

**Parks and Recreation Board
Strategic Planning Meeting to Develop Parks, Trails & Recreation Plan
Work Session #3
Charlestown Elementary School
2060 Charlestown Road
Malvern, PA 19355
Minutes of April 30, 2012 - DRAFT**

Before the meeting was convened, participants had time to review maps and charts illustrating the recreational opportunities available in the township, and residents' input.

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM.

- 1) **Welcome**: Bob Jones, Chairman Parks and Trails Committee: Bob briefly reviewed the planning charge from the Supervisors and the steps that have been taken to date, including the questionnaire distributed to all households, and 3 community meetings designed to review the questionnaire information and to compile and prioritize ideas for developing and maintaining recreational opportunities for township residents over the next 10 years.
 - a) The purpose of the planning process as outlined by Township Supervisor, Charlie Philips, in a letter on May 17, 2011 is as follows:
 - i) This plan should be one that incorporates access to recreational opportunities in other areas of the township not served by Charlestown Park as well as the inclusion of trails with a plan to provide for connections to regional trails where appropriate.
 - ii) The plan should be one that encourages residents and visitors to actively use the facilities, as is currently the case at the Charlestown Park, while not adversely affecting the neighbors.
 - iii) Because there is a growing interest in bike riding there should be thought given as to how to provide bike trails or bike lanes in appropriate locations in the township.
 - iv) The current areas to consider should include the Brightside Farm, which is a major Township asset that is underutilized, the eventual Jenkins Park, Charlestown Park, the TND trails and future ball fields, the Horseshoe Trail, and the other trails that have been designated during the open space easement process.
 - v) The plan should include possible funding opportunities from the county, state, and federal governments as well as foundations that encourage such uses.
 - vi) At a detail level the implementation of the plan should list immediate financial considerations to become operational and a longer range financial plan that establishes future financial requirements based on the plan. Also, recommendations as to the maintenance issues should be addressed.
 - b) Bob introduced Tom Committa, Planning Consultant to the Township.
- 2) **Tom Committa asked those present to introduce themselves.** Present were:

Esther & Walt Underhill, Valley Hill Road
Jeremy Leaidicker, Union Hill Road
Mary Lou Forcine, Jamie Lane
Jac Miller, Three Ponds
Teri & Andy DiStefano, Sagewood Dr

Jen Hawes, Maryhill Road
Chris Galbraith, Sunny Hollow Lane
John Martin, Howell Road
Jim Mitchell, Ravenhill Rd
Sue Staas, Hollow Road

Peter Hall, Howell Road
Jim Quay, Ravenhill Rd
Bill & Carolyn Casswell, Valley Hill Rd
Nancy Long, Church Road
Paul Hogan, Sidley Hill Road

Rick Berry, Charwyn Lane
Barbara DeWilde, Valley Hill Rd
Lani Carrow, Carrow Lane
Lisa Tull, Jeffords CT
Bob Jones, Valley Hill Rd

- 3) **Overview and Brief Recap on the Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan:** Tom Comitta.
- a) Tom distributed copies of the agenda for the evening; and stated **that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to review and prioritize the suggestions and ideas that have been presented through the questionnaire and at the previous two community meetings.**
 - b) Tom reviewed the history of the development of this effort:
 - i) The comprehensive plan for the township was last reviewed in 2001. Ten+ years ago. Residents and our supervisors need to form a perspective, and ultimately a plan for recreation in Charlestown for the next 10+ years.
 - ii) Funding is always a concern, which leads to the question of what is important enough to support.
 - iii) Tom also explained that under PA. State Law, townships may impose so-called "Impact fees for recreation" on new construction in the township. These fees may then be deposited in an interest bearing account to be saved to be used to develop and improve recreational opportunities.
 - c) Currently the township has two active parks, Charlestown Park, purchased in 1976; and Brightside Farm, purchased in 2005. Proposed parks include the Jenkins Tract, which was purchased by the township in 2004 and a tract of township-owned land in Devault on White Horse Road, which will be developed as a park when the Spring Oak & Pickering Grant proposed TND, is built. Additionally, the township residents enjoy two township maintained public access trails; the Pickering Trail and the McDevitt Trail in addition to the Horse Shoe Trail, which is maintained by the Horse Shoe Trail conservancy, and which traverses the township. .
 - d) **Tom emphasized that planning for the next 10 years of recreational development and maintenance is a long term project; and that progress to date will be reviewed and evaluated by the Supervisors at their meeting on June 4.**
- 4) **Tom reviewed how the planning process has progressed so far:**
- a) 251 residents responded to the questionnaire that was mailed to all households in Charlestown. The questionnaire was also posted on the website; and respondents were encouraged to respond as they preferred.
 - b) Top preferences of respondents were: nature, biking, and hiking trails.
 - c) Dog parks, fitness trails, and picnic areas were in second place. The question then becomes where??
 - d) The population in Charlestown is aging, multigenerational, with many long-time residents.
 - e) Many of the current facilities experience low usage
 - f) Residents indicate diverse preferences
 - g) The township has and will have limited resources.

- 5) **At the first community meeting on February 29, attendees were asked to allocate imaginary funds to the recreational preferences indicated through the questionnaire.**
 - a) The prioritized list included: improve and maintain existing facilities; and continue to acquire easements and land for open space.
 - b) Picnic tables, signs and parking were ranked second.
 - c) Ampitheater was lowest ranked.

- 6) **At the March meeting, participants were asked to indicate where preferred activities should be located.**
 - a) Ampitheater should go at Brightside – maybe use one of the barns.
 - b) Arts might be located at the Bachman Mill on Charlestown Road
 - c) Charlestown Park needs restrooms.
 - d) Volley ball should be located at Charlestown Park.

- 7) **Tom proposed that activities should be located in the appropriate portions of the township.**
 - a) Using the map of the township, (see attached), he suggested that the green area is for natural recreation. Yellow area is the residential portions of the township. Brown area is for more “urban” recreation. Adopting this philosophy will help to empower the supervisors to say “no” to inappropriate choices of recreation in a particular location.
 - b) On this map, it is also possible to sketch out how Charlestown’s trails can connect with neighboring townships.

- 8) **Questions about what recreational activities should go into each of the existing parks.** Using diagrams of each park, Tom elaborated on what the responses from the questionnaire and input from meetings have suggested:
 - a) Charlestown Park should be improved: picnic areas, parking, basketball area, restrooms, maybe a dog park and an ampitheater. What should be a 30 year plan for this park?
 - b) Jenkins Property – parking is already designed into the subdivision. Tot lot, one or two picnic tables and nature trail are all that is suggested.
 - c) Brightside Farm - A short paved loop trail, which was shown in 2005 Master Plan might be added. There should be expanded community gardens, additional parking. A key question that has been repeated: Can this be a Charlestown version of a Springton Manor – ie a working farm that is set up to be an educational experience?
 - d) Spring Oak & Tyler Griffen - There are about 6 acres of township land between these two developments where an athletic field, a pavillion, tennis courts are conceptualized. Spring Oak construction could begin in 2012.

- 9) **Tom explained the concept of Service Areas of parks:** The range that people are willing to travel to use a particular Park factors into the fees charged developers to support public recreation in a township. According to the Service Area formula, based on accessibility and services provided, Charlestown Park is a major service area. The Devault area will be very desirable and will attract people from a large area

10) **Members of the audience pointed out two items that have not been addressed:**

- a) Bike routes. Chester County does not include bicycling on its trails map for Charlestown because the roads are too narrow. The question: how to address bike routes, bike lanes, bike paths (off road), regional bike routes including Charlestown remains.
 - i) **Bill Casswell offered to sketch out one or two bike routes in Charlestown.** He also recommended the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, which publishes regional maps of bike routes. **Bill will get the information to Bob Jones and to Tom Committa.**
- b) Rails to trails: Chris Lawrence talked briefly about the Candy trail: A rails to trails project linking Phoenixville to Devault. This will be an important trails link! **Chris asked that anyone interested in serving as a liaison to Norfolk Southern, owner of the rails, during the summer contact him. (river_wind@mac.com).**

11) **After a break, Tom asked that the audience participate in making priority lists for each park.**

- a) Concern was voiced that by focusing on the current 4 parks, we aren't looking at all the possibilities in the twp.
- b) Also, concerns about funding parks was expressed. Have easements usurped the available grant money at the expense of parks. Bob Jones explained that these basically are funded from two different funding pots.

12) **Priorities for future recreation in the township:**

- a) **Jenkins Park:**
 - i) Make a short paved trail for baby carriages off of parking area.
 - ii) Maybe make an internal trail, adventure trail, fitness trail.
 - iii) Keep the Jenkins property as is. NO PARK
- b) **Brightside Park:**
 - i) Designated parking.
 - ii) Rehab barn for usage – adapt existing buildings for recreational use.
 - iii) refurbish barns as barns ala Springton Manor
 - iv) Pavillion – covered area for picnic tables, 30 by 40 feet.
 - v) Picnic area – exists already.
 - vi) Brightside trail expanded and maintained. Some sort of surface on the trail.
 - vii) Security for the picnic area.
 - viii) Tree banks
- c) **Charlestown Park:**
 - i) Community Center – ampitheater would do parking lots and utilities.
 - ii) Larger playground for all age kids. Tot lot.
 - iii) Improve bathrooms, picnic area.
- d) **Devault:**
 - i) Expansion of playing fields in Devault. Rectangular – multi purpose. Maybe have more fields.

e) General recommendations:

- i) #1 item: a community center. Someplace – Tyler Griffith – or Brightside or Charlestown Park.
- ii) Multi purpose playing fields at appropriate locations.
- iii) Linking trails – to be able to walk to work.

13) There will be a meeting of the Historic Society at the Grange on June 6.

- a) Could this be a possible community center? It already has parking and a stage.

14) On June 4, at the Supervisors' meeting, 7:30 at the GV middle school, Tom will report on the efforts to respond to the supervisors' charge to develop a coordinated plan for recreation in Charlestown. Be sure to come!.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Staas
Chair, Trails Committee

ADDENDA: TABULATIONS

Park, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan

Charlestown Township – Chester County, PA

VISIONING SESSION – PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2: March 29, 2012

Responses to Question 3

Hypothetically, how would you spend/dispense \$100.00 of park, recreation, open space, and/or trail resources? (The list below reflects the order of dollar values, from highest to lowest from the 2-29-12 respondents.)

TABULATIONS: April 9, 2012

<u>Item</u>	<u>Indicate Priorities</u>			<u>Indicate Your</u>
	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>#1 Choice</u>
Improve/Rehabilitate Existing Parks & Recreation Areas	13	7	1	(6)
Acquire Land for Open Space	7	5	6	
Develop New Trails	10	6	2	(2)
Protect Historic Resources	10	8	1	
Improve/Rehabilitate Existing Trails & Signs	12	4	2	
Develop New Parks & Recreation Areas	7	6	6	

Acquire Easements to Preserve Open Space	11	5	3	(6)
Picnic Tables	5	10	3	
Gateway Signage	3	6	9	
Parking	4	10	5	
Barn Rehabilitation	6	2	10	
Historic Markers	2	11	5	
Benches	3	9	6	
Lighting	1	7	10	
Landscaping	1	5	12	
Tennis Court	4	2	12	(1)
Children's Playground Equipment	8	6	4	
Dog Park	5	6	7	

Open Area & Seating for Theater, Concerts	6	8	5	(4)
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A = Highest Priority; B = Moderate Priority; C = Low Priority

Park, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan

Charlestown Township, Chester County, PA

VISIONING SESSION – PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2: March 29, 2012

Place an (X) to indicate where you believe certain Park and Recreational Facilities should be located.

TABULATIONS: April 9, 2012

Existing Park & Recreational Facilities													
P & R facilities	A. Charlestown Park	B. Brightside Farm	C. Charlestown E.S.	D. Ice Dam	E. Jenkins Tract	F. 6.2 Ac. Devault	G. Baughman Mill	H. Rev War Cemetary	I. Longwood School	J. Grange	K. Rapp House	L. Nature Center	M. Markley
1. Amphitheatre	6	7	3		2	3				1		1	
2. Arts Venue	1	2	2		1	2	9			6	5	5	
3. Baseball/Softball Field	6	1	2			3						1	
4. Basketball Courts	8	1	3			2							
5. Biking Trails	5	9	1	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
6. Community Gardens		10				1			1			2	2
7. Cross-Country Ski Trails	2	5	2	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8. Dog Park	8	7			3	5							
9. Equestrian Trails	3	6	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10. Fitness Trails	8	6	3	2	5	1						1	
11. Hiking Trails	3	8	2	6	4	1							

12. Ice Skating Park				2		2				1		2	1
P & R facilities	A. Charlestown Park	B. Brightside Farm	C. Charlestown E.S.	D. Ice Dam	E. Jenkins Tract	F. 6.2 Ac. Devault	G. Baughman Mill	H. Rev War	I. Longwood School	J. Grange	K. Rapp House	L. Nature Center	M. Markley
13. Lacrosse Field	7	1	1			2							
14. Music Venue	5	11	2		1	3				5	1	2	
15. Nature Trails	1	6	1	9	3		1	1				4	1
16. Passive Open Space	1	7		2	6	1		3	1				
17. Picnic Pavilion	10	9		2	7	4	4					2	
18. Picnic Tables	12	6		4	6	3	2		1			1	
19. Playground	10	4	3		5	5	2			1			
20. Restrooms	15	12	3		3	3	3	1		6	3	1	
21. Senior Center	5	6	1			1	1			4	2	2	
22. Sledding Hill	4		1									1	
23. Soccer	11	2	2			2							
24. Teen Center	3	4	1			3				2			
25. Tennis Courts	6	3	3			4				2			
26. Theatre Venue	6	8	4		1	4				5		2	
27. Tot Lot	4	2	3		3		2			1			
28. Volleyball	7	4	2			2							