

Meeting Minutes: Chickies Creek Day Use Area Master Site Development Plan Study Committee Meeting #2

Date: April 19, 2021
Time: 6:30 PM
Location: East Donegal Township Municipal Building
By: Ann Yost, RLA
Project No.: 20EDT-01

Persons Attending: Cory Sine, Chairman, EDT Park Commission
Scott Kingsboro, Secretary, EDT Park Commission
James Gerlach (online), EDT Park Commission
Nickolas Ebersole, EDT Park Commission
Paul Weiss, Lancaster Co. Parks and Recreation Department
Skip Nell, Maytown Historical Society
Rose Madar, EDT Park Commission
Glen Mazis, Marietta Borough
Sue Landes, Recreation and Parks Solutions
Rebecca McCormick, Murphy Dittenhafer Architects
Ann Yost, YSM
Chuck Strodoski, YSM

Purpose of Meeting: To review the findings of the site analysis, assessment of the historic structures, and input from the key person interviews.

Of Record:

1. Everyone introduced themselves.
2. A. Yost provided a brief overview of the key person interviews: Interview input included:
 - A Donegal High School Earth Science teacher suggested two student field trip topics that could occur in the park: stream study/tree identification and astronomy study. He also suggested telling environmental and history stories about the park via QR codes on posts and having students prepare a webpage that provides information about the code feature.
 - Donegal Trout Unlimited is a conservation organization which works with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to do floodplain restoration projects. Primarily interested in cold water streams.

- East Donegal Township Director of Public Works suggested park improvements to address dust from the existing drive, remediation of wet areas in lawn, and moving the parking away from the playground. Also noted that park is relatively easy to maintain, and the Ranger Station is not open for public use.
 - Signage was suggested to direct visitor to the park.
 - The park could be a location for school students to have lunch in pavilion following visit to Vesta Furnace.
 - Provide interpretative sign at John Guy House which was a former hotel and distillery and at the corridor of the former Columbia-Marietta Trolley.
 - The park could be a walking destination.
 - The park is heavily used in the summer by families and people swimming or floating in Chiques Creek. The creek is the biggest draw to the park. Need to protect streambanks and riparian vegetation. Concerns about stream erosion and invasive species.
 - Visitors like to park under the one shade tree at the end of the drive loop, parking is undefined.
 - Often see people walking dogs in the park and rarely see people fishing.
3. R. McCormick provide an assessment of the historic house, smoke house, and root cellar to include:
- The house is a three-and-half story limestone structure. The structure is sound with some cracking of wall plaster. Ceiling height is low at 7'8" typical. Some of the 6/6 windows have been replaced with vinyl windows.
 - The brick smokehouse and limestone root cellar provide opportunity for historic interpretation.
 - The two bank barns are in sound condition.
 - Repurposing the house for public use will be challenging because of ADA requirements and the extent of restoration needed. Using the house as a residence would require less work than public use, but still require significant upgrades.
4. A. Yost summarized the floodplain and stream assessment by LandStudies. Key information included:
- Chiques Creek near confluence with Donegal Creek has 6-8' banks. A probe found that the historic base of the creek gravel layer is approximately 5' below the existing water surface.
 - The watershed is heavily influenced by legacy sediment.
 - The reach of Chiques Creek is suspended in a state of impairment due to the legacy sediments and is unstable. The vertical banks could fail and drop lower creating banks that are 11'-13' high.
 - 4 recommendations were suggested:
 - No Action – not recommended.
 - Bank Armoring – not recommended.
 - Floodplain Bench with Bank Grading – this involves removing sediment for a +/-25' wide areas with 5:1 side slopes on each side of the creek.

- Floodplain Restoration – this involves removing sediment to the full extent of the floodplain, the excavated floodplain could range from 50’ to 200’ wide depending on the limits of the legacy sediment. There is potential that floodplain restoration in this location close to the confluence with the Susquehanna River could attract funding associated with water quality improvements.
5. C. Strodoski narrated a PowerPoint presentation of site analysis findings. Key findings include:
- Access to the site is limited by the narrow and curved alignment of Long Lane, one-lane bridge on Long Lane, and difficult left turn at Long Lane/Route 441 intersection. Site distance at the park drive is adequate but the road curve limits moving the access point.
 - There is good access to Donegal Creek along the clearing for the sewer line on the north and east side of the creek.
 - Chiques Creek is severely impaired due to the legacy sediment that has built up in the creek bed. The creek has significant sediment, especially west of the creek bend. The creek elevation has lowered following the removal of a dam near the Route 441 bridge, resulting in sheer banks of 6-8-feet high.
 - Foundations from the former Columbia-Marietta Trolley traverse the park site.
 - There are very large sycamore trees throughout the riparian corridor.
 - There is a large stand of invasive bamboo at the bend in the creek.
 - The trails extending through the site start as mowed trails and transition to earthen trails as they follow the creek upstream.
 - There are interesting rock outcrops,
 - The trail parallel to the upstream western property line appears to be from a former trolley line. The trail is straight with a significant swale on the uphill side. Historic mapping has not yet been found that identifies this rail corridor.
 - Invasive vegetation is overtaking trees along the upland trail.
 - Recreation amenities include a small playground which is not age-segregated, a wood pavilion, and open lawn for informal play. A portable toilet is available adjacent to the former ranger station.
 - The slope analysis map illustrates the extent of steep slopes that are found within the park. In addition to the steep stream embankment there is a significant ribbon of steep slopes of 15-percent and 25-percent and over that traverse the site. The shallow slopes are confined to the floodplain and a small portion of the upland agricultural field. The park parcel on the west side of Long Lane contains almost entirely slopes over 8-percent.
 - The floodway and floodplain encompass approximately half of the park site however the buildings are not within the floodplain.
6. Additional general discussion items included:
- The status of the electrical service in the house was questioned.
 - The house was nominated for the Historic Register in 2005. It was not known who made the nomination.

- The Ranger Station is in relatively good shape with separate men's and women's rooms that appear that they could be converted to comply with ADA requirements. The office is a large open room, about the size of a small classroom that is currently used for storage by the Township.
 - The buildings are served by on-site septic. Water is private and the line is not in good shape.
 - The site is deed restricted as a public park.
 - A Boy Scout will be developing an orienteering course in the park as an Eagle Scout project. The coordinates of the course points have been provided to YSM.
7. The next meeting will be a public meeting where residents are encouraged to share their ideas for the park. Due to the pandemic the public meeting will probably be held as an open house in the park where residents can stop by and talk to the consultant team. A. Yost will coordinate the date, time, and format for the public meeting with the Township manager.
 8. Please provide changes or corrections to these meeting minutes to anny@ysmla.com YSM within one week of receipt.