

Meeting Minutes

Plan Study Committee Meeting #4
JMT Project No. 22-02994-001

An in-person study committee was held at the Community Center to review the recommendations for improvements to Macclesfield Park. The following committee members were in attendance:

Name	Organization	E-mail Address
Bill Gaboda	Resident	wgaboda@gmail.com
Laurie Grey	Resident (Rivergate)	llbcomcast.net
Lisa Huchler	Disability Advisory Board	lhuchler@aol.com
Rob LaBar	Parks and Recreation Advisory Board	rob4491@gmail.com
George Schlieben	YMS	president@ymsoccer.net
Matt Curtin	PAA	matthew.a.curtin@gmail.com
Stephen Edwards,	Resident	stephenedwards@gmail.com
Gordon Workman	LMFA	Gordon028944@yahoo.com
George Steill	Pennsbury School District	gsteille@pennsburyisd.org
Dan McLoone,	LMT Planner	danm@lmt.org
Jim Majewski	LMT Community Development Dir	jimm@lmt.org
Monica Tierney,	Director of Parks & Rec.	monicat@lmt.org
Andrew Mears	JMT	amears@jmt.com
Ann Toole	Toole Recreation Planning	anntoole@comcast.net
Neil Beach	JMT	nbeach@jmt.com

The purpose of the meeting was to present the pre-final site design and discuss the public meeting. The PowerPoint presentation slides are attached.

The following items were discussed:

1. Welcome and Introductions – A. Mears welcomed the Master Plan Study Committee (MPSC) and attendees introduced themselves.

2. A. Mears reviewed the meeting agenda.
3. A. Mears presented the purpose of the project was to address issues at Macclesfield Park that include overuse, traffic, and parking, and optimizing sports play and recreation opportunities for the community at large in Macclesfield. Andrew Mears and Neil Beach used the attached PowerPoint slides to present the meeting's subject matter including:
 - a. Recap of the project purpose
 - b. Update on the Turf Field Use Agreement
 - c. Implications of re-shaping Macclesfield Park
 - d. Field Use Analysis Summary
 - e. The Path Forward
 - f. Public Meeting
4. The following comments, clarifications, and suggestions were made during the committee discussions:
 - **Impacts on neighbors** - JMT always considers impacts on neighbors and did so here. The Township Planners described more intensive efforts to buffer her property and that these are underway given where we are in the park master plan. The Tree Planting Plan includes five trees going in by Laurie Grey's house with 11-14 more going into the park.
 - **Sports Focus Group Summary.** A. Mears presented information from the Sports Focus Group. The sports organizations would be the most affected by realignment of Macclesfield Park. We can't "kick the can down the road" on solving the issues in this park that would create issues in other township locations. We do need to look at the park system as a whole. We must deal with these issues and not just move them around. Macclesfield Park is operating beyond its carrying capacity.
 - **Reshape and Rebalance.** Reduce the impacts from programming. Where do we accommodate needs? We need to look at:
 - Partners
 - Existing parks
 - New parks
 - **Other lands.**
 - Potential other lands that are undeveloped open space
 - School District grounds
 - All other parks
 - **Preliminary Recommendations**
 - 2. Improve programming, update existing facilities, and provide overflow parking area at Macclesfield.
 - 1. Partner with School District for better use and maintenance of underutilized fields and spaces.
 - 1. Enhance Caiola, Stoddard and/or Fred Allen Complexes to include lights and turf existing fields.
 - 1. Develop new facilities to address immediate and future unmet needs at other locations.

- **Master Plan Map of 2.**
 - A. Mears presented an overview of the proposed re-envisioning of Macclesfield Park.
 - Existing Fields – 15 of 17 rectangular fields are in Macclesfield – lighted baseball fields, Football okay. Two 90's needed. Soccer needs two more.
 - Other fields – mostly on school campuses.
 - A turf field can serve as two grass fields.
- **Neil Beach, PE, presented the Impacts of reshaping Macclesfield.**
 - **Fields** – Summary of field needs are 2 soccer fields, 1-90' diamond field, and a second 70' or 90' diamond field. No additional fields are needed for football.
 - **Parking:** Estimated 168 participants per field at peak use. 880 parking spaces needed but that's not a typical occurrence. Macclesfield now has 556 parking spaces. With reshaping, parking needs drop to 640 parking spaces and a safe pathway system for pedestrians. The proposed number of parking spaces is 587 with 307 for overflow for a total of 925 spaces. Eliminating fields make parking manageable.
 - **Pathways.** There are multiple walking opportunities provided via a 2-mile outer loop trail, and a shorter 1.5-mile outer loop trail option. A central 1.25-mile inner loop trail is provided as well as boardwalk connections to the existing DE Canal Towpath Trail.
- **Committee Questions:**
 - **Lit fields.** Three baseball and soccer/baseball were eliminated. Upgrade of lights recommended for the park is recommended to reduce the bleeding of lights outside of fields and provide better cutoff conditions. If field was lighted would that help soccer? Concern about striping of the field – problem for soccer program if fields are striped for other sports. Soccer expressed concern about losing lighted fields. YMS suggested adding another set of lights. Could we run quieter portable lights for 10 weeks in spring and fall by the small soccer fields? YMS and the Township want to be fair to neighbors. Noise and glare are issues. Only need the lights for practice. Adding second set of lights on field 10 would be better.
 - **Question on parking spaces and paving.** Neil Beach stated that if there is flooding, it's coming from outside this park. The Master Plan would include the minimal addition of impervious which is managed in accordance with regulations to control flooding. Existing trails are paved. No decisions on paving – it must be accessible, could be pervious or impervious.
 - **Soccer Fields.** George Schlieben expressed concern about four lighted fields down to two soccer fields is a big leap. YMS could deal with three but not two fields. Is it the goal to move another user onto that field? It's not prohibited. But is there a lighted field missing for soccer? Committee members questioned taking away three baseball with two lighted fields and one soccer at Macclesfield so that we're looking at Middle School, Edgewood, and Snipes as areas to accommodate needed sports fields. Keeping the fields lit would be challenging.
 - **Traffic.** Does design improve problems at entrance and exit onto River Rd? Neil Beach stated that the Master Plan improves the area in the park at the entrance but not River Road itself as a state road. The goal is not to have congestion in the park – we are dispersing the traffic with the new circulation and drop off areas. No stacking where people are parking. Spreads parking out. Without enforcement, people will drop off at first stop.
 - **Signage.** A. Mears described the entry signage – barrier with dual purpose to deter congestion, lead people around so the area is not congested, a nice, landscaped feature. Entrance sign – incorporate art. Design detail with precedent images. T Connect the drop off areas with walkways, landscaping, and public art so people can safely walk between high activity areas.

- **Restrooms and concessions** – The restrooms are already raised with sewer so it'd be ideal to try to keep their current locations. The elevations will need to be raised as they are now to be outside of the flood elevation.
- **Snipes Discussion** - What changed about not talking about Snipes? Natural Lands did a study of Snipes. Neil Beach said that is in the mix of the overall solution to community recreation needs, with the needs determined and the Natural Lands study, we looked at Snipes as part of the park and facility solutions. Our job is to point out solutions to be considered.
- **Floodproofing** – The Master Plan addresses stormwater management.
- **Making Macclesfield more parklike for all.** The park's central feature will be a themed playground. This specially designed play to area will make Macclesfield more parklike.
 - Water feature to cool people off.
 - Skatepark and pump track could be accommodated. Do feasibility study because there is room to accommodate it.
 - Boardwalk connections to D&L trail.
 - Rest stops and overlooks. Could be more natural or more formal. What it looks like still needs to happen in a future phase.
 - Outdoor game area
 - Community Pavilions – make it more of a community feel. Different treatments with ideas.
- **Pennsbury School District partnership** – Neil Beach said that we have been asking the School District for information on how the Middle School campus is being used. The District provided the sports schedule but not how the grounds are used for school programming or other community uses. The discussion about use of the Middle School could be advanced for a bigger discussion on the topics of future maintenance and future improvements. Dr Smith wants to work more in concert with more community collaboration. He was shocked at how many people use the grounds on weekends. Only one worker on weekends and would need more. The Middle School Campus at 88 acres lends itself to a partnership. Neil explained that all we were presenting there is very conceptual.. We're just showing existing capacity with our sketch plan. Figuring out the Middle School grounds and the Township/School District partnerships needs more discussion and work, including facility improvements and maintenance. We're just in the infant stages of discussion. We looked at Edgewood that now has a cricket pitch. Weekend Warriors and the Athletic Director wants another want cricket league. All School District fields are multi-use. The Middle School is perfect for the consideration of upgrades. The School District is trying to keep Middle School for universal use – no fences, no dugouts, more manageable if maintenance were better. Baseball was talking about doing dugouts on “tennis field”.
- **Lighting Caiola.** Neil Beach presented consideration of lighting the fields at Caiola. That would be part of the overall solution of ensuring adequate field capacity.
- **Snipes.** The Natural Lands Study found that there was nothing extraordinary about natural features here. Andrew Mears described the ecological restorations that JMT does on a regular basis. Neil Beach stated that we identified the development of facilities on Snipes where it is least impactful. Our charge was to look at solutions to Macclesfield, how can we not talk about Snipes since Lower Makefield Township already owns it. Andrew Mears described the concept plan. A large part of Snipes is untouched, high priority areas are untouched. Facilities are pushed toward I-95. We cannot solve the problems at Macclesfield unless we look elsewhere.
- **Township Properties** – Monica Tierney described how we looked at every property. This is a basis for discussions to move forward.
- **Parking.** If we don't designate this as overflow parking, it'll be used for fields. Concern is that we're losing practice space for soccer. Andrew Mears said that this goes back to the

fundamental problem of not enough land. If we want to have a nice community park here, we must find solutions. So, the next steps require finding additional space.

- **Small soccer fields behind the park.** YMS is keeping the fields in the back.
- **Play Area.** The playground and splash pad and structure would be small, not a large sweeping playground. An obstacles facility for older kid area 50-yard dash – 100” long rings in the air – more for athletic challenges – have more challenging things for kids, not strictly exercise but more challenging for kids. Andrew Mears stated that in the future design, we could design this in more detail to get at things like that: teen area, themes, challenge. The central area in the park Zen City master plan is a large area for the playground etc. Monica Tierney expressed that such an area would be a dream! This is high level – we need to focus on our solutions:
- **Public Meeting.** The format for the public meetings was presented for the Committee to discuss. Public meeting will set the stage then present to help people understand. We want input from the public that will matter. To accomplish that we will have a presentation and four stations for each solution being proposed that we want everyone to go to. This process will get the pulse of the community. Our job is to present it and ask how we can move forward? Committee member expressed concern that people don’t understand this study: they only think about how they get in and out of Macclesfield!!! Residents have no idea that we are doing a whole new plan. Traffic will be addressed because we are lowering park use.
- **Zen City.** We will use our Zen City site and use four discussion groups for online discussion.
- **Buffering.** Andrew Mears described our efforts to add more buffering via the Master Plan design. Jim Majewski said that we could add a lot more landscaping. Laurie Grey It’s important to address buffering and that no resident needs are included in this. Andrew Mears disagreed stating that this whole process included outreach and that she is on the committee. We heard that neighbors want more buffering so we included more buffering and that the Township is already planning more trees. She can hear people using the park.
- **Loss of Open Space** – Bill Gaboda expressed concern about the loss of open space. Torbert Farm – gone – selling Shadybrook. Gray Nun gone. Snipes is last opportunity for passive park. There will be opposition. He likes the plan presented tonight better than all previous plans. With the right kind of lights, it is acceptable. All needs cannot be met. Compromise is necessary. Stephen Edwards doesn’t understand the opposition to Snipes. Lisa Huchler’s concern is maintenance. Does every park need a playground? They must be replaced and maintained? It all needs to be maintained.
- **Cost.** George Schlieben asked what would be the cost of all this? Andrew Mears said that following the public meeting a range of probable costs would be developed for the potential solutions presented. George Steill said that all this is predicated on getting fields at the Middle School. Concern is the overlap with School District activities: every building is used six days a week. Lighting could be an issue. He wants to make sure the School District is not holding up the process. Monica Tierney stated that we are not expecting a decision right now and that we need to keep discussions going so that we can all work together. Quarry Hill and Afton? Looked at them but not showing them. George Steill asked: “How many fields needed?” Baseball: three 90-foot fields but really needs two lighted 90’ fields. Now has two 50-70 at Macclesfield. The 9-12 age group needs facilities.
- **Baseball.** Needs to go somewhere.
- **Public Meeting Finalization** – In light of the committee’s comments, questions and discussion, Andrew Mears went over how public meeting will work another time to determine if the advisory committee was in favor of the format. All were in favor of doing it the way Andrew Mears proposed.

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

02.19.2024.
Date

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Attendees
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