

Trails Committee Meeting Minutes

East Brandywine Township Building

April 12, 2016 @ 7:00 PM

Members Present: Chairman Mike Wagoner, Dave Summers, Ian Plane, Muriel Kennedy, and Recording Secretary Dick Williams.

Members Absent: Vice-Chairman Trevor Weiss

Guests: Vice-Chairman of the East Brandywine Township Board of Supervisors Jay Fischer, Assistant Township Manager Luke Reven and resident Charles Lindsay

Chairman Mike Wagoner called the meeting to order. Assistant Township Manager Reven reported that Vice-Chairman Weiss would be unable to routinely attend meetings due to an illness in his family. A brief discussion of the situation ensued (additional discussion and action reported at the end of the Minutes).

Chairman Wagoner called for a vote to approve the minutes from previous meetings on January 12 and March 8, 2016, noting that anyone requesting changes should feel free to speak up (there was no quorum at the March 8 meeting and the February meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions). Member Summers moved to approve and Member Kennedy seconded. The minutes were approved.

Chairman Wagoner initiated what turned out to be a lengthy discussion of the trail routing through the Hopewell development and distributed copies of the Hopewell topographic survey. Assistant Township Manager Reven noted that McMahon Associates began the topographic survey on March 16 and discovered that the wetland areas were bigger than indicated on the subdivision map, adding that the pink area on the map projected for Committee review is the new wetlands area. Assistant Township Manager Reven and Chairman Wagoner reported, among other things, (1) that a routing of the trail between lots 14 and 15 would require significant tree removal; (2) buffering was a serious problem for at least one of the lots; (3) one lot owner had mistakenly claimed open space as part of their lot; (4) a "boardwalk" across wetlands via the longer route "green line" would not be required if the "shortest possible distance" route alternative was selected; (5) Lot 14 owners were described as not favorably disposed toward the trail, but the Township possessed an existing easement.

Other remarks:

Supervisor Fischer noted that everything in front of the Jones lot, from the property line to the cul de sac, appears to be their front yard.

Assistant Township Manager Reven remarked that the “yellow line is the best route...but as you walk it, you can see the backs of the houses.”

Chairman Wagoner noticed that “the path on the top of the berm is being mowed.”

Assistant Township Manager Reven projected photos taken from a walk through the subdivision, including a view from the cul de sac looking toward Lot 14.

Township Supervisor Fischer questioned the accuracy of a property line based on the location of a utility easement, noting that “we will have to go back to the sub-division plan for Heatherwynd West.

Assistant Township Manager Reven reported that “Next month we will get the official visit and recommendations for the plan from McMahan.”

Township Supervisor Fischer remarked that “The big issue will be how difficult it will be to cross the wetlands. Chairman Wagoner responded “Not that difficult.” Assistant Township Manager Reven added that “There is running water.” Chairman Wagoner noted that “...The only other concern is to get up to the top of the embankment...the wet section would require a boardwalk.

Assistant Township Manager Reven expressed concern that his photos show that (people walking) on the berms would be looking (directly) into some of the houses. Chairman Wagoner responded that “Three to four houses might be impacted...Add some additional screening in addition to what they already have in place. That might be a good biscuit to give them.”

Member Summers noted that the Connell Lot has the house located very close to the property line. On viewing a projected photo, he indicated that he liked the location of the trail on or near to the property line, in which the trail appeared to be approximately 15 to 25 feet from the house.

Assistant Township Manager Reven projected a photo of a densely wooded area, noting that a 15 foot easement would require lots of tree removal and two greater than 90 degree turns.

Chairman Wagoner noted that “going around the bottom of the basin seems like a more environmentally sensitive route that minimizes going through the trees and avoids the sharp cutback angles,” adding that, “we should walk it (the environmentally sensitive route that would require a boardwalk).” He also noted that, “The route close to the house (mentioned earlier by member Summers) might be the better option from a cost standpoint.”

Assistant Township Manager Reven projected the lot parcel map.

Chairman Wagoner remarked that, “We will need to sell (the routing of the path) to the Connells and the Ameyes.”

Assistant Township Manager Reven noted that, "the trail drops you off right across from the Fanellis (sp?). Chairman Wagoner remarked that, "People will just walk up the hill (to get to Hopewell). Township Supervisor Fischer noted that, "We don't want to encourage people to walk along Hopewell to get to Dilworth.

Chairman Wagoner suggested a wooden bridge as an alternative to blunt the impact on 213 Montpelier. He added that traffic on the trail will likely only be local.

Chairman Wagoner asked if there was any word on the success or failure of the Township's application for funding from the County's VPP Spring program. Assistant Township Manager Reven replied that nothing had been reported so far and that "we need to get an update."

Chairman Wagoner noted that the Township was waiting to hear back from PECO on its application for funding. Assistant Township Manager Reven noted that, if successful, the grant would be \$10,000 and would be applied toward the Hopewell – Community Park connection.

Chairman Wagoner asked, "If we don't get this – will the Township be able to cover the acquisition of land (which has been appraised at \$16000 to \$19000) an improvements in the amount of \$50,000?"

Assistant Township Manager Reven reported affirmatively and noted that the improvements could be covered with funds available from the Township's Open Space Fund.

Chairman Wagoner asked when the purchase would occur. Assistant Township Manager Reven replied that, "Legal is busy." Chairman Wagoner asked, "Do we need to get someone else to work on it?" Assistant Township Manager Reven replied "No, I'll wait." Chairman Wagoner asked when will closing occur. Township Supervisor Fischer responded that it would take six months, adding that that would be a fast track.

Chairman Wagoner asked, "Do we need to get estimates from Yerkes (serving currently as Township Engineer)?" Township Supervisor Fischer replied that, "We got an estimate from them and it was ugly." Chairman Wagoner responded, "We've had Yerkes a long time. Change is good." Assistant Township Manager Reven noted, "We need a purchase agreement and the landowner's agreement before we get estimates."

Chairman Wagoner remarked, "We can expect Hopewell to ask for their connection to the Park." Assistant Township Manager Reven replied that, "the end of August, beginning of September is when McMahan has us presenting to Hopewell.

Turning to new topics...

Assistant Township Manager Reven noted that the flood damage to the Trailhead had been repaired and reported to Chairman Wagoner that Dr. Whitaker, who had established the Chester County Foundation Fund, had passed on. He added that Dr. Whitaker's wife would

assume his duties on the Foundation's board and that she would be building the memorial that will be constructed in the area of the Trailhead. He offered that, "The completion of the trail along Dowlin Forge will help sell the trail to the community.

Chairman Wagoner noted that, "We will try to put in a parking lot on the Whitaker property."

Off-agenda topics...

Member Ian Plane stated that the e-mail received from Vice-chairman Trevor Weiss, "Sounded like a resignation to me." Chairman Wagoner responded, "Let's recruit for the position in the 'Milemarker,'" adding that "I'll also contact Dave (works for Chester County Trails, lives in Hopewell)."

Assistant Township Manager Reven asked Township Supervisor Fischer, "Jay, do you need an official resignation?" Township Supervisor Fischer responded, "Yes." Assistant Township Manager Reven noted that, "a recommendation of the Committee to the Board of Supervisors would suffice." Member Summers said, "Look up the e-mail Trevor sent just prior to the January meeting. It's best to reach out to him first before we go to the Board." Chairman Wagoner noted that, "After we hear from him, at our next meeting, we can send a recommendation to the Board."

Assistant Township Manager Reven agreed to reach out to Trevor.

Chairman Wagoner reported on plans for the Chester Valley Trail, noting that there will be a connection from Main Street in Exton to Quarry Road (near Clover Mill Road) and following the old railroad right of way. The Whitford Bridge and the Downingtown high trestle will be restored at an estimated cost of \$5 million, extending the trail to Thorndale. In Thorndale, the trail will connect with the Caln Trail.

Township Supervisor Fischer reported that Sly Fox Brewery was sponsoring a run from South Street in Philadelphia to Pottstown and back.

Chairman Wagoner noted that the Brandywine Conservancy was putting together an 80-mile and a 40-mile loop along the East and West branches of the Brandywine, through Coatesville and Modena. He added that this would include a section of trail between Downingtown and West Chester along the abandoned former trolley line.

Member Summers moved to adjourn. Chairman Wagoner seconded and the Committee concluded the session.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dick Williams

Members:

Dave Summers
426 Corner Ketch Road
Downingtown, PA 19335

Trevor Weiss, Vice-Chairman
126 Helm Way
Downingtown, PA 19335

Richard Williams
600 Pancoast Lane
Downingtown, PA 19335

Muriel Kennedy
380 North Buck
Downingtown, PA 19335

Ian Plane
108 Great Oak Drive
Downingtown, PA 19335

Michael Wagoner, Chairman
241 Jefferis Road
Downingtown, PA 19335