TOWNSHIP OF FERGUSON
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Parks and Recreation Committee
Meeting Agenda
Ferguson Township Conference Room 2
Monday, November 12, 2018
4:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

III. CITIZEN INPUT

IV. DISCUSSION OF LOW/NO-MOW AREAS OF FAIRBROOK PARK

Narrative
At the Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Monday, September 17th, the Board referred a request to the Parks and Recreation Committee to review and provide recommendations on designating certain areas of Fairbrook Park as low- or no-mow areas. The Committee has been asked to consider the floodplain boundary which overlaps a portion of the park in their analysis. Sloped areas of the park may also be appropriate for consideration. Furthermore, the Committee has been asked to discuss and suggest criteria for maintenance of these areas. Provided with the agenda are several supplements including the request forward by the Board of Supervisors; Fairbrook Park Master Plan; a natural resources map; and delineation of the floodplain boundary. Dave Pribulka, Township Manager, will introduce the item.

Recommended motion: That the Committee forward its recommendations on designating certain areas of Fairbrook Park as low- or no-mow areas to the Board of Supervisors.

V. REPORTS

1. Staff Report
2. Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority Report

VI. OPEN DISCUSSION

VII. ADJOURNMENT

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, September 10, 2018
4:00 P.M.

I. ATTENDANCE

The Parks and Recreation Committee held its regular meeting of the month on Monday, September 10, 2018, at Ferguson Township in Conference Room 2. In attendance were:

Committee:
Niki Tourscher, Chairperson,
Shawna Doerksen, Vice-Chairperson
Kathie Vondracek, Secretary
Andrew McKinnon
Laura Moser, absent
Norris Muth, absent
Connie Puckett

Staff:
David Pribulka, Township Manager
Centrice Martin, Assistant to the Manager

Others in attendance were: Marcella Bell, Recording Secretary; Denise Meyer, Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority; Laura Dininni, Ferguson Township resident; Dorothy Blair, Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition (NVEC); Christine Bailey, NVEC; David Stone, NVEC; Wes Glebe, NVEC

II. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Tourscher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 13, 2018 MEETING

A motion was made by Ms. Doerksen and seconded by Ms. Puckett to approve the August 13, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion carried 5-0.

IV. CITIZENS INPUT

There was no citizens' input.

V. WHITEHALL ROAD REGIONAL PARK—CONTINUED DISCUSSION

Mr. Pribulka stated that provided with the agenda are several attachments relative to this discussion. This agenda item was requested by Mr. McKinnon and has been continued from the August 13 meeting. On March 21, 2018, the Township Manager mailed a letter to the Chairwoman of the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority to share the comments made by the Board of Supervisors at the regular meeting on March 19. The Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition also followed up with a letter on July 8 to the Authority expressing support for the Board's comments. Mr. McKinnon is requesting that the Committee consider writing a letter in support of the Board of Supervisor's letter to the Authority, including recommendations relative to prioritizing green infrastructure in parkland development in current and future phases of Whitehall Road Regional Park. The floor was then opened up to public comment for 10 minutes.

Mr. David Stone introduced himself as the treasurer for NVEC. He stated that the opportunity to discuss this plan is an opportunity to dig deeper. He stated that NVEC is trying hard to reconcile the sports groups and the environmental groups for this plan and hopes that this doesn't end up being a culture war. This park is a good opportunity to bring both sides together and the letter is a good start to address concerns. Mr. Stone explained that the State College Borough Water Authority (SCBWA) denied the Toll Brother's permit to install sewer mains on SCBWA property along Whitehall Road, which represented their commitment to the covenant easement.

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Ms. Laura Dininni stated that the Board's letter on March 21, 2018 to the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority (CRPRA) focused on Phase 1, but the 5th bullet states "The Board encourages consideration of green infrastructure and low impact parkland development with the development of the first and subsequent phases of the park. This is consistent with the strategies identified in the current park master plan's emphasis on sustainable parkland development through the Sustainable Sites Initiative."

She went on to state that the current plan shows 10 trees on 50 acres, whereas prior plans showed 250 trees on 50 acres. Ms. Dininni stated that at the General Forum meeting on August 27, the newest Whitehall Road Regional Park proposal for Phase 1 was presented by the CRPRA to elected officials. The proposal included items that were not in the original master plan, such as a year-round pavilion and ADA play equipment. These items skyrocketed the cost of the development. Ms. Dininni stated that if CRPRA would like to add these items into the master plan for construction, it must change the master plan and have unanimous agreement from the Centre Region. Ms. Dininni explained that the CRPRA must decide whether or not it wants to open up the master plan for revisions, which would give the Ferguson Township Board of Supervisors and the Parks and Recreation Committee an opportunity to comment on other considerations for the master plan.

Ms. Dorothy Blair, NVEC President, stated that AstroTurf fields can be put in other parks instead of only in the Whitehall Road Regional Park. She stated that AstroTurf is not good for the watershed. Putting Astrofturf in other parks around the Centre Region is beneficial and would also change the perception of what this park has to be.

Mr. Wes Glebe, NVEC, stated that he attended the General Forum meeting on August 27 and was upset that comments from the sports groups were made regarding the last 16 years of being in a state of desperation for more playing fields. He explained that they made it sound like they were denied places to play.

The floor was then turned over to Mr. McKinnon for continued discussion on the Whitehall Road Regional Park. He passed out handouts, including Randy Hudson's depiction of the existing master plan, a child-safe plan, and a modified existing plan.

Mr. McKinnon stated that if the CRPRA decides to give value to the proposed additions, it will have to open up the master plan for revisions. The community as a whole is interested in this park, but the plan needs to be looked at in terms of cost savings. Mr. McKinnon would like the Parks and Recreation Committee to send a letter to CRPRA in support of the Board of Supervisor's letter on March 21, 2018.

Mr. McKinnon reviewed considerations (as noted below in bullet points) that the current plan has to offer versus what an alternative plan might have to offer.

- He explained that regarding environmental considerations, the current plan prioritizes sports fields while the alternative plan would prioritize views and natural areas. The alternative plan would consider using real grass for sports fields and use best practices if AstroTurf was used. Risk to the watershed is minimized due to the emphasis on green design. The alternative plan would encourage the establishment of native plants as well as preserve wildlife habitats. There would also be a smaller ecological footprint. The alternative plan has a higher value on natural resource preservation and honors the less is more principle.

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- Under democratic considerations, the alternative plan would have a full range of active, passive, and natural activities. The sports fields would be based on need, not desire. The alternative plan would be attractive to a larger cross section of the population. The alternative plan would honor the community's vision for the park and would promote more equitable cost sharing. The alternative plan would allow local groups to plan ahead in case there was water pollution and would be based on democratic decision making.

- Under aesthetic considerations, the alternative plan would be designed for dark sky standards for stargazing and would have minimal to no sound amplification. The alternative plan would have the appealing appearance of a parkland and leaves undeveloped areas natural.

- Under design considerations, the alternative plan would use hydroengineering for parking based on minimum code requirements.

- Under planning considerations, the alternative plan would consider peer review of the master plan and allow a careful consideration of all of the steps in the approval process. The alternative plan would update Phase 1 which would include future phases as well.

- Under safety, educational, and cost considerations, the alternative plan would prioritize safety with strategic placement of the parking lots and the roadways. The alternative plan would provide several more learning opportunities for students. Lastly, the alternative plan would keep the cost within the budget constraints and would be less expensive to taxpayers due to its passive park status.

Mr. Pribulka stated that he and Ms. Martin met with Ms. Pam Salokangas, Centre Region Parks and Recreation (CRPR) Director, and Mr. Jim Steff, Centre Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Executive Director. They learned that CRCOG has approved Phase 1 in the Master Plan and is proceeding ahead with its contractor for the first phase of the park development. There is intent to submit a land development plan that includes the eight playing fields, however, CRCOG also recognizes that there are serious budget concerns regarding the AstroTurf fields and the ADA play equipment. CRCOG plans to include AstroTurf fields and ADA play equipment in the land development plan as alternatives, unless money can be raised to cover these additional items since there is no funding currently appropriated. Mr. Pribulka went on to explain that the CRCOG is not intending to open up the master plan for revisions. Mr. Pribulka stated that there is an assumption that if CRCOG has to revise the master plan, it would be opened up for comment on current, yet-to-be-developed portions of the plan and items related to future phases of the Whitehall Road Regional Park. If a master plan amendment is warranted, how would it proceed? At a macro level amendment, would it allow any changes to be suggested, or would the amendment be specifically focused on the AstroTurf fields and ADA play equipment? Mr. Pribulka also mentioned that in the original master plan, there were several shelters proposed, and more recently there has been a proposal to integrate those shelters into one big shelter. The CRCOG has to figure out if the changes are substantive enough to warrant an amendment to the master plan, or is the spirit and intent kept the same as to not rise to that level? Mr. Pribulka explained that CRCOG is the agency that approves the master plan—the five municipalities that participate in the Parks and Recreation program voted unanimously in favor of the Whitehall Road Regional Park and also guaranteed a loan to the CRPRA to develop Phase 1 of the park. Going forward, any changes to the master plan have to be voted on unanimously by the CRCOG General Forum to be approved.

Ms. Tourscher added that CRPR plans to apply for grants to plant additional trees in the park.

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Ms. Vondracek stated that it didn't make sense that with all of the parks in the Centre Region that there were not enough fields to play on. Ms. Tourscher explained that athletic teams have to play at the same time because there are certain times they can play as well as certain times of the year they can play. In addition, there also needs to be a time period to allow the fields to rest so the field is not overused. Ms. Tourscher stated that there is a shortage of fields, but she sees both sides of the issue.

Mr. McKinnon stated that he agrees with Ms. Tourscher and would be in favor of having the proposed fields if a needs assessment was completed. He went on to say that he felt that this is not the place to put a bunch of fields, however, a few would be okay as long as they were complimentary to the landscape and not on top of the high points. Mr. McKinnon said if a needs assessment reports that these fields are needed, then he suggests putting the additional fields at another park like Hess Fields. Mr. McKinnon stated that there is an inequity with amenities dedicated to one demographic—the sports community.

There was a brief discussion regarding the all year round pavilion, the kitchen, and who would be allowed to use the pavilion. The Board of Supervisors has discussed the possibility of donating $40,000 to build a kitchenette for the park, however, there needs to be more discussion before the Board commits that funding.
There was a general consensus from the Parks and Recreation Committee to support the Board of Supervisors letter to the CRPRA.

A motion was made by Ms. Doerksen and seconded by Mr. McKinnon to request Ms. Vondracek write a letter to the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority from the Ferguson Township Parks and Recreation Committee in support of the March 21, 2018 Board of Supervisors letter, including two comments from the Parks and Recreation Committee: in future phases where possible, use materials that would allow the sports fields to go back to its natural state and use the future Centre Region Comprehensive Plan to plan the future phases of Whitehall Road Regional Park. The motion carried 5-0.

VI. APPOINTMENT TO THE SUBURBAN PARK MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Ms. Martin stated that the Master Plan Update development process for Suburban Park is underway, with the agreement for consulting services awarded to YSM Landscape Architects. A steering committee is to be formed to provide input and review materials as the planning process develops. The Committee should appoint one members to serve on the Steering Committee who may act as liaisons to the Parks and Recreation Committee. The Steering Committee will meet at least four times throughout the process.

After a brief discussion, the Committee will continue this discussion at the next meeting due to the absence of a few members.

A motion was made by Ms. Tourscher, seconded by Ms. Doerksen to continue this discussion at the next Parks and Recreation Committee meeting.

VII. REPORTS

1. **Staff Report:** Mr. Pribulka stated that staff held an initial meeting with YSM Architects, the consultant selected by the Board of Supervisors to complete the Suburban Park Master Plan update. The tentative timeline includes a kickoff meeting with the steering committee on October 1 and the first of three public meetings will be scheduled before a Board of Supervisors Regular meeting in November. Mr. Pribulka also stated that there was an inspection conducted by the liability insurance for the Tom Tudek Memorial Park Trust land that includes the farmhouse, horse pasture, dog park, and several other park amenities. Some minor improvements were

required and staff is working on the completion. Mr. Pribulka added that over $3,000 has been raised to date to help construct a memorial at Tudek Park in honor of Elsie Tudek. The Trust will need to convene to determine what the most appropriate memorial would be at the park. Initial discussions have centered around an extension of the butterfly garden or another "soft-scape" memorial. The design is finalized and bid documents are being prepared for the second phase development of the Louis E. Silvi Baseball Complex. Committee members may recall the scope of work includes ADA enhancements that will provide greater accessibility to the fields, an improved spectator or concession area, and associated stormwater improvements. Construction is expected to be completed in the fall.

2. **Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority:** Ms. Myer stated that Mr. Pribulka covered a lot of her report with his discussion on the staff meeting with Ms. Salokangas and Mr. Steff. Ms. Myer added that the CRPRA approved the budget for its meetings to be covered by C-Net in 2019.

VIII. OPEN DISCUSSION

The table was opened up for open discussion of the members. Mr. Pribulka mentioned that Ms. Laura Moser may not be able to attend any more Committee meetings due to time commitments. He will reach out to her and determine if the Board of Supervisors need to appoint another committee member.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, the Parks and Recreation Committee adjourned at 5:44 PM.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

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KATHIE VONDRACEK, SECRETARY
FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

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AGENDA ITEM:
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I'd like to discuss identifying a no/low mow area in Fairbrook Park, particularly in the floodplain area (but perhaps other areas, esp. sloped areas).
The no/low mow area I am proposing would generally follow with the floodplain boundary, while simultaneously providing access to maintain the embankment and to access the existing amenities.
Maintenance direction might be for the area to be mowed no more than two times a year, late winter and late summer, or as infrequently as once a year, using the PA Game Commission Habitat Management, Mowing and Wildlife page criteria: "To maximize wildlife benefits and reduce wildlife mortality, mowing *should be done outside of the nesting and brood-rearing season*, which generally occurs from April to August. ***Late summer and late winter are the best times to mow for wildlife***."
I'd like to send this request to the FT Parks Committee for review and suggestions.

Proposed Action: Request the FT BOS asks the Ferguson Township Parks Committee to identify potential low/no mow areas for Fairbrook Park, especially in the floodplain, and perhaps on sloped areas, and suggest criteria for maintenance.
Goals: floodplain management, parkland asset management, reduction of maintenance costs, provision of small native animal habitat, enhanced parkland diversity.
Attachments:
Fairbrook Park Master Plan
Fairbrook Park trail and road system
Floodplain Map
Floodplain overlaid on parkland in pdf
3 photos of mown wet floodplain area

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END

FAIRBROOK PARK MASTER PLAN

Ferguson Township Centre County Pennsylvania

Battaglia Jones Landscape Architects January 1998

Scale 1"=50' North

Natural Resource Map

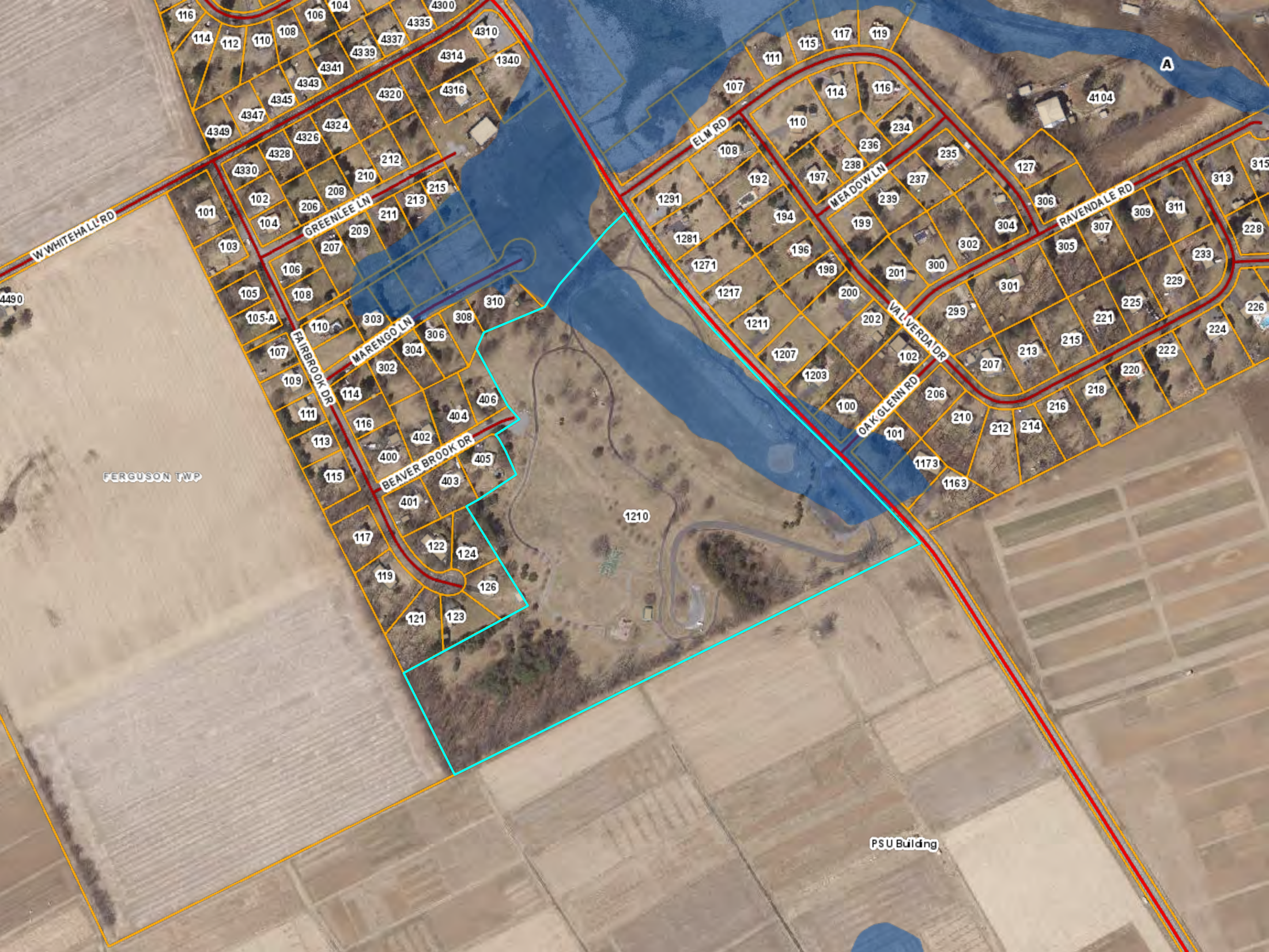
FergRoads
Fairbrookpark
Fergusontwp
Buildings
Hydrology
Floodplain
WoodedArea

Slopes
0-10
10-25
>25

N

Not to Scale

October 31, 2000


W WHITEHALL RD
GREENLEE LN
MARENGO LN
FAIRBROOK DR
BEAVER BROOK DR
ELM RD
MEADOW LN
VALVERDA DR
OAK GLENN RD
RAVENDALE RD
FERGUSON TWP
PSU Building
1210
A
4104
4490

Staff Report
October 8, 2018

1. The first meeting of the steering committee for the Suburban Park Master Plan Update is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17th. The kickoff meeting will include a review of the scope of work and an introduction of members. YSM, the consultant selected to facilitate the update, will lead the meeting. It is anticipated that the first of several public engagement sessions will also be scheduled at the meeting,

2. On October 1st, the Board approved a contract with HRI, Inc. in an amount of $111,017 for the ADA improvements at the Louis E. Silvi Baseball Complex. The project was over budget for that item but within budget for the fund. A notice to proceed was issued and equipment has been ordered.

3. Vacancies for the Township's Authorities, Boards, and Commissions have been announced and applications are being accepted through November 1st. There is currently one vacancy on the Parks and Recreation Committee due to the resignation of Laura Moser. A candidate from Ward III will be prioritized but any resident of the Township is welcomed and encouraged to apply. The appointment will be for the remainder of Ms. Moser's unexpired term.

4. Preparations are underway for the 2019 Operating Budget. The Board of Supervisors will hold two public worksessions on November 13th and November 15th, followed by tentative adoption on December 3rd and final adoption on December 10th.

5. The COG General Forum denied a request from the University Area Joint Authority for a sanitary sewer easement on the Whitehall Road Regional Park property. The proposed easement would have been the location of a sewage pump station that would service the development of The Cottages at State College Planned Residential Development and the Whitehall Road Regional Park. Plans to proceed are still being developed.

Staff Report
November 12, 2018

1. The Suburban Park Master Plan Steering Committee held its first of three public meetings on Monday, November 5th in the Township's Main Meeting Room. Approximately twenty individuals were in attendance and the discussion centered on how residents currently use the park and what the expectations are for future development. The next public meeting will take place on January 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Quality Inn on North Atherton Street.

2. On November 5th, the Board of Supervisors awarded Contract 2018-C22 for replacement of the Tudek Barn Roof as well as gutters and downspouts. The contracted amount was slightly over budget at $43,400, but the Township has sufficient funds to cover the overage thanks to savings in other park projects this year.

3. The Centre Region Council of Governments voted unanimously by unit vote to approve the sanitary sewer easement for the sewer pump station that will service The Cottages Planned Residential Development and Whitehall Road Regional Park at its General Forum meeting on October 29th. The Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority is proceeding with preparation of a land development plan to submit to the Township in the coming months.

4. Work is progressing at the Louis E. Silvi Baseball Complex for the ADA enhancements and associated improvements that were part of the DCNR grant award. It is anticipated that work will be completed before the winter.