

APPENDIX B.
*Focus Group Meetings/
Key Person Interviews*

Lindsay L. Taylor, CPRP

Certified Parks & Recreation Professional

Project: 2022 South Whitehall Township Parks Recreation Open Space & Trails Plan (SWT PROT)

Meeting Date: February 9, 2022

Fields / Youth, Sports Focus Group Meeting

In Attendance: Representatives from the three (3) major SWT youth sports organizations, Michael Kukitz, SWT Recreation Manager, SWT Park Maintenance Foreman, Bryan Smith, Barry Isett & Associates, Lindsay Taylor, CPRP.

1. Permit requests from youth groups generally 7 days/ week from 8:00am to Dusk.
2. SWT Commissioners would like residents to get a field when requested for special occasions.
3. Any improvements made by youth sports groups must be approved by SWT first.
4. SWT parks area dog friendly.
5. Groups reviewed fields in parks; Covered Bridge #4 is now #3 and one field has been removed from play due to flooding issues.
6. Overuse is an issue. Registration numbers generally holding steady, but Travel numbers growing.
7. Baseball, softball groups take care of their own fields. Question as to whether they use Diamond Dry or other field conditioners.
8. Sheds and equipment provided by the youth groups.
9. Field boxes needed at some parks and the tractor at Troxel is needed.
10. Water needed at fields.
11. Groups try to rest fields, but questions as to who schedules the fields to rest.
12. Questions about orientation. No real problems noted by youth groups, but SWT park maintenance foreman stated that some fields do have orientation issues.
13. Damage to fencing from kids noted.
14. Not enough parking at Covered Bridge Park.

South Whitehall Township Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Plan

Key Person Interview

Name: Steve Walck

Role: Parkland School District

<p>1) What recreational facilities does Parkland SD currently have? How are they managed/scheduled? Process required?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troxell Field – Currently used by district and Township • 2 softball fields (to be lost after building demo), 3 lacrosse fields (2 utilized), large gym (district and community use) • Potential demo/sale by district – Has to redistribute to other district buildings which are currently maxed out. • Aug 2024 – to be moving out of Troxell; District not looking to replace building. Building is old, not renovated – portion is 100 years old with 1962 and 1978 additions. • Township currently has no indoor activities at Troxell • Previously had tennis courts and street hockey court at Orefield for after school use • Wrestling room at Orefield was previously used. • Cross country trail and triathlon held around high school; 911 heroes run held each year. • Steve to provide list of facilities in SWT
<p>2) What recreational facilities are available to the public? What is the process for use? Individual/informal versus organized?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans Memorial – Upper Macungie • Shared use with the Township and community groups • Fees – no charge for outdoor facilities unless on turf or fenced in fields. • Indoor and fenced in areas are charged fees – after 6pm during the week and the weekends. • Community groups and SWT charged no rental fee but charged custodial fee for maintenance. • Playgrounds are open for community use.
<p>3) What opportunities are available that can be explored and be made available to the public?</p>	<p>Does the District have underutilized recreational space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority – District, then Township over community groups – with a balance. • Outside organizations required to fill out facilities request form and insurance required. • Winter season – hard to find indoor space • Mid-Nov. to March – Completely scheduled • 14 buildings/13 facilities for use. 7 days a week. • Groups book all day 8am to 8pm, though they are only using part of the day. • After-school activities - @ 4:30 are okay; looking to revamp in the Spring • Community groups and basketball stop in March • Other activities offered: Summer camps, swim and gym, community activities, dance recitals • Steve handles non-district activities (Non-Parkland SD activities)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole handles some after school programming, arts department, athletic department for other activities; senior programs, yoga for seniors, low impact aerobics for seniors, Zumba (scheduled with Nicole and Jessica) • Mike K – handles Township programs at District facilities, ballroom dance class (seniors), adult volleyball, wiffleball, swim and gym (every Sunday January through March) • Summer playground program - indoor and outdoor; offered at Kratzer, Parkway Manor, and Cetronia – transitional phases – limited by hiring staff of 30. • Upper Macungie, North Whitehall, and South Whitehall collaborated on summer camp program for a total of 5 locations – totaling 657 kids in 2022. • Summer Playground Program - \$275 – Resident, \$325 non-resident/student; 8-week program – Monday to Friday 9am-3pm • Collaboration with Heyday Athletics • High school tennis courts – locked • Orefield Courts – not locked, but not in the best shape • Running track open for high school and middle school for limited hours, plus the police use • Turf Field – mixed use field. Heavy district use.
<p>4) Does the District maintain these spaces or contracted/delegated to other organizations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities shared by Township/County District • District sports are expanding and using those facilities • District looking change scheduling program in the near future – online scheduling system. • Year to year – Carry over of activities • Safety issues and facility repairs are handled by the district. • Infield fill maintained by the District and the Township • Grounds maintained by organizations (clean up and routine maintenance) – though Township and District drag first; mowing and fertilization, etc. completed by district. • Nature Trail – district land – environmental club and district maintained. • “Field of Dreams” resolution passed in the 1980’s between SWT and Parkland School District. • District has no extra land. • A few underutilized baseball fields at Orefield (one is used for overflow bus parking) • 11 weeks to get buildings and facilities ready for next school year.

5) Does the SD require any annual training for maintenance or recreational resources and/or staff?	
6) Are there areas that you would say the department or the Township is deficient in staffing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major issues • Custodial staff on site if there is an emergency or issue – otherwise handled by staff on site • Custodial staff paid - \$40/hour for the evening or weekend day use • Overtime - \$60/hour but to be updated. • Chemical surcharge - \$20
7) How does your organization align into the Township's park, recreation, and open space programs today?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer and lacrosse use fields regularly • Baseball field usage on the rise • No adult softball leagues • Parkland is declining, though SPYA usage increasing
8) What type of support does the Township need to enhance its Park Recreation, and Open Space abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing of overbooking and then organizations not using fields at their scheduled times. Organizations requested to provide game/practice schedule but not provided. • Township field ranger to monitor field use. • Not able to control open spaces because they are not fenced/locked.
9) What type of programs or amenities would you like to see, and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding ways to maximize use • School clubs expansion to use gym space (science team – gliders, etc. National Science Program to be held at Springhouse in the Spring) • Court use – Basketball and volleyball courts • Basketball facilities – complaints in the smaller schools that there is not enough space for out of bounds. • No operations facility to be located in Orefield.
10) How can this plan identify and plan for future needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding ways to maximize use
11) Who are two key people or organizations you think we should talk to?	
12) What is the best method of communication to keep your constituents engaged?	

<p>13) INDOOR facilities – use, management, availability? Gyms; classrooms; pool.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winter season – hard to find indoor space• Mid-Nov. to March – Completely scheduled• 14 buildings/13 facilities for use. 7 days a week.• After-school activities - @ 4:30 are okay; looking to revamp in the Spring• Community groups and basketball stop in March• Other activities offered: Summer camps, swim and gym, community activities, dance recitals• Troxell – Township Fire and Police department use indoor and outdoor facilities for training and classes.
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Recorded by: B. Smith, A. Eichlin

South Whitehall Township Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Plan

Key Person Interview

Name: Mike Kukitz

Role: SWT Parks and Recreation Director

<p>1) What are the duties of the Parks and Recreation Director?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and recreation programming (two seasons ahead) • August due date for Fall/Winter • Jan/Feb due date for Summer • Newsletter coordination • Grant coordination • Summer camp – seasonal (25-30 kids/summer) • Staffing for summer camp • Budgeting • Oversight of facilities maintained by Public Works • Sport checks parks for maintenance • Response to calls for maintenance • Capital Improvements • Summers – Heavy programming; Fall/Winter – larger events. Special events. • Average 45 hours/week • Grow programs and events – grow department • Currently has a PT employee – Recreation specialist working 20 hours per week • Determine how to start a program: 1) what gaps exist, 2) Requests, 3) What is successful?
<p>2) What maintenance is the public works department responsible for?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with PW as needed • Routine maintenance schedules • Stops by parks every other week • Public works is responsive to work that needs to be completed • Doesn't feel a need to outsource; only issue may be time • PW director • Mowing is back in hours • Repairs • Would be interested in getting an employee playground certified (Playground Safety Auditor) • Capital projects - outsource
<p>3) Does the Parks' staff (camp staff, PW, etc) receive any annual training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&R Director – PRPS conference, Eastern, Greenways, & Trail Summit • Camp Staff – CPR, First Aid Certified • Background training

4) Are there areas that you would say the department or the Township is deficient in staffing? If so, where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity in P&R Dept to grow – can see P&R Specialist going full time • Potential for department growth \$218,000 + revenue for 2022 • Need to clearly express revenue and expenses for Parks and Recreation
5) How does your organization align into the Township’s park, recreation, and open space programs today?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are park issues/repairs reported? See 13.
6) What type of support does the Township need to enhance its Park Recreation, and Open Space abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talked to PASD after school programs to see if they can pick up these programs.
7) What type of programs would you like to see, and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need space to accommodate larger events • Large events are well attended...maybe too well attended. • Consider expanding programs to smaller parks.
8) What type of facilities would you like to see, and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor amphitheater needed • Unable to expand opportunities without the space – need more indoor space.
9) How can this plan identify and plan for future needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to a programming specialist to help delegate these activities so Mike can handle overall and capital project.
10) Who are two key people or organizations you think we should talk to?	
11) What is the best method of communication to keep your constituents engaged?	
12) Park maintenance. Direct report to P&R? How is this managed and operated? Is this working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Herb Bender on public works
13) Park facility repairs. How are they reported? How are they handled? In house or out of house repairs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls or email to township on found issues. – Mike manages then goes to P&R. • Typically handled by public works (Lucas field supervisor) • No work order process • Not tracked
14) Season staff and volunteers. How are they recruited? Issues? Training requirements/protocols?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat and new. School District; Word of mouth; Facebook postings; signs at park kiosks; direct emails to coaches; email distribution

15) News letters/advertising/announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and Rec Facebook; Instagram account; kiosks, newsletters and flyers at parks; township newsletter; School district; social media. (police uses Nextdoor app)
16) Park capital improvements. How are small and large projects handled? How do you prefer to have them handled?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small projects in house and larger projects. Project specific. Include public works.
17) Park Maintenance. How can this be improved/more efficient or effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective and efficient • Maintenance checklist/guide needed
18) Indoor recreation Facility. Thoughts? Need? Uses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need is present. • 2 basketball courts – with opportunity for expansion • Larger classrooms spaces (up to 50+ participants each)
19) Township Pool. Thoughts, Need? Uses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. Spray parks and splash pads would be well received. Maintenance.
20) Overall staffing needs. Current support staff? Assistant? Secretary? Needs for what tasks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to a programming specialist to help delegate these activities so Mike can handle overall and capital project.
21) Budget. Current budget shortfalls? Greatest source of income?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget supported by Supervisors
22) What facilities generate rental income? Thoughts on opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilion rentals (\$\$) • Rec fees for programs • Field rentals – no fee • No fees generated from larger events – Fall Fest, Movies in the Park, Fishing Derbies
23) How are rentals handled – taking application/fee, scheduling, reserving facility/posting, answering questions, unlocking/turn on electric, etc., clean up/pick up trash, lock up, return deposit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pavilion rentals currently handled by Township admin. – complete a permit and drop off check fee at Township building • Field use permits by Mike • No fees generated from larger events – Fall Fest, Movies in the Park, Fishing Derbies
24) Field use. How are these handled? Taking application/fee, scheduling, reserving facility/posting, answering questions, unlocking/turn on electric, etc.,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling is a headache/time consuming. • Bi-annual youth group meeting required participation. • Police or Mike handle unauthorized use • No signs at field about permitting required • Public works sends out on weekends after events from May to August to collect trash and check

clean up/pick up trash, lock up, return deposit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional accountability needed by youth groups – SWT, North Whitehall, Upper Macungie, Parkland School District
25) Emergency/accident reporting. How is this handled?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing in place • Police review events and present at larger events • No security cameras – no foreseen needs
26) Twp Public Works. How do they interact with P&R? Protocols for maintenance and repairs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used to meet regularly (monthly) with PW
27) Twp Police. How do they interact with P&R? Special events? Traffic control? Calls to parks – frequency? Issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic control or Fire Police. No fee services. Not reported to P&R • Most events an officer is present. • Cetronia ambulance at many events • Fire department in attendance at most events • Prepared for larger events with services.
28) Other information/questions we should be asking?	
29) Where do you want to see the P&R program at SWT in 10 years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor space for year-round programs, particularly in the colder months. • Expanded programs with added staff and space • Centralized online program to handle scheduling • 10-year capital plan – redo a playground each year

Recorded by: B. Smith, A. Eichlin

South Whitehall Township Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trail Plan

Key Person Interview

Name: Herb Bender

Role: SWT Director of Township Operations, Public Works Manager

<p>1) What are the duties of the Public Works Manager? How many people are on staff?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 full time parks guys – can make it work• Ideally would like to 2-3 if more maintenance going to be involved• Salary range: Herb to provide• Class I laborer (unionized) – works pretty well• Compensated well – many other municipal employees come to SWT• 4 summer help (600 hours) per bargaining agreement – entitled to those hours, but can lose that time if doesn't make the full 600.• Had 4 part-time, but could really use 7 – couldn't afford to have the full 7 – Salary range, unionized, pension plan.• Hired 2 summer help full time because they were so regular, good employees• Summer originally paying 10-12 per hour; had to increase pay to \$19, cost became an issue• Would need 2-3 full staff if adding to the parks.• Admin Asst – Current staff is fine.
<p>2) What maintenance is the public works department responsible for?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brought grass cutting back in house• Previously paid \$90,000 for outsourcing• Routes – One north/one south and then one east and one west. Same route each week.• Responsible for road plowing, clearing paths• Half of crew go into clearing paths in parks• Half go into clearing water systems• Could afford additional zero turn mowers – now has 4 mowers• Same guys who cut, also do the trimming – may put summer help to do the trimming if they are falling behind• Equipment includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 wing mowers (for grass cutting)• Aerates – for blowing and seeding• Ballfield groomer• Backhoe• Payloaders• 2 trackless with flayer mower• Equipment Storage - Shop 2 (Wehr Mill Rd) and Muni Building• Note: Some equipment is shared with street

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems – PW secretary may take calls or PW email (any one from PW and has PW cell phone will receive this email) – Herb does dispatch to crews • Director of Township Operations, Public Works Manager • Utility & MS4 coordinator • General coordinator – just hired someone for this position • Crew leaders • Public works staff • Broken into classes • Crew is responsible for checklist – laminated, check when completed.
<p>3) Does the PWs staff receive any annual training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In house training (to keep costs down) • Spray application • LTAP • No additional budget needed for training – gets feedback from employees and budgets accordingly. • Certifications: requirements dependent on what you’re being hired for • Class 2 and higher required CDL • Safety Inspections: Inspected, but not certified – no designated inspector; employee has taken a webinar and will visually inspect playground equipment. • Trash removal: completed daily; pays overtime in summer to clean parks (at CBP) to ensure bathrooms cleaned – Bathrooms cleaned daily • Bathrooms: cleaned year round; heated – looking to change heating (toilet was smashed recently) • Porta-potties rented and cleared by third party. • Set up for every event – concerts in the park, movies the park, etc. • Currently uses RecDesk – 2023 good test year. Adding pavilion rentals and field use. • Ball fields- all field grooming, will provide infield mix; responsible for lining the fields • *PASD - Responsible for maintaining some of the school ball fields – Herb to provide maintaining for youth orgs; recommend: stop this maintenance – make school district or maintain the fields • Line striping on fields completed by others/leagues; minor infield repairs completed by others/leagues • Brush hog and other equipment currently available that would be able to maintain meadow should meadow be proposed • CBP – Flooding at Covered Bridge Park - ice boulders • The Vistas – Natural Pathways, naturalistic look = maintenance nightmare; What are we going do with the

	<p>soccer fields? Soccer field will be offline with new park. Informal and formal usage – youth orgs playing games and practicing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 fields with youth organizations – team practice and games on weekends.
4) Are there areas that you would say the department or the Township is deficient in staffing? If so, where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be interested in P&R director being more of an events and programming director • Would be interested in someone in house to be used for grant writing • Pathways – if proposed need 6-8 to accommodate for plowing. Paved. Understand that this is additional maintenance. • Connections to porta johns along paths that are too narrow - rutting • Natural trails – unsure how to maintain • Wants to try to find ways to save costs
5) How much does the PW dept spend annually in maintaining the Township parks (mowing, general maintenance, etc)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combined with streets costs – • Herb to provide
6) What type of support does the Township need to enhance its Park Recreation, and Open Space abilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winchester Heights – to be redone pickleball and tennis – double striped • Jacoby Park – split up basketball court into half court and pickleball court • Would like to see pickleball at the Vistas • CBP – basketball courts heavily used, would like to see lighting – to get summer leagues (parks open dawn to dusk) • Township notes when grass is high so proposing meadows at the parks is a concern.
7) What type of programs or amenities would you like to see, and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautify the parks first before adding new parks – Can pieces be replaced before buying whole structures • Adding additional landscaping • Planting beds – shrubs, perennials, annuals – by the PW staff. • Mulch – replace mulching, can we make it interesting? • Artificial turf – Not desired. too much maintenance
8) How can this plan identify and plan for future needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Lawn – subject to vandalism, spray paint. – bisected by 22 • Occasional picnic table written on CBP – nothing major

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No security cameras; trail cameras as needed. Maybe Grand Lawn would benefit from cameras, but not really seeing a need for cameras• Identify if and how many people it is going to take (and their pay) to maintain the additional work?
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Recorded by: B. Smith, A. Eichlin