



# Northern Chester County Parks & Recreation Board Forum Report

Tuesday March 9, 2010 7:00 - 8:30 P.M.  
Warwick Township Building

## Participants

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Suzanne Nastase	West Vincent	John Mikowychok	Chester County Parks and Recreation
Naomi Minarick	East Vincent	Jay Erb	North Coventry
Brian Wilde	East Vincent	Sara Schick	West Vincent Parks and Recreation
Cindy Moran	East Vincent	Karen Nocella	East Coventry Parks, Recreation and Conservation
Kim Merritt	Chester County Open Space Preservation	William Nesley	South Coventry OREO
John Hoekstra	GreenValleys Assn	Jim Barker	Warwick Township
Cathie Whitlock	South Coventry OREO	Stan Stubbe	North Coventry
Harold Kulp	East Coventry	Nancy Bartley	West Pikeland Parks and Recreation
Barbara Miller	West Pikeland Parks and Recreation	John Ellwanger	North Coventry Park and Recreation
Charles Jacob	Warwick	John Matthews	West Pikeland
Planning Team			
Ann Toole	Toole Recreation Planning	Michelle Brummer	Gannett Fleming

## Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions, and About the Plan – Chris McNeil and Michelle Brummer presented information about the project planning team and the Northern Chester County Federation consultant selection process.
2. Forum Discussion – Participants engaged in a discussion about the successes, challenges and opportunities regarding municipal parks and recreation in Northern Chester County.

## Discussion Results

### Parks & Recreation Board Successes

East Vincent Township – Park Design for Community Park on the Ridge

- many facilities
- well integrated
- connected trails

- demonstration meadow – award from Philadelphia Horticultural Society
- Community Day with friends

West Pikeland Township – Bridge to Bridge Trail

- along 113, 2 bridges, equestrian use
- signage, parking still in progress

South Coventry Township – Bought land to connect Woody’s Woods to Coventry Woods

- planning for Woody’s Woods
- Connie Batdorf Park – well used by non-residents

North Coventry Township – upgrades to Kenilworth Park (1970’s design)

- expansion of Coventry Woods
- streambank/riparian better restoration projects

West Vincent Township – Collaboration with township organizations; recent citizen survey:

- Community Day – Walking survey; Raffle entry
- Town Hall Meeting
- W. Vincent Township Newsletter
- Fire Department
- Receive/request survey
- Separate sports league poll

Warwick Township – 90 acre passive park (woods)

- adding new open space in partnerships
  - SCT, ENT, FPCCT to add 30 acres to Warwick County Park
  - NCT to add land to Coventry Woods toward 620 acres
- active in Hopewell Big Woods – trail links, economic development potential
  - Schuylkill River National Heritage – economic development
- re-use of 100 yr. old truss as a park feature; locally made with plaque pedestrian bridge
  - last stop on the Iron Heritage Trail
- 1990s Community
  - survey resorted with expression of passive rec. need; trails needed
  - survey findings are still used today

Chester County – Schuylkill River Trail

- 1982 – easement
  - other – parking trailhead at Crawley and at Spring City
  - 5.4 miles from EPT to Parkerford – currently under construction
  - \$406,000 in DCNR grant – April 15 ceremony
- Iron Heritage Trail
  - research, interpretive signage plan

## **Parks & Recreation Board Challenges**

- No money
- Tension between active and passive recreation advocates
- Conflicts between active rec. facilities and quiet neighborhoods (lights, noise, traffic/parking)
- Trails-private use only, “secret” trails
  - trail users who feel/act entitled to trail use
  - is a purchased easement the solution?
- Perception of criminal delinquent behavior on trails
  - some get the concept of “community policing” by trail users
  - perceived needs for tournament quality facilities
- Getting trails through the development process
  - no ordinance in place today per planning commission
  - e.g. 50% open space required in WVT
- Vocal minority as small as 1 person (silent/absent majority)
- Quantifying needs for fields, etc
  - evaluating best location for various facilities

## **One Important Thing the Plan Could Do**

- Inter-community coordination
- Facility sharing
- Fee-in-lieu
- Appropriate siting criteria standards
- ID gaps in recreation facilities in the region, e.g. general or specific facilities
  - today, community parks are similar in design and audience; ID need for diversity
- Complete, current inventory
- Capital reserve fund for park maintenance from facility fees
  - Some have established 4% reserve fund, others 10%
  - Lancaster examples uses includes fees e.g. leases

## **Parks and Recreation in 2020: Vision**

- Lifetime recreation/community center/senior center
  - Phoenixville Homes Proposal for community center: Library, senior center, computer, trail amenities, child daycare, police station; seeking funding
- Approved YMCA at Weatherstone in West Vincent Township
  - developer dependant
- Informational materials – brochure, calendar
- Completion of trails/connections from Schuylkill River Trail to French Creek Trail, Iron Heritage Trail, Horseshoe Trail, Boars Back Trail and signage for trailheads and resource interpretation
- Forge to Furnace Trail/Morgantown to Manayunk

- Horseshoe Trail moved off-road
- Publicity of trails as a system
- Best location for Park sky/stargazing and protection
- Fitness Trail with exercise stations
- Regional website with interactive map
- Examples of passive recreation suitable to natural resource context
- Best practices for recreation development
  - facilities
  - support: parking, restrooms
  - infrastructure: water, stormwater/drainage
  - other services: repair, food, lodging, medical care/first aid – economic development opportunities

### **Working Together: What About Joining Forces?**

- Sharing information
- Sharing facilities, e.g. fields
  - acquisition, development, maintenance?
  - willing to advocate to elected officials
- More coordinated special events
- Program/Management Staff/Communication/Maintenance –Equity! Equitable cost-sharing
- Scheduling of events/field use and rest