

North Strabane Township Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan

Meeting Minutes

January 18th, 2023 - Municipal Building

In attendance:

Matt Cunningham, Parks and Recreation Director
Emily Holmes, Township Supervisor
Lisa Sheehan, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Board
Michelle Quinn, Member of the Parks and Recreation Board
Josh Hickman, Community Volunteer and Scout Leader
Jill Motzer, Citizen Volunteer
Donald Progar, Citizen Volunteer
Davis Garner, Youth Citizen Volunteer
Heather Cuyler, Pashek+MTR
Adriana Bowman, Pashek+MTR

Absent:

Steve Glancy, Youth Soccer Organization Leader

Discussion Items

1.1 Staff, committee, and consultant introductions

Pashek+MTR, Heather Cuyler, provided a brief background of her previous experience as a Parks and Recreation Director and Recreation Planner and her unique perspective of what Parks and Recreation entails. Adriana Bowman provided a brief background and role in the plan.

The Study Committee is comprised of a diverse group of residents including youth representation, Township staff, and local business owners. Each member provided a brief background of their interests and history with the Township. Matthew Cunningham, Parks and Recreation Director, mentioned that his interest in the plan is to figure out the best direction for parks in North Strabane.

1.2 Purpose of a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan

Due to the rapidly growing population of North Strabane Township, the timing is right to undertake a Comprehensive Recreation, Park, and Open Space Plan to look at issues such as open space preservation and connectivity. This plan will be a guide for future parks and recreation capital, operations, maintenance, green space preservation priorities for the next 10 years and should be revisited annually. The goal is to assure the plan is achievable with specific action plans as well as commitment by staff, and elected officials.

1.3 Role of the Committee:

The consultant shared with the group the importance of the committee to remain engaged throughout the entire process. It is essential to the success of the plan.

The role of the Study Committee is:

- To share their knowledge of the community
- Help define the vision, goals, and objectives for the Township for the next ten years.
- Serve as a sounding board to vet recommendations and implementation strategies.
- Engage other community members to further public engagement.

1.4 Process and Schedule:

The Study Committee regular meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of each month.

Please note: scheduled meeting may be rescheduled, canceled, or serve as workshops. Any change in the regularly scheduled meeting date will be communicated with all committee members.

The planning process is anticipated to take approximately 12 months, with an adoption in December 2023. This plan was partially funded through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) under the Community Conservation Partnerships Program. The Bureau has outlined specific requirements which must be completed during this process.

1.5 Public Engagement:

Questionnaire:

During the next couple of months, the Study Committee, staff, and consultant will identify key questions to include in the Community Questionnaire. This questionnaire will be provided to the community to share their visions and concerns. The consultant will provide both digital and paper versions of the questionnaire, as well as a QR code to market throughout the community and on the Township's digital platforms. Paper versions of the questionnaire will be located at the municipal building. A draft version of the questionnaire will be provided for committee review prior to the next steering committee meeting.

The committee discussed opening the questionnaire mid-March to coincide with community events, as well as tax billing.

Stakeholder Interviews:

Stakeholder interviews will be conducted by Pashek+MTR staff. The stakeholders should represent a diverse group of individuals beyond your typical associations, and leaders in the community. Staff, and identified leaders will also be interviewed. Each committee member was asked to provide contact information for three separate people including name, address, phone number, recreation interest and email to Heather by February 15th.

Public Meeting/Event:

Community events which would provide opportunities for public input included:

- BINGO March 1st
- Egg Hunt April 1st
- Movies June 9th & July 7th
- Touch a Truck July 22nd
- Community Day August 5th

Each event provides input from different demographics. Details will be determined later.

Website

Pashek+MTR will design and host a website for the project. The website will include important project documents, links to the community questionnaire, a contact form, and other pertinent information about the project. The committee suggested linking the project website to the Township's Parks and Recreation section of the Township's official website. Towards the end of the project, a transition period should be developed prior to the expiration of the project website.

Brainstorming:

Existing Conditions

The Committee and Staff shared their initial thoughts related to existing recreation amenities and facilities as well as green space.

Trails and Connectivity:

- Development of a full walking trail loop around/in the municipal park
- Additional nature trails near the disc golf course
- Connections to existing neighborhoods and future housing plans
- Connections to Eighty-Four
- Connection to the Montour Trail
- Connection to Canonsburg, Peters, Cecil

Dogs:

- Leashed dogs are permitted in the park
- People are still walking their dogs off-leash in the municipal park
- Is there is a dog park in the future? Worth a discussion.

Borland Manor Parkette:

- The property was donated for parks and recreation use.
- The Deed should be revisited.
- Nearby residents utilize the property.
- There have been complaints in the past about activities after dark

Municipal Park:

- Need for planting plan, existing plants are not thriving. (climate appropriate trees/plants, soil testing)
- The steep hillside is mowed by PW. How can we better maintain this area?
- Recreation Way hillside should also be evaluated for future low maintenance planting and maintenance.
- New metal roofs are being installed on the pavilions and bathrooms. Could there be a solar component included?
- There is a need for additional shade (near seating, in the open field, additional tree plantings)
- There is limited parking, especially during events.
- There is some interest in a splash pad but there is limited space (could be potentially located near the concession by the ballfield)

Alexander Playground:

- Is an older, less used park.
- There are no restrooms, including port johns.
- There are thoughts of renting the pavilion.

Eighty-Four Property:

- There's no parking
- This property contains steep slopes.
- Property is located on a hill adjacent to the newly constructed Fire Department.

Community Pool:

- There is currently no community pool
- The nearest pool is in Canonsburg
- Newer housing plans have community pools.
- Peters Township is currently evaluating the feasibility of a community pool.

Potential Youth Recreation Opportunities:

- A pond with recreational fishing
- Pickleball

Other Comments:

- What is best for the overall community?
- What's offered in nearby communities (that we don't need to replicate)?

Next Steps

Key Stakeholders contact information forwarded to Heather Cuyler, hcuyler@pashekmtr.com by February 15th.

Next Study Committee Meeting February 15th, 2023, North Strabane Municipal Building

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek + MTR and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Please notify Pashek + MTR within one week of distribution. Otherwise, minutes will be distributed as final, and assumed accurate as written.

Prepared by: Heather Cuyler, Pashek+MTR, hcuyler@pashekmtr.com

Date Prepared: January 19th, 2023

Distributed to: North Strabane Township: Matthew Cunningham & Study Committee.