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Memo

To: John Hackman, Berks County Conservancy
From: Jim Fries, RLA
Present: See attached sign-in sheet
Date: 3-27-09
Job Name: Angelica Greenway Feasibility Study

The second meeting of the Steering Committee for the Angelica Greenway Feasibility Study was held on March 11, 2009 at the Environmental Education Center at Nolde Forest. The following are minutes and notes from that meeting.

1. An overview of the project scope, goals and objectives were presented by DDP.
2. As some members of the steering committee had not attended the initial meeting, the objectives of the study were presented. The four sections of the greenway with desire lines for potential trail connections were illustrated. The study objectives include
 - a. Study the feasibility of a greenway corridor to connect the City of Reading, Angelica Park to Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center.
 - b. To connect the Angelica Creek Corridor to the Governor Mifflin School District Campus and the Borough of Shillington's Memorial Park.
 - c. To connect the Angelica Creek Corridor to the historic Union Canal Lock #54.
 - d. To connect the Angelica Creek Corridor and/or the Union Canal Lock #54 to the Flying Hills PRD and golf course.
3. Desire lines for the greenway segments were reviewed. Some of the segments were revised from the first meeting to reflect new information provided by Cumru Township and the Berks County Greenway, as well as comments received in the first meeting.
4. A summary of recommendations contained in local planning documents affecting the greenways was presented. The documents included the Governor Mifflin Area Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance of Cumru Township and the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan of Cumru Township. The greenway related items in the three planning documents include:

Cumru Township Park Recreation & Open Space Plan

- a. Promote land preservation through Conservation Zoning
- b. Provide a trail connection along Angelica Creek from Angelica Park in the City of Reading to Nolde Forest.
- c. Acquisition and development of the historic Angelica Ice dam site between Route 625 (New Holland Road) and Mountain View Road as a sub-neighborhood park
- d. Acquire and develop park land on Cedar Top Road (Ashley Run Open Space)

- e. Provide park land near Flying Hills development and Freemansville Road.
- f. Promote trails as connections between preserved open space areas
- g. Pursue trail corridor development through land use regulatory means for Angelica Creek corridor, Wyomissing Creek corridor, Rails to Trails corridor (Thun Trail) and the Schuylkill River Greenway/Heritage Park development along the river.
- h. Open space should provide recreational opportunities, both active and passive. Pedestrian trails should be provided and should meander throughout the open space.

Governor Mifflin Region Comprehensive Plan

- a. Protect natural resources through conservation
- b. Develop zoning and land development tools to promote preservation and conservation of land.
- c. Improve opportunities throughout the region for safe bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- d. Require developers to provide recreation land within new developments or pay a recreation fee in lieu of providing the land.
- e. Preserve land along creeks for public passive recreation through revisions to municipal ordinances.
- f. Seek trails along the Schuylkill River, Angelica Creek and Wyomissing Creek. Provide trail connections to existing trails, the creeks, downtowns, neighborhoods, parks and schools, with an emphasis to provide off road trails that run parallel to roads unsafe for pedestrians.
- g. Develop a trail and greenway system, especially along the Wyomissing and Angelica Creeks. Provide connections to the Thun Trail.
- h. Require new developments to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections with nearby parks, residential developments and existing trails, whenever practical.
- i. Upgrade the shoulders of key roads in Berks County including Route 10 and Route 625 from Kenhorst to Nolde Forest to make them safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- j. Use mandatory dedication provisions in subdivisions ordinances to require dedication of open space or payment of recreation fees as part of major new residential developments.

Zoning ordinance of Cumru Township

It was noted that the Cumru Zoning ordinance was revised in 2009. In that code revision, provisions were adopted to address many of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and the Park Recreation and Open Space Plan. They include:

- a. Addition of Cluster development zoning as a permitted use in the Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Rural Conservation and Agricultural zoning districts. Cluster development zoning allows reductions in individual lot sizes when a land preservation threshold is met.
 - b. Bonus density provisions have been incorporated in the zoning code to encourage the use of cluster development provisions of the revised ordinance.
 - c. Mandatory dedication of open space or a fee in lieu of dedication was included in the revised ordinance.
5. Trail width standards for on and off-road trails from the Pennsylvania Standards for Residential Site Development, April 2007 were reviewed.
 6. It was noted that the planning team will be setting up meetings with landowners to explore potential greenway segment linkages between Lock 54 and Flying Hills and between Ken Grill Recreation Area and the Governor Mifflin School District during the next month.
 7. The following issues were raised by members of the steering committee and some local residents that were present:
 - a. *What is the benefit of the trail connection from Ken Grill to Nolde Forest?*
The consultants noted this connection was identified in both the Cumru Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan and the Governor Mifflin Area Comprehensive Plan as a desired open space and trail connection. It was further noted this trail would serve the local population with safe connections between open space destinations.

- b. *It was noted by a local homeowner that even though the trail link along Angelica Creek was moved from the sewer easement adjacent to Angelica Creek to an area in the open space further up the hill it was still too close to her property. She further wanted to know what would keep people that were on the trail from coming onto her property?*

It was noted by the consulting team that the trail was now 300 feet horizontally and approximately 40 feet vertically from the back of her house in a heavily wooded area and that the steep slope would be more of an impediment to someone trespassing than the currently existing access from the road. Existing studies regarding trails and safe communities were offered to the homeowner.

- c. *What is the time frame for trail development?*

It was noted the Greenway Feasibility Study is the first step in a long range planning process. It will be completed this summer. Once the feasibility study is completed, funding sources for individual segments of the greenway will be sought for easements and acquisitions, design and construction. Once easements are obtained, construction documents will have to be prepared before construction can be initiated. It would likely be 2-3 years before there is any construction of new trails.

- d. *How is the planned trail north of Route 724 to connect to that shown in the open space south of Route 724?*

The consultants noted that as this is a busy road, the trail connection is shown running along the street frontage, probably as a widened sidewalk, to the corner of routes 724 and 625 to cross at the light, then returning parallel to route 724 and crossing the stream to parallel the east side of the stream to the old ice dam. It was noted that the owner of the open space at the southeast corner of Route 724 and 625 had expressed a desire to develop that property, but any development could likely only occur on the west side of the stream. The site appears to be largely in the floodplain with wetlands possibly present.

- e. *How would a trail connection from the Ken Grill Recreation Area to the Governor Mifflin School District work?*

At the present time, it is anticipated a greenway connection from Ken Grill Rec. to Governor Mifflin campus will follow the sewer easement from New Holland Road to the campus. Once at the campus, the greenway will follow the creek adjacent to Governor Drive, eventually crossing Philadelphia Avenue (Route 724) to get to Shillington Memorial Park. We have met with representatives of the Ken Grill Recreation Area and they have agreed to allow for a trail connection across their facility. Depending on site lines and safety issues, the crossing of New Holland Road will either be at an existing intersection or mid block, near the Sewer easement that leads to the Governor Mifflin School District campus. There probably are not sufficient traffic warrants to install a traffic light, but a stop sign at the crossing or traffic calming measures may be possible. The Conservancy is in the process of setting up a meeting with the school district to discuss greenway route options.

8. The next meeting will be a public meeting. It was decided to schedule it for Tuesday April 28, 2009, so that people who have had a conflict with Wednesdays will be able to attend. Location to be determined.