



Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of the May 12, 2025 Meeting

In Attendance:

Joseph Meehan, Chairperson
Dr. Richard Costlow, Vice Chairperson
Nancy Becker

Michon Blake
Todd Fisher
Dave Sponseller

Excused:

Joe Rumsey
Robert DeHaven

Dan Vaitis

Other Attendees:

None

MEETING FORMALITIES

In accordance with the agenda Chairperson Meehan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. All present participated in the pledge of allegiance. The 12MAY2025 meeting of the OPEN SPACE AND PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING began and minutes of the meeting are reported here.

OPENING COMMENTS

Mr. Meehan noted that he records the audio of the meeting for his convenience in preparing the minutes. He met with David Kraynik, the Township Manager, on May 8th who provided an update on items of interest to the Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee (OSPAC). Mr. Meehan will report on the topics as they are listed in the agenda items as the meeting goes forward.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no members of the public attending. No public comments.

APPROVAL OF OSPAC MINUTES – RE: Meeting of April 15, 2025

There were no additions, deletions or corrections to the previously-issued draft minutes of the April 15, 2025 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was voiced by Ms. Becker and seconded by Ms. Blake. A quorum of Committee members voted unanimously in favor of the motion; the April 15, 2025 minutes are approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS and Updates provided by Mr. Meehan

OSPAC Comments on the Towamencin Township Comprehensive Plan

This was not an agenda item, but Mr. Meehan interjected that he would send the consolidated OSPAC comments to the committee and to Simone and Collins.

Towamencin Day 2025 Debrief

Attendance on the day was quite high and residents appeared to have enjoyed all aspects of the festival. Even with the closure of Kriebel Road for additional parking, adequate parking was a shortcoming due to high participation. Several options were discussed for increased parking. They were: park on Kriebel Road [~50 spaces]; expand parking on the South side of Kriebel Road [~25 additional spaces].

Moderate winds created some difficulties with “pop up” shade umbrellas. Suggestions or requirements for erecting “pop up” shade umbrellas should be reconsidered in advance of next year’s festival to balance the need of vendors and presenters for shade and safety of the festival participants.

OSAPC members at our presentation table received multiple comments and inquiries on completion dates for the Green Lane soccer field, Kriebel Road Trail, Grist Mill Park and Pickleball courts at Clemens. OSPAC and the EAC jointly demonstrated an instructional tree planting [a hybrid Chestnut].

Grist Mill Park Improvements

The contractor has made more progress but has been slowed by recent rain. The playground equipment is installed, the pavilion area, playground and basketball court are awaiting final surfacing, and curbing is installed for the perimeter of the playground. Completion is projected for June.

Green Lane Road Park Soccer Field

Site grading by Public Works is proceeding as the weather permits. The “soil amendment” by Land Tec Enterprises will occur after grading.

Pickleball Courts At Butch Clemens Park-

Two grants approved by the BOS were submitted: the DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) [\$533,973 request] and a DCED Greenways Trails & Recreation Program [\$250,000 request]. If both are approved, they will fund the construction of the pickleball courts. Letters, on behalf of the OSPAC, in support of the grants were included in the applications.

Connector Path from Grist Mill Drive to Grist Mill Park

One grant along with two letters of support (OSPAC and TYA) was submitted to the DCED Greenway Trails & Recreation Program (GTRP) [\$159,012 request] to construct the connector trail from Grist Mill Drive to Grist Mill Park. We hope to get some help from State Senator Pennycuik on this because it is a legislative program.

Planting Trees in 2025 and Tree Bank Update

In addition to the demonstration tree-planting on Towamencin Day there are several additional tree plantings to be done in 2025.

In response to an question about funds held by the Township in a “tree bank account” Dave Kraynik reported to Mr. Meehan that money from developers in lieu of tree planting was moved to a “park improvement capital” line item in the budget. He estimates there are sufficient funds for a \$25,000 expenditure annually for 5 years. The language in the ordinance that governs the funds for tree planting needs to be clarified; is it only for trees or general open space improvements other than reforestation. Can funds be earmarked for trees specifically? The OSPAC will continue to request an accounting of revenue received in lieu of trees so we can leverage the funds for tree planting grants for which the Township qualifies.

Mr. Meehan said he will further investigate a tree-planting program funded by Pennsylvania for Philadelphia and its suburban counties. Planting trees adjacent to roads on sidewalks requires only a 3x3 foot space [4x4 is preferred]. Committee comments encouraged planting trees at the entrance(s) to our Township, particularly near the Turnpike and at the correct time of year for the species of tree chosen.

The OSPAC briefly discussed the possibility of creating a shared drive in the digital cloud to compile and share relevant information. The action point was taken by Dr. Costlow to get information on what is required.

Veterans Memorial Park Engineering Plans

A multi-faceted discussion occurred regarding a previous proposal by PSDC (Mark Nicoletti). There is a proposal from PSDC to partially fund Design and Engineering for development [possibly \$100,000] of Veterans Park provided there is an agreement on an exchange of land owned by PSDC adjacent to Tomlinson Road for land owned by the Township that is currently open space. The OSPAC is unaware of any agreement between PSDC and the Township for this to happen. The details of the proposal and any accompanying reviews by the Township, the Planning Commission, or the Solicitor need to be clarified before any further action can be considered.

Geocaching

There is a tentative agreement with John French, a geocaching advocate and Township resident, and the OSPAC, the Township Manager, the Chief of police and the Township Director of Administration on the details of a proposal which would require geocachers to submit a "Notification Form" to the Township to notify the Township if/when a geocache is placed on Township property at a particular location. The Township would only keep a record of the notifications as a reference source should a need arise. The OSPAC's review of the issue of allowing geocaching in Towamencin Parks along with the tentative agreement as a condition of acceptance, now needs to be presented to the Board of Supervisors for its consideration and action.

The OSPAC consensus at this meeting was the presentation of the proposal by Mr. French and the OSPAC to the Board of Supervisors should be deferred until the June 25th BOS Meeting. At that time the BOS can review the information and decide to allow or not allow geocaching in the Township parks.

NEW BUSINESS

Basketball Court at Valley View Way Cul de Sac

The OSPAC is aware that the basketball court located at the Valley View Way cul-de-sac is in poor shape. The frequency of use of the court was reported as low to minimal and primarily individual, not teams. In addition, the other paved spaced in this location [possibly a former tennis court] has been re-purposed for pickleball by neighborhood residents. The OSPAC consensus was that any maintenance or repair of the basketball court at this location, even for a minimal cost, could be deferred until we can judge the frequency of use of the new basketball court at Grist Mill Park.

The realization that the neighborhood repurposed a public space to accommodate pickleball suggests that the "noise factor" associated with pickleball in this residential area may be less of a concern than previously thought. One member of OSPAC feels we should get input from the neighborhood on their desire to improve the facility for pickleball, recognizing that such an improvement may entice non-neighborhood residents to play there.

Comprehensive Plan Take Aways

The following were additional comments on the Towamencin Comprehensive Plan:

- Push for further development of Evansburg State Park as a needed adjunct to existing Towamencin parks to include:
 - creating or resurrecting a Master Plan
 - working with the other Townships that border Evansburg
 - Getting cooperation from State Senator Pennycuik
- Priorities outlined and cataloged by S-C should be OSPAC focus too

- Encourage the development of a formal tree plan in Towamencin [in cooperation with the EAC]

Dr. Costlow noted his participation in the 2025 Montgomery Senior Games and suggested the Township encourage, in whatever way is expedient, participation in the 2026 Montgomery Senior Games as a social and health maintenance opportunity for our senior citizens. The Fisher Park bocce courts could be a venue for that sport.

There being no other new business topics or discussions, Mr. Meehan entertained a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was voiced by Ms. Becker and seconded by Ms. Blake. A quorum of Committee members voted unanimously in favor of the motion; the May 12, 2025 meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Dr. Richard D. Costlow
Vice Chairperson, Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee

The next Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee Meeting is on June 09, 2025