already on that side, both be placed closer to the fence line. Additionally, when the bleachers are repositioned, he requested the “stoned area” beneath each bleacher be removed and be returned to turf so any lateral shift of the play footprint could have this available to shift the entire play area. He added that stone need not be placed beneath the relocated bleachers to ease in moving the bleachers in the future. The stone beneath the bleachers boxes you in and limits the flexibility of shifting the field to limit concentrated turf wear and tear.

The Committee consensus agreed with the request and saw this change in the bleachers and removal of the stone as something the township public works department should be able to do. Mr. Meehan said he would send an email to Mr. Kraynik with the request.

Mr. Vaitis also noted the poor condition of the turf fields # 3 and #4 at Grist Mill Park saying they sorely needed turf maintenance such as aeration, spotted topsoil placement, leveling and overseeding. Mr. Meehan said this issue is something TYA should bring up in its regular meetings with the Township as it is a maintenance item and beyond the OSPAC’s scope.

Geocaching Policy in Towamencin Parks

Mr. Meehan said a message from a resident asking the Township to revisit its policy on allowing geocaching in the township’s parks has been forwarded to him asking for the OSPAC

review of this policy. The resident said Towamencin is one of only two municipalities in Pennsylvania prohibiting geocaching.

The committee discussed this issue and the policy decision. The Committee agreed that this was a BOS policy decision which considered input from other Township departments such as police, public works, and emergency responders and the OSPAC should not open it again. It was a BOS decision considering all this input. The resident should bring this request directly to the BOS if they want a change to the policy.

Dr. Costlow made a motion that the OSPAC pass this back to the BOS for their action and not reopen this policy issue regarding geocaching in Towamencin Parks. Ms. Blake seconded the motion. All the Committee members voted to approve this motion.

Mr. Meehan said he would pass this information on to the Township staff.

Mr. Meehan asked if there was any other new business. There was none.

Dr. Costlow made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fisher seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted

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

The next OSPAC meeting is on August 12, 2024