

Trails Advisory Committee

Date: February 14, 2024

Location: Franklin Township Municipal Building (475 DeMott Lane, Somerset)

Open Public Meeting Act Policy

Roll Call

- Tara Kenyon, AICP/PP, Consultant (TK)
- Vanessa Jones, Chair (VJ)
- Anne-Marie Orlusky, Vice-Chair (AO)
- Christopher Gonda, Secretary (CG)
- James Kuligowski (JK)
- Jignasha Patel (JP)
- Robert Kovacs (RK)
- Alex Kharazi, Council Liaison (AK)

Introductions and Welcome

- Michael Morosco, Intern, Rutgers University Ecology Program
- Pravesh Lal to join TAC for March Meeting

Public Comment The meeting was not attended by members of the public.

Approval of November Meeting Minutes

- Motion to Approve, AK, second by AO
- Vote: Aye: VJ, AO, CG, JK, JP, RK, AK

Site Plan Review

- “The Easton at Rutgers”
 - Overview by TK
 - Land Use Variance related to business zoning.
 - TK identified the JFK Walking Path for discussion.
 - AK as the variance is pending approval, recommendations by TAC can be submitted after Zoning Board Approval.
 - If the variance is approved, TAC will have an opportunity to submit recommendations
 - RK expressed concerns about the development’s impact on the pedestrian environment.
 - AO asked about the traffic patterns and possible improvements.
 - VJ is interested in improving pedestrian/bicycle access to the JFK sidewalk and bike path, and Marconi Plaza.

New Business:

Projects for 2024 Visioning Session

Purpose:

- Identify direction of events to track through the year
- Tracking will develop an annual report of events and accomplishments.
- Projects include the following:
 1. *Green Infrastructure Project - Sustainable Jersey (In Progress)*
 - a. Tara is managing project with DPW.
 - b. The second component is the Concept Design for Woodlands Trail
 2. Updated to Pathways & Trails Plan
 - a. The adoption in the Township Master Plan is pending.
 3. Site Plan Review (Ongoing)
 4. GPS/GIS Trails Mapping (Ongoing)
 5. Trail Marker Updates & Paint Blazes (In Progress)
 - a. Many trails have not yet been updated.
 - b. JP offered assistance by students.
 - c. RK volunteered his scout troop affiliates.
 6. Trail Hikes / Nature Walks / Education Events (Ongoing)
 - a. Variety of events initiated for 2024
 - b. Age 55+ hikes have not continued since the departure of Chuck Martin. TAC would like to continue this project if possible.
 7. National Trails Day - June 1st
 - a. Claire, Watershed Ambassador & Bunker Hill Natural Area
 - i. The idea was received positively
 8. Wayfinding Signs
 - a. Compile a complete list of signs to be submitted to DPW
 - b. RK suggests signage include new maps
 9. Trail Conditions & Updates
 - a. Log system is functioning and entries will be compiled and forwarded to DPW.
 10. Catalpa Park Trails
 - a. Permit from DEP is pending, and TAC will design trail concepts.

11. Implementation of Local Health Assessment

- a. TAC to review assessment and to make recommendations

12. Additional Ideas

- a. AK mentioned Youth and Family Theme Walks.
- b. TK offered Youth Center to tour Naaman Williams project
- c. AK inquired about shuttle and transportation for trails events.
- d. VJ emphasized the importance of leading hikes to demonstrate access to trail spaces.
- e. AK discussed the relevance of this work and Local Health Assessment data.
- f. JK supported that Dept. of Recreation Registration can assist with identifying the number of potential participants who would need transportation/shuttle.
- g. AO expressed interest in the development of the Memorial Forest site and trails
- h. CG suggested submitting GIS data to NJ Trails Action Network/NJDEP
- i. Public Events for Info Tabling - JK
- j. Directory of partner organizations - CG
- k. Reference peer organizations/trails committees - AK

Old Business

- Trails Maps
 - Tara delivered updates that are in progress.
 - TAC agreed to costs of printing
 - 250 ct x 7 sites, total \$806.88
 - While valuable, the “*Things to Do Map*,” is not up to date and will not be printed with this print request.
- Community Energy Plan & Micromobility Study
 - Implementation Grant
 - Micromobility Study, consultant will meet with TAC
- Memorial Plaque to remember Melba Battin at Negri Nepote Preserve
 - Tara received a quote for a bronze plaque (\$300)
 - Stone possibly \$100
- Security Cameras
 - Twp to install cameras at all parking areas over the course of several years.
- Trail Walks & Events
 - CG Trail Running Series for Spring from April 22 through May 20
 - JP proposed to host children’s activities while parents participate in the run
 - JP Interested in hosting Eco Hikes in May
 - VJ Storybook Hike

- Firefly Walk - TAC will consider July, at Negri Nepote, and astronomy hikes will be discussed
- D&R Canal Watch will host a series of events for any interested members
- Trail Conditions & Updates
 - Trail Update Google Form reviewed by TAC

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn, AO, seconded by JP, all voted in favor to adjourn.