

Bike/Hike Meeting Minutes
April 20, 2021 8:00am – Meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Lynn Goldman, Chairman; Judy Hendrixson, Vice Chairman; Tom Kelso; Larry Gage; Shelle Clancy, New Britain Township; Rick James; Andy Hamilton; Andy Oles; Elizabeth Wyckoff; Marilyn Jacobson, Chalfont Borough; Cynthia Jones, New Britain Township; Mary Pat Holewinski, New Britain Borough; Louise Silberg; Roger Clark; Randy Cohen; Steve Disciullo, Baker Engineers; Paul Gordon, Bucks County; Shaun Curran, Chalfont Borough Manager; Nancy Santacecilia, Board of Supervisory Liaison; and Stephanie Mason, Township Manager.

Minutes Approval – Approval of the minutes from **March 16, 2021**, on motion of Mr. Clark, seconded by Ms. Jones the minutes were unanimously approved.

Review of Projects

Route 202 (Central Park – Pooles Corner) Trail Feasibility Study

Mr. Disciullo indicated that he had provided the overview of the results at the last meeting. He and Mr. Stanford are going over the recommendations and are coming up with a plan that could be considered by the committee. Eventually it will be put into a report which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors, the Borough and submitted to DVRPC.

Ms. Goldman indicated that the Federal Government has a new Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, who indicates that trails and roads are going to be a priority. Secretary Buttigieg rode his bicycle to work and therefore she believes that funding for infrastructure such as bike trails will be forthcoming from the Federal Government.

Old New Road - Update

Mr. Kelso indicated that he needs to complete his plan for the proposed trail. He believes that before the road is top coated that pulling the curb back would be helpful. He is using the Gilmore plans from the AutoCAD for a hopeful trail alignment. This trail will connect the existing neighborhood to CB South. It was residents from the neighborhood who contacted the Bike/Hike Committee to request consideration of trail to be installed in the future. This could be very beneficial.

Neshaminy Greenway – Bristol to Upper State – Update

This is 100% completed.

Turk Road Area Feasibility - Implementation of Study Findings

Mr. Clark brought up East Road and the need to send a letter to a few of the residents who we will need easements from as there is not enough right of way along East Road in certain locations.

Mr. Disciullo explained the right of way and that typical roadways have a 50' right of way with the ability to have 25' on each side, in some areas it is only 33' which means there is only 16½' from center line which does not allow enough room for the trail.

Mr. Kelso said it is always good to have a person-to-person contact.

Mr. Gage wanted to know about Turk Road and the potential that that area could be paved as well in the next few years. There has already been a speed reduction to 25mph, from a safety standpoint people walking and bicycling could be helpful.

Shady Retreat Safe Routes to School Trail – Update –

Mr. Disciullo indicated that they are pushing for the big submission to Penn Dot for signage and pavement markings; they are finalizing the structure and trying to work toward getting bids possibly by the end of the year out on the street.

Ms. Mason is working on the easement with the Stonington Farms.

Bucks County Trail – Update –

Mr. Gordon indicated that the Bucks County Planning Commission met with the Bucks County Commissioners around April 9th and that the Planning Commission and the County Commissioners received several letters from concerned residents on the potential impact of the proposed trail on County property and the environment.

All the options available to the County Commissioners were explained and they agreed to have further environmental studies completed beyond the required studies, which have already been completed.

The Citizen Advisory Design Committee will wait for those studies to be completed before they move any further with their aspect of the project.

However, the County has reduced the project from 2 miles to .7/10 of a mile and they are working with Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority to gain some access, the majority of trail will be at Valley Road in Warwick at this time.

The project has been scaled back due to the cost of remapping the flood plain and impact and location of the proposed bridge crossings.

Mr. Hamilton indicated he has sent a letter to the County as well as the Township in favor of the project; he also indicated that the Bike Works has started a petition in support of the project.

Mr. Gordon reminded everyone that this is still a design project and there is no funding for construction.

Ms. Hendrixson suggested that the Bike/Hike Committee write a letter of support, either individually or as a group.

Ms. Goldman indicated that she walked the area starting at Duane Road and it is gorgeous. There are currently some dirt paths that are used by ATV's, but this is an area that should be shared with all County residents.

The loop proposed from York Road is a great fishing spot. It too is beautiful and will be part of the environmental study along with most likely the entire Dark Hollow area.

It was suggested that if people have not seen/walked the area, it would be helpful to do so; there is certainly support and concern from those regarding the environment and of course the goal is to always find a balance.

Mr. Gordon indicated that if anyone is going to walk the property, he would request that no one access the County property from Pebble Hill Road.

Mr. Gordon also indicated that the Bucks County Planning Commission is working with those County residents who have environmental concerns as well as those in the cycling community. The Planning Commission needs to remain neutral.

Baker Engineering is on hold with the design now while these additional studies are being completed.

In addition, to the Red Belly Turtle Study that was a PINDI hit, and the other environmental studies will be done. The County has stopped the bridge survey work; however, he believes the entire corridor will undergo the environmental analysis.

Mr. Kelso commented that he believes that there is a lot of encroachment from private properties into the County Dark Hollow area and stopping that encroachment would be beneficial.

Mr. Gordon said that the County is trying to understand the legacy knowledge now that Bill Mitchell has retired.

Mr. Kelso suggested that the municipal support would be important.

Ms. Mason indicated that since the Township has members of the Environmental Advisory Council raising concerns as well as the Bike/Hike Committee the Township also needs to remain neutral.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that she is concerned about the EAC's concerns, since the Bike/Hike Committee has always worked hard to protect the environment when putting in trails. She also is surprised with the amount of damage that the ATVs are causing in the Dark Hollow area as well as the runoff from the farm. She believes that the Bike/Hike Committee could be helpful in providing illustrations of good ways to build trails.

Mr. Gage indicated Dark Hollow Park is beautiful, the Seven Arch Bridge is a jewel, having trails for people to get there would be beneficial.

Mr. Hamilton indicated that it would also allow Duane Road, which seems somewhat disconnected to have safe pedestrian ways through Dark Hollow as well as to Almshouse Road and places like Turk Park. Access to the trail is a passive way for people to get to know the area and enjoy the natural beauty. It was suggested that Mr. Hamilton could reach out to DCNR as they are supportive of trails along waterways and natural areas.

There was a question about how this area was created to begin with and Mr. Kelso gave a brief history.

Mr. Gordon also indicated that it was outlined in the feasibility study.

Mr. Hamilton indicated that the petition being circulated by Mr. Boger from Bike Works should be helpful.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that she walked the area with the Environmental Advisory Council and saw the opportunity to improve the environmental degradation that is occurring with the use of ATVs near the creek at this time.

Mr. Kelso suggested that preparing a letter of support by the committee would be most beneficial.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that things should be identified to address issues and ways to mitigate concerns regarding the environment.

Ms. Santacecilia indicated that the EAC has their lens, and the Bike/Hike has a lens as well, hearing from both is important. She would prefer to see the two groups working together to be inclusive regarding the County's project.

Ms. Hendrixson indicated she believes that if there is a trail that people are using, it is policed and would improve the erosion that is occurring in the creek from the ATV's and farm.

Mr. Gage indicated that he would be willing to do some research on the history and help develop a letter that could be shared with everyone.

Mr. Kelso indicated that accessibility to the environment would be important, accessing greenways and waterways, in educating people of the natural beauty, understanding the importance of it, and bringing them out to see it assists with that education. He also suggested contacting the Bicycle Coalition and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council who lends support to trails.

Ms. Goldman requested that Mr. Gage, Mr. Kelso, and Ms. Hendrixson work together to create an appropriate letter.

Ms. Silberg suggested to make sure that the impact from trails can be fact-based. Taking and sharing that approach should be helpful.

Ms. Jones commented on how surprised she was about the negativity from the CADC and concerns about the erosion along the Neshaminy especially when it is a fisherman's trail.

Ms. Silberg indicated that she believes rejuvenation of the area can occur especially with the installation of trails.

Pump Tract – Update –

Plans are underway to do work in house by putting in extra soil. They were able to obtain the soil from a house being built nearby. Although Ms. Wykoff was not available, work on the trails through the woods was also occurring.

Mapping Project – Update –

Ms. Hendrixson indicated that the consultant was having some technical problems but working through them and hoping that by the next meeting in June they would have some user-friendly information to share. In the interim a training session on how to use the software will be arranged.

Other Business / New Projects for Consideration

Ms. Holewinski indicated that New Britain Civic Association was going to be installing low level solar lights along the trail to the soccer fields at Covered Bridge Park. No one objected to them making that installation. New Britain Borough and or Civic Association will maintain the lighting.

Mr. Oles from Warrington Township thanked the Committee for the letter of support for their trail grant from 202 to the Bradford Dam. He appreciated the cooperation.

Reminder: There is no May meeting as May 18th is Primary Election Day, therefore the next meeting will be June 15th.

Adjournment - Being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:27am. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 8:00am via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by:

Stephanie J. Mason
Township Manager