



**SMSD Science Dept. Focus Group Meeting Minutes**  
**Spring Meadows Community Park Update**  
**Project No. 13.1141.001**  
**Date: 05.01.2014**

The meeting with South Middleton School District Science Department was held at the High School on 03.20.2014 for the above referenced project. The following people were in attendance:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Andrew Mears	JMT		
Ann Toole	Toole Recreation Planning		
Sarah Colondrillo	Director of Recreation		
Kurt Uhler	Director of Parks & Facilities		
Joel Hain	BSHS		
Jarrett Sweeney	SMT		
Joe Harker	BSHS		
Steve Lockhart	BSHS		
Dave Prescott	YBMS		
Bill Bechtel	YBMS		
Joseph Mancuso	SMSD		
Laurie Gray	YBMS/SMSD		
Dave Bitner	YBMS, Asst. Principal		
Mark Brenneman	BSHS		

The purpose of the focus group meeting was to explore educational opportunities associated with the park site and discuss potential improvements that could assist environmental educational initiatives.


The following items were discussed:

1. S. Colondrillo introduced the consultant team and focus group attendees introduced themselves.
2. A. Mears discussed the planning process that would be undertaken to develop the park master plan. As part of the initial project kick-off meeting it was noted that the park site had some significant environmental features that could provide landscapes for learning. It was determined that a meeting with the SMSD Science Department was warranted to explore the potential use of the site to supplement the Environmental education curriculum.
3. An open discussion followed relative to the purpose of the focus group meeting and included the following comments and suggestions:
  - a. The park should be enhanced with landscaping to beautify and attract wildlife.
  - b. There may be an interest from Dickinson Farm to partner, promote, and assist with programming and support of an environmental education component.

- c. Educational opportunities should not be limited to the park site but should consider the entire area including the adjacent Dickinson Farm.
- d. It will be critical to balance the expansion of facilities with environmental enhancements so that the park does not become a sports complex. Important environmental features in the park include the following:
  - i. Rock outcroppings
  - ii. One wetland
  - iii. The wellhead
  - iv. Opportunity to cultivate wildlife here
  - v. Opportunity to partner with Dickinson College on environmental programs, education, public awareness and facility planning.
- e. Programming will be crucial to the overall success of the park both in terms of the active recreation features as well as any landscapes for learning components.
- f. The park could be utilized to support STEM programs. Enhancements and interpretive opportunities noted are:
  - i. Community gardens
  - ii. Wetlands
  - iii. Soils
  - iv. Geology
  - v. Farm to Table Concept
  - vi. Aquifers
  - vii. Environmental Education Center
  - viii. Yellow Breeches
  - ix. Recycling
  - x. Alternative energy
  - xi. Agriculture
  - xii. Bird Identification
  - xiii. Soil and plant profiles
- g. Star Parties and other astronomy events could be held at the park provided that surrounding lights in the area could be overridden at specific times.
- h. Classroom time is an issue that will need to be addressed to effectively utilize the park to enhance and support the science curriculum.
- i. Increase wildlife by providing more habitats. The site is void of any substantial forest or wooded area. However there is a patch of woodlands on the adjacent Dickinson Farm that borders the park along the southern boundary.
- j. There are concerns for invasive species in the area. It was noted that there is bamboo growing down by the underpass and that the park should be planted with native species.
- k. Expansion of the existing disc golf course should be considered and some of the current issues with the existing course should be addressed. Middlesex Township's course is an example of a good disc golf course.
- l. The geology of the site and the artesian well is strength of the region and should be highlighted.
- m. The wetland area is a vernal pool that is seasonally flooded. There was an attempt to enhance the existing wetland area with plantings that did not work too well. Although

- the wetland is a vernal pond it still should be expanded to allow for close interpretation by allowing controlled access.
- n. Opportunities include installing blue bird boxes, incorporation of QR codes in the interpretive areas, and reforestation. Expertise is crucial in such efforts in the park as planted wetlands project failed about five years ago due to lack of expertise in carrying out the project.
  - o. "Why the Bubble Bubbles" is a very popular program that was created by Linda Stoltz and Stephen Lockhart in Boiling Springs as part of the elementary and high school science curriculums.
4. In summary the group felt that it was imperative that the master planning process seek to:
- a. Protect environmental features and provide ample separation from active areas and facilities.
  - b. Stick with the strengths of the area – Ag and Water
  - c. Programming
  - d. Provide "meaningful experiences"

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

05.1.2014

Date:

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Attendees  
Project File