



School District Focus Group Meeting Minutes
Spring Meadows Community Park Update
Project No. 13.1141.001
Date: 04.30.2014

The meeting with South Middleton School District was held at the Township Municipal Building on 03.05.2014 for the above referenced project. The following people were in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Andrew Mears	JMT		
Ann Toole	Toole Recreation Planning		
Sarah Colondrillo	Director of Recreation		
Kurt Uhler	Director of Parks & Facilities		
Al Moyer	SMSD		
Joel Hain	SMSD		
Pat Dieter	SMSD		
Tom Merlie	SMSD		
Thomas Hayes	SMSD		
Rick Vensel	SMSD		
Jarrett Sweeney	SMT		
Joseph Mancuso	SMSD		

The purpose of the focus group meeting was to explore partnership opportunities for expansion, redevelopment, and the development of an Operation and Maintenance plan for Spring Meadows Park.

The following items were discussed:

1. S. Colondrillo introduced the consultant team and focus group members introduced themselves.
2. A. Mears reviewed the meeting agenda, presented a brief overview of JMT and Toole Recreation and discussed the planning process that would be undertaken to develop the park master plan.
3. An open discussion followed relative to the purpose of the focus group meeting and included the following comments and conclusions:
 - a. The District has the manpower to maintain facilities to the level of play required for high school sports. The District and Township have an established working relationship and have shared resources including equipment in the past. The School District has a need for high quality fields for scholastic play. The District would be willing to support the higher costs of field maintenance for the field quality needed.
 - b. Lacrosse is an emerging sport and may eventually become a Junior High sport.
 - c. The potential of the site for environmental education is an important component that should not be overlooked in the planning process. Currently the School District Campus does not have those opportunities. It would be important to include stormwater management in environmental education and use the wetland area.

- d. A. Toole requested a contact for the science department for follow-up conversations about the District's environmental curriculum. The group felt that it was imperative to meet with several of the teachers in the department and Dr. Moyer agreed to arrange for JMT to meet with the science department with teachers from both the high school and middle school.
- e. The District's Campus is landlocked and they are in need of more space. Several immediate and multiple needs that can be met through a partnership with the Township.
- f. A key component for the master plan should be flexibility in the design for meeting current needs and future needs not yet defined.
- g. The existing wetlands are an asset and should be incorporated into the design.
- h. Accessibility between Spring Meadows Park and the School Campus must consider safety.
- i. Space for equipment storage and concessions would be needed. It was noted that there are already concessions at Spring Meadows Park, however the relationship to the field areas is not optimum. The running of the concession stand needs to be addressed as no one has stepped up wanting to run it.
- j. The Township has recently developed two additional rectangular fields at Leaman Field. The intent is to move play on the smaller pop-up fields from Spring Meadows Park to this facility.
- k. Instead of building additional baseball fields, the existing baseball fields should be lighted.
- l. There is no fall baseball because the outfield is issued for field hockey. It is important for this plan to address how sports have changed e.g. year-round play rather than just play in traditional seasons.
- m. Currently the football teams have no designated or legitimate place to practice.
- n. The band uses fields to practice.
- o. The stadium is used by a number of organizations including youth football as well as twilight baseball. The turf field was developed four years ago as a community field and is used as such.
- p. Grass fields can only support a certain number of events per season and this is greatly diminished by playing on wet or soggy fields. The School District would tend to play under these conditions where the Township would not, requiring the fields to be closed until field conditions were suitable for play.
- q. A community room would be another asset to the park and should be considered. Middlesex Township has a community room that can be viewed as an example.
- r. Could a turf field be developed at Spring Meadows Park? Currently the existing turf field at the High School is booked.
- s. A possible solution would be to develop a second turf field at the School Campus and offset the loss of a grass field with use of fields at Spring Meadows Park.
- t. One of the major concerns for using facilities at Spring Meadows Park would be issues surrounding severe weather and addressing how to get the students back to the Campus.
- u. Accessibility from the school to the park is not clear but is an important consideration. Access to the park is a "lightening rod" for this project. There are a few key parcels to making successful connections between the park and School Campus. The District now

- pays bus costs to get players to Woodcrafters. Having fields near the school would enable the District to cut the bus run in half.
- v. One consideration for linkage would be to add sidewalks along W. Springville Road. Any crossing of Route 174 must be safe.
 - w. The plan must be careful in how we present “safety issues” as this will tend to rally the naysayers.
 - x. We must be cognizant of the culture here and the fact that we cannot please everyone. Securing the support of the older population would be important to the project’s success.
 - y. A key component of the plan is to engage the older population. Walking is currently very popular at the park. Consideration of an indoor recreation facility such as a community room would add to providing a park for everyone.
 - z. A trail on the adjoining Dickinson College Farm is of interest to the Farm managers. Connecting the potential trail to the park would be important. Ultimately the trail system should connect to the Yellow Breeches, to Boiling Springs (via the Brenneman Farm), and in to town.
 - aa. If a Veterans’ Memorial is to be included in the park, it is important to develop a vision and a mission for it.
 - bb. The immediate needs for the School District includes:
 - i. A full-size adult baseball field
 - ii. A turf rectangular field
 - iii. Game level field hockey field
 - iv. Lighted rectangular multi-purpose field
 - v. Tennis Courts – need two more courts to have tournaments

The above represents a true and accurate account of the discussion during this meeting to the best of my knowledge. If there are any conflicts, misrepresentations, or omissions with the above statements, please contact the undersigned within ten (10) days of this date.



Andrew A. Mears

04.29.2014
Date:

Copy:
Attendees
Project File