



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 & Patton

Draft Meeting Summary

Monday, 1 Feb 2010, 12:15 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.
Centre Region COG Building Forum Room

I. COG PARKS CAPITAL COMMITTEE - 2010 REORGANIZATION

This section of the meeting summary was approved by the Parks Capital Committee at their 18 Feb 2010 meeting.

II. REGIONAL PARK PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. Mr. Klees called the Regional Park Planning Committee meeting to order with the following persons present:

- The COG Parks Capital Committee (5)

Mr. Dan Klees	College Twp.	Mr. Richard Killian	Ferguson Twp.
Mr. Jim Rosenberger	S.C. Borough	Mr. Cliff Warner	Harris Twp.
Mr. Jeff Luck	Patton Twp.		

-The Centre Regional Recreation Authority (6)

Ms. Kathy Matason	College Twp.	Ms. Sue Mascolo	Ferguson Twp.
Ms. Donna Conway	S.C. Borough	Mr. Roy Harpster	Harris Twp.
Mr. Chris Hurley	Patton Twp.	Dr. Donna Ricketts	SCASD

- Municipal / Regional Staff (non-voting)

Mr. James Steff	COG Executive Dir.	Mr. Mark Kunkle	Ferguson Twp.
Mr. Adam Brumbaugh	College Twp.	Ms. Amy Farkas	Harris Twp.
Mr. Thomas Kurtz	S.C. Borough	Ms. Kathy Ulincy	Finance
Mr. Ronald Woodhead	Director CRRA/CRPR	Mr. Greg Roth	Park Supervisor
Ms. Diane Ishler	Office Manager	Mr. Jeff Hall	Rec.Sup. Sports & Fit
Mr. Sam Thompson	CPRP Intern		

-Others

Mr. Paul Rittenhouse	Harris Twp.	Mr. Dick Mascolo	member of the public
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-Consultants

Mr. Jim Pashek and Mr. Dan Jones

2. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** - None

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the December 7, 2009 meeting were approved with one abstaining on a motion by Mr. Rosenberger and seconded by Mr. Warner.

4. **OAK HALL REGIONAL PARKLANDS**

Mr. Woodhead reported that the state grant check for the full \$38,000 grant for the Oak Hall Master Site Plan was received on Jan.25. This grant project is officially completed.

He also reported that the \$185,000 grant applied for in April 2009 for the Oak Hall Parkland construction was not approved. A discussion followed about why no Centre County applicant received funding. Mr. Pashek indicated that the funding for next year's grant is less than it was this year. Later this year, Mr. Woodhead will find out how to apply for grants this year.

5. **HESS SOFTBALL FIELDS COMPLEX PROPOSAL - Update**

Mr. Woodhead updated the committee on the current aspects of the Hess Field project indicating that more information may be available in time for the COG Parks Capital Committee meeting, Feb. 18, 2010.

Mr. Woodhead then reported on two items:

- Harris Township issued a letter offering \$20,000 to assist with the purchase of Hess Field.
- A lease has been executed between the Hess family and Mr. Dreibelbis so the SC Softball Association can operate the complex as softball fields in 2010.

Mr. Harpster suggested that the CRPR Board contact the Hess family through the lawyers because the Hess family wants to sell the property before April to receive a rebate. A discussion followed. Mr. Woodhead will have the Authority solicitor apprise the Committee of any issues that are important to consider as this process goes forward. Mr. Harpster also asks that members of the committee meet with the State College Softball Association to discuss operating the facility if the COG purchases it. Mr. Woodhead indicated that those meetings have not been held but they will be in the near future. He would like the discussion to start on staff level with recommendations coming to the Committee. Mr. Klees asked if this is operational wouldn't it come before the Authority. Mr. Woodhead replied that this was an awkward situation but he thought it would go before the Authority. He also thought that the General Forum action would be linked to the operations.

6. **WHITEHALL ROAD REGIONAL PARKLANDS - Master Site Plan**

Mr. Pashek reviewed where we are in the project. This is the last meeting with the Park Planning Committee; the last public meeting is scheduled for Feb. 23; and there are two more COG presentations with one possibly in March and the last one in April or May.

Mr. Jones then reported on two aspects of the project:

- A. The Soil Profile Tests conducted in December. The purpose of the tests is to determine that there is an adequate soil depth and not just a small amount of soil over rock. The tests found one place where rock was only 1ft under soil with the rest of the 75 acres adequate. The other purpose is to test the ability of the soil to infiltrate storm water and the tests were good.
- B. Looked at the dimensions of the plan:
 - 1) Tennis - how big should the tennis building be on the plan; it is 320 ft on the current plan. He explained that this is a really big building and presented drawings showing how the building would look with its surroundings when it was first built and then after 20 years when the foliage had time to grow. He suggested that the building should be the same size as the outside courts and a rounded building would look better.
- He presented drawings of the plan if it included the 25 additional acres and what would be if those additional 25 acres were not purchased and part of the development.

Mr. Luck spoke to building an indoor facility. He stated that it should be a multipurpose facility or the committee must be prepared to put up a building for other sports groups who would like to have indoor facilities in the Centre Region. Mr. Pashek replied that it is not a usual practice to make a facility for tennis multipurpose; they tend to be a single purpose building.

Mr. Klees clarified that the footprint of a building is shown on the plan in case one would be built there, but it would need an organization paying for the building. A discussion followed concerning providing land for organizations to build indoor facilities. Mr. Rosenberger asked if there are options for another building on this

property. Mr. Kunkle suggested moving the site of the building and tennis to the triangular field next to the present site and had tennis pay for the additional 25 acres. More discussion followed. Currently, Ferguson Township Ordinance does not allow an indoor sports facility to be built in the township. Mr. Luck does not want to set a precedent in providing land for organizations. Mr. Klees asked if the building would include restrooms and still fit in the footprint? The building does include restrooms. Mr. Kurtz said the question is whether to give up one outdoor soccer field to gain greater flexibility in building an indoor facility. Mr. Killian stated that putting the building on the plan says the committee is open to having a building there but does not commit what that building would be. Mr. Klees reminded everyone that after the Master Site Plan is adopted it requires a unanimous vote to change it. He also stated that he doesn't see a building of any kind in the first phase. Mr. Luck thought the committee was not interested in providing indoor facilities as evidenced by early discussions before Oak Hall. He explained that it appeared as a new idea and there doesn't seem to be enough time to really investigate the ramifications of the decision. It wasn't until the December 7, 2009 meeting that the building appeared and he missed that meeting. More discussion followed as to whether the building should be called a tennis building or whether there should be a building there at all. Ms. Conway indicated that she understood the outside courts were not needed for tennis; so, if we don't include the building we waste the space. Ms. Oliver, Tennis Association & tennis instructor for CRPR, indicated that six courts together are necessary for youth lessons. The high school courts used for years are no longer available in the day during the summer and those were the only place that had six courts together. Many of the Committee were willing to support a building being on the plan if it was listed as an indoor sports facility. A discussion continued as to where a building would work on the plan. The feeling was that if an organization paid to have a building on municipal property, then the group had to be open to allowing the same to other sports group willing to pay. Another item to consider when determining where a building would be constructed is the water and sewer. Mr. Klees indicated the simplest thing would be to just say there would be no buildings (except for maintenance) on municipal park land.

Mr. Luck asked what was involved in putting a building on the Master Site Plan later. Mr. Jones said there is an official rules for Master Site Plan; the spirit is that you would develop according to the plan. If you have a major change, you would probably have to do another Master Site Plan. Many times some amenities never are completed due to budget changes, etc. Although the discussion was not complete, the Committee moved on to the next item on the agenda.

- C. Cost estimates, phasing, and funding strategies:

Mr. Pashek referred to the Whitehall Road Regional Parkland Master Plan cost estimate and the sample funding charts included in the meeting packet. He presented costs for items that may have to be done before Penn State develops or sells the partial next to the road for development.

- 1) This would include the cost of a temporary road and a fire road exit.
- 2) Non sports field costs main sign, fence, lighting, maintenance building, sewage station, tree farm, a picnic grove, community gardens, winding path, dog park, perimeter fence, etc..
- 3) Center core - building not included in costs, field artificial surface, fields, drainage, stands, lights, gravel paths, regional playground, restrooms, pavilions, etc..
- 4) 25 acre option costs.

Financing - Mr. Pashek qualified the reports since his expertise is not financing. He obtained some help from a person who knows about financing and from his accountant and some bank employees. There are two options noted. If all three parks were developed at the same time with everything. The other is just sports fields only (walking paths, parking lots, and other things that support the fields). There are two ways: pay as you go or by bond do everything at one time. Based on the current municipal contribution rate, the Everything - Pay as you go would take 88 years and the Sports Fields Only-Pay as you go would take 50 years. Whitehall Road Regional Parkland Master Plan cost estimate is \$8,001,670 for 75 acres; optional 25 acres additional \$2,450,290. The total for all three regional parks: Whitehall Road Regional Parkland (all 100 acres), \$12,810,011; Oak Hall Regional Parkland, \$4,745,000; and Hess Field update, \$1,175,000; a total of \$18,730,011. The Everything - Issue Bonds assumes a 20 year bond term, 4.25% interest rate, and 3% inflation

and draws in three years. The municipal contributions increase significantly. Sports Fields Only - Issue Bonds - assumes a 20 bond term, interest rate of 4.25%, inflation rate of 3%, and draws in three years. The municipal contributions increase a great deal but not as much as “Everything”.

Mr. Klees asked the those present to comment starting with Dr. Ricketts. Dr. Ricketts commented from the SCASD perspective that it is really important for the school district to be connected to determine if there can be a partnership.

Mr. Luck speaking as one member of Patton Township related that the future plans do not call for any increase in the regional park numbers.

Mr. Klees said he was pretty comfortable with the numbers as it was close to what he had anticipated. If the goal is to be met, bonding is the preference of College Township, but somewhere between “Everything” and just “Sports Field Only”.

Mr. Killian stated that “Pay as you go” is more expensive so he doesn’t support this unless no increase in contributions. He would be interested to know the per capita costs to know how much it would affect each person. Sports fields take precedent.

Mr. Warner said bond - “Everything”.

Ms. Conway ask if the same contractor would be asked to bid on all three projects at the same time. Mr. Pashek indicated there would probably be more than one bid. She ask if it is possible not to do Oak Hall now and develop Whitehall Road Parkland first. It seems like a lot to handle at one time doing all three at the same time, but pay as you go is not good.

Mr. Harpster said to move all three projects along. He is in favor of issuing bonds not pay as you go.

Ms. Mascolo indicate she was in favor of a bond issue.

Mr. Hurley is hopeful and would go with a bond issue.

Ms. Matason thinks a bond issue make sense.

Mr. Klees asked if phasing over time would decrease the sports contributions. Mr. Pashek indicated he did not know.

Ms. Farkas is in favor of a Bond financially but thinks that the Committee has to look at what a person can bare as to cost. She would like to see the Committee explore other creative ways to fund the parks.

Mr. Kunkle had nothing to add.

Mr. Brumbaugh had nothing to add.

Mr. Jones suggested that we keep in mind why we are doing these parks. One of these is the economic benefits, if the longer the development takes the longer it takes to obtain the economic benefit. Mr. Pashek referred to a drawing that indicated how much of the park land would have to be used to put in the radio controlled airplane section. The area encompassed almost the entire triangular field section of the plan.

Mr. Klees asked Mr. Pashek or Ron what they needed to hear but haven’t heard. Mr. Pashek indicated that he needed to get a phasing plan and needs feedback. Mr. Klees asked if they have detailed costs for the other projects beside Whitehall Road Parkland. Mr. Pashek indicated the Oak Hall Master Site Plan has one for the Oak Hall Parkland but he didn’t feel comfortable doing one for Hess Field since he does not have a drawing for Hess. Mr. Klees indicated to Mr. Woodhead that at some point we need to take the everything for all three parks on spreadsheet so that we can eliminate as many variables as possible and focus on what is doable. Mr. Woodhead indicated that Mr. Steff and he will bring back to the committee the recommendation for a Master Site Plan for Hess Field.

Mr. Woodhead reviewed the meetings: February 16 is the Sports Group meeting; February 23 is the Community Meeting. So, the presentation to the General Forum would be at the end of March. Mr. Pashek asked how we politically sell the Master Site Plan since the funding is unresolved. Mr. Klees said that if the Parks Capital Committee would focus on Hess Field and then in March try to come up with a consensus on the three. Mr. Klees said he would have a hard time making a decision on Hess without the other information. Mr. Woodhead ask if they want to have staff focus on eliminating the variables so a recommendation can be made to the committee. Mr. Klees indicated that between the February, March, and April meetings the staff should present information to allow the committee to come up with what they want presented to the General Forum at

the end of April. This would include all the issues previously listed that have to be addressed.

There will be an update to General Forum at the end of March and then the final presentation would be in April.

7. Adjournment There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 P.M..

The next regular CRPR/CRRA Board meeting will be on Thursday, February 11, 2010.

The next COG Parks Capital meeting will be February 18, 2010.

A date for the next Regional Park Planning Committee meeting had not yet been set.

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