

**Planning Commission
Minutes
December 5, 2022
7:00 PM**

Present:

Brett MacKay
Joseph Vavra
Patricia Younce
Nancy Becker
Ed Buonocore
Dennis McGeehan
Douglas Leach
Matt Chartrand

Staff:

Carolyn Shisler, Asst. Zoning & Planning Officer
Mary Stover, Township Engineer CKS

Supervisor Rich Marino was present.

Approval of the November 14, 2022 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Ms. Becker made a motion to approve the November 14, 2022 meeting minutes with one change on page 2 rewording something from Mr. Chartrand. Mr. Vavra seconded. All were in favor.

Sidewalk Connectivity Study – Committee Meeting #2

Presented by: Peter Simone
Emma Haley - Project Manager Architect

Mr. Peter Simone presented a slide show at the second committee meeting for the Sidewalk Connectivity Study. He stated these meetings will go through June of 2023.

Mr. Simone stated that at the November meeting for the public about 20 residents came out. He went over several desired routes of some of the connecting points and showed several slides and described areas where improvements could be located and went through the base mapping.

Ms. Haley went over the survey monkey and Wikimap results; she stated there was a total of 124 surveys submitted and 30 comments. Ms. Haley stated the trends probably will not change that much but will be monitored for the next several months.

Ms. Haley went over the results and stated the connections would primarily be used for exercise not for transportation. She went over results of many of the questions and comments.

Ms. Haley stated that the result of what area or open space is visited most, the answer was Fischer's Park. She stated that Bustard Road is a key corridor to get to the parks as well.

Ms. Younce spoke about connecting from the sports fields to Freddy Hill or somewhere to go after the sporting events for kids. Ms. Haley went over transportation to schools.

Mr. Chartrand spoke about Pennfield Middle School and the limited areas that the kids can walk to and from for that school. He added the opportunity at the high school to walk to places is even less depending on where you live.

Ms. Haley discussed adding safer crossings, bridges, guards, and a traffic light at Inglewood Elementary on Allentown Road were a few items mentioned in the survey results for the schools in the Township.

Ms. Haley stated the surveys indicated that there was one person who bikes to work and lives and works in Towamencin. She stated only seven percent of the survey results suggested they would use the connections for public transportation. There was also a positive response in the residents agreeing to travel times slightly longer for safety.

Mr. Simone went over the areas of Forty Foot Road, Allentown Road, Weikel Road and Morris Road and noted how sidewalks would be so beneficial. He stated that bike lanes were suggested along Welsh Road which would help get access to the train station as well as trails or connections from Firehouse Park to Fischer Park.

Mr. Simone spoke about the PECO easement toward Bustard and stated he wanted to reach out to them again to possibly get them to agree to a trail going along there, possibly near the sewer plant. He suggested that a trail could go near the tree farm and down to Kriebel Road.

Mr. Simone also went over the possibility of closing Kriebel Road to complete a better trail system.

Mr. Simone spoke about a trail to Kibbler Meadows or through it and how this would be beneficial in using this park. He stated the north corridor areas of parks that can be connected.

Ms. Younce asked if there was a way to connect Sumneytown Pike to Fischers Park and Mr. Simone said yes. Mr. Simone went over the existing conditions, the off road trails and a map showing the analysis.

Ms. Haley described the analysis and went over the rating of the existing roads shown on the presentation. Mr. Simone went over the map and the ratings. Ms. Haley showed the accident data and compared it to the map with the rating of the existing roads. She explained they plotted the pedestrian accidents and will be adding the vehicle accidents once they get the data.

Ms. Haley explained they are also looking at bridges and underpasses and starting to identify residential developments. They want to start to see how they can connect all of them together. She explained the Strava run/biking map and showed a map of where people predominately run in the Township. Ms. Haley will show the future proposed changes on these maps and connections and will identify the Public Transportation areas and service areas.

They are hoping to see where sidewalks are missing to these areas and to the schools.

Mr. Simone stated they need to add Nash Elementary school to this data.

Ms. Haley stated they want to add commercial areas and they will look at the walk map "10 min walk" DCNR mapped neighborhoods and where they need to get to.

Mr. Chartrand stated where he lives is the high need area.

Emma stated they will add one mile radius so they can map connecting in the high need areas. And then provide a greater area to the park and trail corridors.

Mr. Simone stated it will be difficult to get sidewalks on Sumneytown Pike but they can certainly get some crosswalks etc.

He will send the PDF tomorrow to take a look at. He went over the improvement toolbox and explained the symbols and what each means.

Mr. Simone explained how the tools work and how they will be added on the maps.

Discussion about speed cushions. Mr. Simone stated the ADA ramps on the sidewalks are good but no crosswalks painted and need to follow up with PW to make sure they repaint them.

Mr. Simone stated they will go over Preliminary Route Concepts. He explained Vision Zero - it's an initiative that the township has a goal of zero fatalities for pedestrians. He explained it is relatively a poor design minus human error, etc. It will be difficult but it is a growing movement in the United States. If you have the aspirational goal and the townships ties it to their Zoning it will be easier to get funding.

Mr. Simone went over the route concepts that may be paths, trails and sidewalks and a combination of all of them.

Mr. Simone went over the proposed connections and went over the NPHS area. Discussion regarding a trail that could possibly go through the fields to the school from the Bridal Path Area. Mr. Chartrand explained that NP came in to present a 9th grade center and if they come in to propose this we can address a path system at that time
Discussion regarding this and suggesting sidewalks

Mr. Simone went over things surrounding dock Mennonite. Had a conversation regarding a path or driveway to the park and access from Mark N. PSDC and working with them to get access.

Discussion regarding veterans park. And Orville and Allentown. Sidewalk connections there. He said that would be tough to retrofit and there are gaps along Allentown road, etc. Crosswalks are needed to all residential areas. Allentown and Valley Forge he suggested a round a bout. Ms. Younce stated she is seeing more and more of them. Mr. Simone stated it is a positive change - huge safety improvement. No need to maintain the light and less impact for the traffic.

Mr. Vavra stated there is one at 73 and 29 and it works well.

Mr. Simone went over the next steps. This was a quick overview. Next public meeting is Feb 9th and they will put this things into a more sold form.

Ms. Younce is concerned about telling more people about the survey and get more people to take it. Mr. Simone stated they were pleased with the results so far. The newsletter and they are trying to get it out there. Ms. Younce stated they could put flyers at WaWas in the township. New letters from local legislators. Print more QR codes and post cards.

Ms. Younce suggested putting it on Facebook. And another e blast. 2 more - early January. Ms. Becker suggested sending them to the HOA's and distributing them to the condo associations, etc.

Mr. Chartrand asked if they are cutting off getting results and comments by a certain date and Mr. Simone stated they will keep it open til first of April. They want to give them an opportunity to participate.

They also have to reach out to the bike stores in the area, etc.

Mr. Chartrand - suggested North Wales running company would be a good one. Mr. Simone stated they will reach out to Septa at the train station to post it. Mr. Chartrand asked if they are trying to steer it only to Township residents? And Mr. Simone stated it is OK to get other residents. Fischer's park is a huge destination, etc.

Mr. Simone stated the master plan to get the bridge at Fischer's was from 20 years ago.

Ms. Younce - the corner of Troxel and Sumneytown - recommended to the BOS that sidewalks put on both sides and there are sidewalks but cannot connect at the corner - she asked what could be done and Mr. Simone stated

Last 5 years - recorded plans for Land Development for deferral of sidewalks - get that list to Mr. Simone - Colleen or myself? ZoningTemp.

Mr. Chartrand stated there is a fire access that goes through Cheswold and crosses Sumneytown pike . Could go through there and cross Sumneytown Pike.
That would be the connection to Sumneytown Pike.

Discussion regarding funding for the sidewalks. Mr. Bunocore asked if the shovel could hit the dirt in 2023 and Mr. Simone stated no. It would be years. The point is that this is a plan for the future.

Discussion for the best way to spend the grant money.

Ms. Becker explained that they need to get it on the books and it will happen. But if they don't get it on the books it will never happen. They planned many of the parks years ago and now they are existing parks.

Mr. Simone stated to keep in touch with them. Suggestions. Possibly another meeting. Preliminary meeting before the 9th as well as the 9th.

Some people will object no matter what they suggests. Mr. Chartrand. Is this only at the PC level and not BOS and Mr. Simone stated yes. They will present to the BOS after May or so. Of 2023.

Ms.Becker can you please send them the link so that they can share it.

New Business

Ms. Younce stated she was reading an article in the Reporter and saw the nice things for MCCC building and their new hospitality unit. She stated this leaves Towamencin losing the culinary institute in 2024 and having a spot vacant. Ms. Becker stated Mr. Nicoletti is looking at another college that would want to use the state-of-the-art facility.

Ms. Younce stated if it was vacant, it would be such a waste and asked if there was anything the Planning Commission members can do to help find a tenant.

There was a discussion regarding the Economic Development Committee and Mr. Chartrand suggested the county committee and stated the next meeting is on Thursday at Local Tap. He stated they are specifically looking for vacant spots and areas that can be filled. He stated it would be a potential opportunity to facilitate this and a way to highlight the space.

Ms. Becker stated that covid killed the school with online learning as they couldn't teach cooking over the internet. Mr. Chartrand stated he will go to the meeting on Thursday and find out more. He stated that MCDP group is the name of it.

The dates for the 2023 Planning Commission were discussed.

Mr. MacKay asked if we have any additional business.

Hearing none, Mr. Vavra made a motion to adjourn, and Ms. Becker seconded. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, .



Carolyn Shisler

Towamencin Township

Planning Commission Secretary/Asst. Zoning and Planning Officer