



Centre Region Council of Governments REGIONAL PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Serving the Borough of State College and the Townships of College, Ferguson, Harris and Patton

WHITEHALL ROAD REGIONAL PARKLANDS – MASTER SITE PLAN SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY MEETING #1

Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 7 PM at
the COG Building, Forum Room

A sign-in sheet was provided at the door for recording those in attendance and for signing up for future email updates. Updates regarding the park planning process will continue to be posted at www.crpr.org. Written suggestions (including via crprlive@gmail.com) submitted within 10 days were also included in this meeting summary (Attachment #2).

Welcome and Introductions *(with 55 in attendance, including 4 staff and 2 consultants)*

Ronald J. Woodhead, Director CRPR, welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave some basic information and history about the project.

- Regional Park Committee Members

From the COG Parks Capital Committee:

Dan Klees, College Township Dick Mascolo, Ferguson Township;
James Rosenberger, State College Borough

From the Centre Regional Recreation Authority:

Sue Mascolo, Ferguson Township Donna Conway, State College Borough;
Kathy Matason, College Township Chris Hurley, Patton Township

- Staff members:

Ronald J. Woodhead, Director CRPR; Jeff Hall, Recreation Supervisor - Sports & Fitness; Jim Steff, COG Executive Director; Diane Ishler, Office Manager

- Project Consultants:

Jim Pashek, Dan Jones

With a PowerPoint show, Mr. Jim Pashek, Pashek Associates, presented an overview of the regional park planning processes. He related that the planning process will use both public input and professional expertise. They will also use the data collected during the Oak Hall Regional Parkland planning process, inputs from these meetings, draft a recommendation to the Regional Parks Planning Committee, then make a final recommendation at a public forum in the spring. He discussed talked about the differences between the Oak Hall Parklands and Whitehall Road Parklands.

Mr. Dan Jones, Pashek Associates, reviewed Whitehall Road parklands, 100 acres (75 already owned and 25 that may be purchased in the future by Ferguson Township). He reviewed the site analysis that included the soils, access, slopes, location, surroundings, and the

specifics of each site (potentials and challenges). The analysis is much more than just facts, but includes cultural and natural information about the land.

Mr. Jones indicated they had five goals for this project: They wanted to 1) respect the environment, 2) respond to the community 3) put the right set of uses together in the right place 4) be economically feasible and 5) the park to be beautiful. The plan should also be orderly and logical.

Mr. Pashek related that the three, initial Concept Plans for Whitehall Road Parklands with some paper, pencils, and markers on each table. He asked attendees to gather at the tables to discuss what they liked or disliked about the concept drawings using the questions listed on the back of the Agenda. After 20 minutes, he brought the groups back to share their answers. A list of those suggestions is attached to this summary (*Attachment 1*).

After this, Mr. Pashek indicated that the planners would review all suggestions provided from the public, staff and interest parties. He reminded those in attendance that these were Concept Plans rather than detailed park plans. With these suggestions, a finalized Concept Plan can be prepared for the Regional Park Planning Committee, and a public forum will then be held to obtain more suggestions. The meeting concluded at 9:05 PM.

Attachment #1 Compiled Group Suggestions
Attachment #2 Written Comments & suggestions submitted thru 31 Oct 09.

*Funding assistance to acquire the regional parklands and to prepare the Master Site Plans has been provided by the five participating municipalities and by a grant from the PA DCNR "Community Conservation Partnership Program."
Whitehall Road Regional Parklands _ Master Site Plan: PA DCNR Project #BRC-TAG-13.6-589*

APPENDIX #1 – Suggestions Provided by Each Group (Compiled)

Concept 1:

Plus +

- Tennis court layout
- Roadway organization – good
- Room for tennis to grow
- Tennis area isolated
- Best security potential

Minus -

- Dog park not needed
- Monotonous layout – diamond shaped ballfields in SW corner preferred
- Crossing roadways to reach the fields (some concern)

Concept 2:

Plus +

- Tennis courts in a row

Minus -

- Tennis courts near dog park
- Meandering road

Concept 3:

Plus +

- Preferred ability to get to fields without crossing road
- Entrance- attractive open space, other uses
- Could reverse perimeter road if access via the conservation easement is an issue
- Courts are away from dog park
- Easier in-out from Whitehall Road
- Shield tennis courts from wind better
- Nice views to east

Minus -

- Tennis courts stacked
- Tennis courts between two parking areas
- No room for tennis area to grow
- An “athletic park” does not need the view

General Comments:

- Consider a loop road and beware of congestion during tournaments
- Consider one-way loop road
- Concern with chemical treatment of fields & runoff from paved areas
- Note standards for tennis (orientation, spacing, etc.)
- Security
- Team with the school district to enable the construction of better baseball fields
- Importance of parking and walking and the need for sportfields
- Complex Indoor Tennis Facility? Add Quick start courts – indoor and outdoor (6-8)
- Having one road access is a problem
- We need an indoor facility
- Keep blacktop to a minimum
- Make sure space is available for building over tennis courts in the future.
- Liked the common areas
- Leave room for bleachers – including at the tennis courts
- Trees – may cause litter on courts
- Café/gym – needs a destination
- Would not drive to just outdoor tennis – used covered
- Lacrosse and rugby are provided for.
- Tennis courts should be lighted; other fields also lighted
- An indoor facility would provide restrooms year round for all users.
- Need more adult baseball fields (especially if Shaner closes)

APPENDIX #2 – Post-Meeting Suggestions

Here is my input regarding the Whitehall Road 3 concept plans, if I am reading them correctly:

Plan 1:

pro-direct road

con-folks closest to Blue Course would be subject to more "traffic" in a park atmosphere

Plan 2:

pro-winding road can look attractive if it is used as a footpath

con-inconvenient if it is for cars

Plan 3:

pro-spur idea seems effective. It reminds me of current Tudek park, with main road and a spur to left for new tennis courts, a small spur to new pavilion on right, and long main lot

cons-none that I think of.

Questions for group as I cannot be there tonight:

Will there be a biking/walking path through to Rte 45 to access Shingletown?

Will there be a space or need for community vegetable gardens such as the well-used plots at Tudek?

Will there be a space dedicated for other community or local garden group, much as the Butterfly

Garden is a specialty at Tudek?

thank you for your time and efforts,

Sincerely,

Jessica Clothiaux

Hi,

I was unable to attend the planning meeting last evening but I would like to comment on the addition of year-round tennis facilities.

I believe that year-round tennis facilities would be one of the best additions to our current park features. Tennis is a great sport and one that is enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. I live close to the tennis courts at Orchard Park and use them frequently with my 12 year old son. He has come to love tennis and it is something fun that we can do together. The Orchard Park courts are busy much of the time, and we have had to wait to play there on several occasions, so more courts (covered or not) would definitely be used. There just aren't many options for playing during the winter months or when it is raining, so a covered facility would be, to quote my son, "totally awesome!" Personally, the thought of being able to play year-round again (I used to when I lived in the Philly suburbs) just makes me want to run out and buy new tennis shoes :)

Thanks for listening!

Jill Skipper (State College Borough)

I noticed the announcement about the community input for the new park near Whitehall and Blue Course, but was unable to attend. One thing that I think our community really needs is a bandshell. Of course, I have in mind an architecturally-pleasing, and acoustically-functioning bandshell reminiscent of the one in my hometown (Davenport, Iowa), which I've included pictures (enclosed). It is the home of the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival and a Blues Festival each year, and hosts many touring and local bands. It is one of the centerpieces of the local arts community. This kind of facility could serve many State College area groups: State College Area Municipal Band, Nittany Valley Symphony, local high schools, Penn State, summer music series, music festivals, arts fest, outdoor theatre, touring bands, etc. Parks are for more than baseball and soccer, and I just wanted to put in a vote for the cultural side of our community,

Best regards,

Eric Patterson (Patton Twp.)

Baseball field orientation: Optimum orientation is to locate home plate so that the pitcher is throwing across the sun and the batter is not facing it. The line from home plate through the pitcher's mound and second base should run east-northeast. Also there should be a batting cage or series of batting cages for the facilities at both the Oak hall and Whitehall facilities. Also here is document (there are many about field dimensions to back stop and other things.

[http://www.keepamericaplaying.com/pdfs/Field Layout/How to Layout a Baseball Field.pdf](http://www.keepamericaplaying.com/pdfs/Field%20Layout/How%20to%20Layout%20a%20Baseball%20Field.pdf)

thank you.

Tom Glass

TO: The Regional Park Planning Committee

I attended the October 21 regional park planning hearing and I was very surprised to hear a discussion of night time lighted facilities and indoor facilities (buildings). I am very opposed to the use of this park for nighttime (lighted) use, and I am very opposed to the construction of indoor facilities. My reasons are cost, security, noise and light pollution, night time traffic, construction traffic, and disrupted view-scape. The proposed conceptual plans as presented to the public at this time do not reflect indoor facilities (buildings) and do not indicate lighted facilities for night time use. I

believe the community at large would be very unhappy to incur the on-going expense and disruption of these buildings and lighted facilities. I believe that the Regional Park Planning Committee should clearly specify that this facility is indeed a "park", and is not an athletic building complex. My request for the Regional Park Planning Committee to plan for a water feature on the adjacent Conservation Area tract is (shown below).

Best regards,

Scott Thompson (State College Borough)

LETTER TEXT FOLLOWS...

TO: The Regional Parks Planning Committee

10/21/2009

FROM: Scott Thompson

SUBJECT: Whitehall Road Park and Conservation Area Tract

As a resident of the State College Borough, I am requesting that the Regional Parks Planning committee, and the COG general forum, include consideration of a "water feature" in the planning process for the Whitehall Road Park and adjacent Conservation Area Tract. The water feature could be a pond, man-made spring, or small wetland.

The Conservation Area tract appears to be an ideal candidate for the location of the water feature. This would be a passive recreational, vegetated, visually appealing feature for the park area. I believe it is consistent with the intent of the Conservation Area tract, which is to protect the watershed supplying the Water Authority's well field. Older topographic maps of this location indicate the presence of an intermittent stream draining the Conservation Area tract.

One possible embodiment of the "water feature" is a minor wetland populated with native species such as black willow, birches, elderberry, arrow-wood, smooth alder, and native wildflowers and grasses. A trail could encircle the wetland.

Additional benefits of the water feature include a destination for beneficial re-use water, protection of water tables for water authority well-fields, restoration of perennial flow in Slab Cabin creek, and a visually appealing boundary for the proposed park.

Thank you for your consideration

Scott Thompson (State College Borough)

Hello: These plans look beautiful! I am very excited about the possibility of making indoor tennis facilities available in the Centre region. Since this region only allows about 6 months of outdoor play (excluding the days that rain prohibits play), an indoor facility would be a huge asset to the community. Year round tennis is a sport that people of all ages can participate in and enjoy. Tennis also appeals to diverse members of the community, and as such helps to draw the community together. Thanks for adding tennis courts to the plan; please consider indoor facilities for this sport.

Best, Nancy McClure

I was not able to attend the Oct. 21 meeting but have studied the 3 different plans on the web site. I would urge the group to cover the 6 tennis courts, regardless of which plan. We desperately need tennis courts but without a cover, people cannot play year round. This is sadly lacking in the Centre region as frequently expressed. The numerous advantages of year-round tennis as a lifetime sport have been well documented. In addition, leagues and tournaments cannot function without back up space. This would not only be a hardship to players but would reduce the tournaments and therefore, income generated from the courts. State College is centrally located and should be holding tournaments and leagues, which presently are non-existent to minimal. There should be an office for collecting revenue and rest rooms close to the courts. Delaying the cover would be more expensive and would necessitate resurfacing the courts and making adjustments to the area, making the project a complete overhaul at a later date. I urge you to study this and "go all out" now. I would be glad to consult with you on this. My phone # is 814-466-(xxxx).

Thank you.

Dr. Joan Nessler

I was unable to attend the community meeting last week but appreciate you posting the Concept Plans for different park layouts. I'm delighted to see that 6 tennis courts are included on all three plans – more tennis facilities are needed in town.

Above all else, however, our community more year-round tennis facilities. I couldn't tell from the plan whether these courts are intended to be covered by a bubble in the winter months but that strikes me as a critical element in the planning process.

Also, recreational tennis players have a tendency to hit balls outside of the fenced-in area occasionally so it seems important to consider what is in the surrounding areas. For example, Concept Plan #1 has a community garden next to the courts and I suspect the gardeners will not appreciate tennis players stomping through their gardens to fetch stray balls. In that respect, Plans #2-3 are superior. From a parking perspective, I thought Concept Plan #3 did the best job of arranging the facilities to be close to different parking areas.

Thanks for your efforts to develop a park that will meet community needs.
Sincerely, David Conroy (Ferguson Township)

To whom it may concern:

Please see my thoughts/comments/suggestions about the Whitehall Concept Plans. The number of full sized soccer fields is appropriate at the current level as shown on the plans. It may be preferable for the fields to be stacked versus in a long line so it makes it easier to move from field to field quickly and see more games. Baseball would probably prefer the same structure. We need lighting for the fields so we can maximize the usage of fields. I do not see a concession area which would be a great way to raise money. As spread out as this is it might be best to had two areas. Overriding concerns would be drainage issues. There is not enough parking for when you run a tournament. Usually when one is ending the cars have not yet moved. But the new players are starting to arrive. Parking lots can get congested. Maybe an overflow parking lot should be included. Drinking fountains are important. An area that is hidden for the dumpsters, etc. Maybe an area that EMS can park that is central and accessable. I can see times when there will be football, soccer and baseball at the same time. It would be great to be able to share a common ems. Independent storage sheds so the various organizations can keep their stuff stored locally. This park will be a great addition to the Centre Region.

Dave Pepper, President, Centre Soccer Assn.

To whom it may concern:

This plan looks fabulous. I am involved in a number of different community groups that I think could make great use of this park/space including Centre Soccer, State College Lions Youth Football, and CRPR Fitness classes.

My thoughts/comments/suggestions about the Whitehall Concept Plans are below.

The number of full sized soccer fields is appropriate at the current level as shown on the plans.

Lighting a few soccer fields and turfing a few would give more use-time and allow for play on some fields longer into the Fall and earlier in the Spring. With the money being spent on the facility it seems a shame not to be able to utilize it from 6-11pm in September/ October/ November. Even lighting a few fields increases the scheduleable time significantly.

A dedicated concession area would be great. Even if sales are not permitted, sometimes for road races, soccer tournaments etc there is a need to provide some form of food for officials runners etc. A place that is clean would be nice. Electricity too. Kind of like the concession shed at South Track field.

As with Haymarket 2 and Fogelman, storage space is important. If groups could have their large items stored at the park that would be ideal. Separate lockable storage for each group would be great.

Consider the parking when having multiple events or a soccer/baseball tournament. Often a number of events are schedules back to back in order to maximize the field schedule. Having overflow parking might help during these transition times, between games, etc. Also

some tournaments might be able to take advantage of charging \$1 for parking (donation) as a way to make \$\$, or as a way to pay for the wages of people assigned to control parking (attendants). A single obvious access point would help with this. Then also an exit/entrance for EMS only, in case of emergency. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Jill E. Garrigan

After attending a part of the meeting and looking at the 3 different concepts, we believe the best plan for the tennis facility is concept one. However, we would like to see the tennis courts be covered year round. And with covered courts you will need to add more space to the tennis facility in order for the courts to be covered.

We believe that having indoor tennis courts would be a huge asset to this community. There are no indoor courts available to tennis players here in state college other than the courts at the university. The university courts are almost impossible to get court time and are very costly. Tennis is becoming more and more popular among all age groups. With year round tennis you can have many leagues, such as USTA, play all year. Weather no longer becomes a factor which helps eliminate make ups and equipment like rollers for water, brooms for leaves, etc. Covering the courts will also help with maintenance and resurfacing of the courts which is a substantial expense.

I hope you take these suggestions into consideration and realize that there are a number of individuals from this community that agree with me in that indoor courts would be a huge asset to this community.

Thank you,

Teri and Mark Mancuso

To Whom It May Concern:

I agree with Dave Pepper's comments (above). Also is there any way to consider an indoor soccer/athletic facility?

Thanks,

Ford McNutt

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express an interest for indoor tennis facilities at the Whitehall Rd. site. It would be very nice to be able to have my children as well as the rest of the family all year round. There seems to be more of a demand for this sport than in the past. Please consider this request seriously.

Thank you,

Janine Surovec
