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W W W . S I M O N E C O L L I N S . C O M

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Detweiler Park Master Site Plan	Project No.:	19060.10
Location:	Dauphin County Conservation District Office 1451 Peters Mountain Rd Dauphin, PA 17018-9504	Meeting Date/ Time:	02/03/2020 7:00PM – 8:30 PM
Re:	Public Meeting #1: Project Background / Brainstorming		

ATTENDEES:

Please see attendee sign-in sheets

NOTES:

1. Commissioner Jeff Haste began the meeting by welcoming all attendees. He spoke of the need of park space in the area and that the site already gets many visitors. He told the attendees that his hope was that everyone would come together and create a masterplan that best reflects the wishes of the community. He described how a successful process can lead to a successful park, much like the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art.
2. Peter Simone (Peter S.) started the presentation with introductions of the consultant team, the agenda for the meeting and the scope of work for the consultant team. He introduced Mike McGraw (Mike M.) of Applied Ecological Services Inc.
3. Mike M. described his scope of work on the project in which he would be investigating the ecological layers of the site and looking to get a snapshot of existing wildlife. He asked for attendees that were interested in volunteering in data collection during certain times of the season, to contact him.
4. Peter S. mentioned that there was contact information on the agenda handout and that if anyone wanted to contact Mike M. or had any comments, they should reach out to the contacts listed. Peter S. continued with the presentation by providing an overview of the master planning process and the project schedule.
5. Sarah Leeper (Sarah L.) continued the presentation with the initial analysis of the site and a photographic site tour.

- 6.** Peter S. told the attendees that the public survey and wikimapping were now live and stressed that it was important to get out this information to friends and neighbors who are not in attendance so that the consultants can get a better idea of ideas from the community.
- 7.** Peter S. led the attendees through an interactive discussion where they brainstormed goals, facts, concepts, and partners. Please see list at the end of the notes for ideas and information gathered from the brainstorming exercise. The following is a summary of key points from the discussion during the brainstorming session.
- 8.** Many attendees mentioned the natural beauty, site vistas, and trails, and that they would like the site to remain natural and provide value for future generations. One attendee proposed using an area as a permaculture/food forest to provide food for wildlife and the community.
- 9.** Attendees stated that the Girls and Boys Scouts should be considered as partners, and that the site could provide opportunities for earning merit badges. It was also mentioned that these groups would be helpful with site stewardship. Pete S. and Mike M. indicated that stewardship of the site is very important and cannot be done by the county alone. Mike M. noted that creating a stewardship plan will come as more data is gathered to identify stressed areas, and that any volunteer help is welcomed. Pete S. added that this type of work is generational and to be successful would require a flexible, long-term plan.
- 10.** Attendees from several bicycle groups (SAMBA-Susquehanna Mountain Biking Association, Susquehanna Bicycle Coalition, and Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League) expressed interest for mountain bike trails on site and noted their group's heavy involvement in stewardship in other surrounding areas.
- 11.** Peter S. noted that there can be some controversy associated with mountain bike trails, but this process will consider all ideas and that education the public regarding impacts /conflicts or benefits of various user group is important part of the master plan process. He explained his successful partnership with mountain biking groups in the Wissahickon Park (Philadelphia) and the importance of such groups when it comes to care of the site.
- 12.** A representative of the Harrisburg Area Flying Society spoke of their desire to use the former airstrip area for model airplanes. He noted that they currently have 50 members and that the group would be willing to work with local groups and neighbors to make sure they do not disturb anyone. He mentioned that an area they had been using is now going to be developed and that they would only need about 700 x 25 ft of the airstrip meadow.
- 13.** Many of the attendees discussed the importance of ADA accessibility and provided some examples of successful ADA paths in natural areas, such as Sweet Arrow Lake and King's Gap State Park.

- 14.** Peter S. stated that Landscape Architects are obligated to make areas accessible, but it is also the right thing to do. He described that use of materials and surfaces will be investigated in the process to provide accessibility where feasible. He further described some materials that could be used such as stone dust and asphalt. He noted that many do not perceive asphalt walkways as appropriate in a natural area, however asphalt does provide a durable, low maintenance surface, and when properly designed can limit erosion.
- 15.** An attendee mentioned that the site sees use in the winter for cross country skiing but noted that access to the desirable level areas can be difficult. Pete S. remarked that there are many programming ideas that can be used on the site and that winter programming such as cross-country skiing and sledding could provide for winter activities. He added that the site is large and can accommodate a myriad of programs, such as night-sky viewing or nocturnal animal observation hikes. He noted that night-time could be a very peaceful time to enjoy the site. Mike M. mentioned that he has noticed various owl species on site. Another attendee stated that David's Field is already considered as a "secret night site" for some. One attendee suggested that the Harrisburg Astronomy Society could be a partner.
- 16.** An attendee asked about the monoculture pine forest area and provided a concept of creating a "cathedral tunnel/space" by lobbing up the low branches. Another asked if they could be sold for lumber.
- 17.** Peter S. stated that the pine trees are probably reaching their age limit and are in decline. He noted that they wouldn't provide much value as lumber, perhaps just pulp or site mulch. He added that the "cathedral" idea could provide a transitional use as other plants or trees are introduced into the area. An attendee stated that they want big trees to fill the site in the future. Peter S. answered that understanding climate change and thinking 100 years in the future will provide best opportunities for these spaces.
- 18.** An attendee noted that the Penn State Master Gardeners could be considered a partner and as educators about native plants and their care.
- 19.** An attendee stated that the Detweiler's recognized the creek that ran through the site and its' important relationship to Clark's Creek. He added that fishing is important to the community. Another added that conservation and enhancement of the riparian buffers should be considered in the plan.
- 20.** Mike M. agreed that protection of headwaters and wetlands on site were important and noted that not all wetlands have been identified on the site. Mike M. also noted that there are many other natural resources to be identified and preserved such as the stand of native *ilex opaca* "American Holly" that exists on site and is not typical for the region.
- 21.** An attendee expressed concerns of an additional entrance from Clarks Valley Road. She noted that the road was very busy.

- 22.** Peter S. noted that this would be considered in the masterplan and that Peters Mountain Road is also busy. Plan recommendations will ensure safe vehicular access into and out of the park.
- 23.** An attendee expressed concern for added waste on the site as visitation increased and asked what could be done to keep waste down and the site sustainable.
- 24.** Peter S. noted that the consultants would work with the County to provide best practices to reduce negative human impact to the park. Carl Dickson (Carl D.) mentioned that the site is by far the largest park site in the County and using grants and volunteers, perhaps forming of a "Friends of" group, would help in keeping the park beautiful.
- 25.** Some attendees noted the need for amenities or added ones such as nice restrooms, picnic tables and wayfinding signs. Others asked for educational signage. One attendee commented that she liked the bright orange Adirondack chair; noting that they grabbed your attention from far away and helped draw visitors into new parts of the park.
- 26.** An attendee noted that the Dauphin County Woodland Owners Association could be considered a partner and assist with education of woodland stewardship.
- 27.** An attendee asked about deer control and noted that there had been several deer – car accidents on surrounding roads in the past six months and there was a sizable deer population on site. He suggested controlled deer hunts as a way to manage deer population.
- 28.** Peter S. noted that this has been done in some parks. Carl D. stated that this is not done in Dauphin County Parks. Mike M. explained that the stewardship plan will identify strategies for protection of planted restoration areas and deer population control.
- 29.** Other thoughts expressed by attendees for the park included connections to the Appalachian Trail, limited/controlled equestrian use, and sustainable trail development. Peter S. asked about consideration of active uses such as a soccer field. The attendees noted that they would not be interested in the development of active sports fields on site.
- 30.** An attendee asked if the consultants would be presenting a proposed plan at the committee meetings. Peter S. explained that the team would be presenting ongoing analysis work and initial ideas at the upcoming committee meetings and that the draft plan would evolve from the public and committee input we receive over the next 6 months and would be presented to the public in September.
- 31.** Peter S. went over next steps and repeated the need for attendees to get the word out about the survey, wikimapping, and upcoming meetings. He thanked everyone for a great meeting.

This report represents the Professional's summation of the proceedings and is not a transcript. Unless written notice of any correction or clarification is received by the Professional within ten days of issue, the report shall be considered factually correct and shall become part of the official project record.

Sincerely,
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



Rob Gladfelter, ASLA

The following is the information and ideas gathered from the brain storming exercise:

GOALS:

- Develop a Master Plan
- Improve public access
- Forest management plan
- Watershed enhancement
- Honor unique features
- Preserve spirit of natural environment
- 100-year restoration plan
- Honor Detweiler Legacy
- Zero waste

Facts:

- 411Acres
- Existing trails
- Place to get "lost"
- Range of experiences – fields to woods
- Primary access from DCCD
- *Alanthus altissima* on site
- Large vines – most invasive
- Secret meadow
- Great Horn and Eastern Screech Owls
- Headwaters on site
- Red squirrel population in pines
- *Ilex opaca* on site
- Largest county park
- Orange chairs grab attention

- 11 deer accidents on roads in past 6 months
- Horse trail at Ned Smith Center has issues
- 21 different butterflies and moths
- 9 dragonfly species

Concepts:

- Environmental education
- Maintain large open fields
- Protect viewsheds
- Keep natural
- Permaculture / food forest
- Introduce Chestnuts, pawpaw, native fruits
- Native Fruits Harvest festival
- Restrooms
- ADA trail access
- Use portion of airstrip for model plane club
- Trail upkeep and maintenance
- Prioritize invasive removal and restoration
- Use trail color to denote trail difficulty
- Wayfinding / trail blazing
- Shared used /multi-use bike trails
- Badge earning opportunities Boy/Girl Scouts

- Star gazing
- Peters Mountain Rd access point
- Consult people with disabilities
- Cross country skiing
- Community resilience
- Sledding
- Better access to level trails
- Camping
- Group camping events
- Create “Cathedral Tunnel” in pines
- Plant Big trees
- Re-route steep slope trails
- Foster stewardship relationships with adjacent landowners
- Long term-add acreage to site
- Picnic areas
- Safe roadway access
- Shade structure over trout hatchery
- Maintain fish stocking
- Donor trees and benches programs
- Volunteer work groups
- Deer population control
- AT trail connection
- Children mountain bike trails
- Use trails to assist with stormwater management / erosion
- Develop sustainable trails
- No active recreation
- Use i-naturalists to share data
- Create a Friends of a Park

Partners:

- DCNR
- Middle Paxton Township
- Dauphin County Anglers & Conservationists
- Girl Scouts – 13 members
- Boy Scouts
- SAMBA- Susquehanna Area Mountain Bike Association
- Harrisburg Area Flying Society
- Astronomical Society of Harrisburg
- Master Gardener – Penn State Extension
- Dauphin County Woodland Owners Association
- PA Interscholastic Cycling League