

TOWNSHIP OF FERGUSON

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FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 11, 2022, 4:00 P.M.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84430721446>

Meeting ID: 837 2598 6340

[Zoom Access Instructions](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. CITIZEN'S INPUT

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. UPDATE ON THE UPDATE TO THE RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Narrative

Ms. Tracy Strickland, with HRG, is here to present a status update on the Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan. The RPOS plan provides the Township with a 10-year outlook and vision of Township parks, recreational facilities, and open space. On July 12, the Parks Committee took part in a joint worksession with the Board of Supervisors guided by HRG to provide direction for the RPOS plan update and review the 2009 RPOS Plan.

2. CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE EXERCISES

Narrative

HRG provided the Parks Committee and the Board of Supervisors with a series of exercises defining the RPOS Plan update. This agenda item focuses on topics not addressed in the Parks and BOS joint worksession. Attached in the agenda packet are materials relating to these exercises.

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. DISCUSSION ON AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Narrative

The Parks Committee Secretary resigned in April of 2022. The Committee needs to nominate and appoint a new secretary. There are previously accepted minutes requiring the secretary's signature in waiting. The position will be served through December of 2022.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Parks and Recreation Committee nominate and vote on a secretary.

2. DISCUSSION ON COMMITTEE VACANCY

Narrative

The Parks Committee currently has a vacant position. The position term ends on December 31, 2022. Staff previously advertised the vacancy via the Township website, social media, Cnet, and the Centre Daily Times but did not receive any applications. As part of Staff's strategic plan to better advertise the position, the Parks Committee is asked to discuss potential options for filling this vacancy.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Parks and Recreation Committee discuss the vacancy and options for filling it.

VI. REPORTS

1. Staff Report
2. Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority Report – Mr. Bill Keough

VII. OPEN DISCUSSION

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

FERGUSON TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, June 9, 2022
4:00 P.M.

I. ATTENDANCE

The Parks and Recreation Committee held its regular meeting on Thursday, June 9, 2022, via hybrid format in attendance were:

Committee:

Tessa Antolick-Chairperson
Dr. Shawna Doerksen- Vice Chairperson
Rick Tetzlaff
Norris Muth
Connie Puckett-Absent
Bill Keough
Rob DeMayo

Staff:

Centrice Martin, Manager
Summer Brown, Recording Secretary
Jaymes Progar – Assistant Township Manager
Larry Maginnis, Township Arborist

Others in attendance: Megan Hoskins, Ferguson Township Resident; Kim Faulds, US Fish and Wildlife service

II. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Tessa Antolick called the Thursday, June 9, 2022 Park and Recreation meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

III. CITIZEN'S INPUT

Megan Hoskins is a Ferguson Township resident and was a part of a group that had previously completed work in Songbird Sanctuary and is present for a status update on the masterplan. Ms. Martin stated that the Township has had leadership change and our new arborist, Mr. Larry Maginnis has taken the lead on the program within Songbird Sanctuary. Ms. Martin offered to speak with Ms. Hoskins offline for a more formal update. Ms. Kim Faulds who is a member of the U.S Fish and Wildlife and Mr. Maginnis gave a brief overview of what has recently been done in the sanctuary.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Tessa Antolick called for a motion to approve the May 12, 2022 minutes, Dr. Shawna Doerksen made the motion, and Mr. Norris Muth seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. UPDATE ON THE RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Ms. Tracy Strickland is present from HRG for a plan update. Ms. Strickland reviewed key things that have occurred since the last meeting which include: HRG has finished all park assessments, completed eight stakeholder meetings, planning an event to take place at Greenbriar/Saybrook park for neighborhood input. Ms. Antolick asked how far along the representative is. Ms. Strickland stated that she feels they are at about 50% complete. HRG plans to use the Summer to feed the Committee chapters to review in sections.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED JOINT WORK SESSION WITH BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Committee agreed that this is a great idea but the date and time proposed does not work for most of the Committee members. Mr. Muth and Mr. Rob DeMayo are available on the suggested day and stated they can attend. Ms. Martin stated that staff will provide an update of this meeting to the other Committee members at the next meeting.

2. FERGUSON TOWNSHIP 2023-2027 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET

Ms. Antolick stated that in the agenda is a nice breakdown year by year of the Parks capital improvement budget. Ms. Martin reviewed the budget year by year with the Committee. The Committee discussed the capital improvement budget in detail. Ms. Martin stated that as of today a parks tour has not been scheduled. The Committee expressed that they would like to do a tour and discussed possible dates. The Committee decided June 23rd after 4:00 pm in a van or carpooling would work best. The Committee determined they would cancel the July meeting. **Ms. Antolick made a motion to cancel the July meeting, Dr. Doerksen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING LOCATIONS

3. CITIZEN REQUEST

Ms. Martin stated that a resident has requested a gaga ball pit. Ms. Martin stated that this is the Parks Committees opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on whether this is something that should be added in the CIP. The Committee discussed the bit, the game, and safety in detail. Mr. Keough stated that this would be a nice amenity for a smaller park. Collectively the Committee would like more information and feedback from the community before its added to the CIP.

4. PROCLAMATION – 2022 PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH

Ms. Martin stated that the Township declared July Parks and Recreations month. The proclamation is included in the agenda for the Committee to review. **Mr. Tetzlaff made a motion to recommend this be approved by the Board of supervisors, Dr. Doerksen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.**

VII. REPORTS

1. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Martin stated that the staff report is included in the agenda and staff is present to answer any questions the Committee may have. Mr. Progar provided a small update on Homestead Park. Minor scheduling issues with getting contractors back in to fix small issues have occurred.

CENTRE REGION PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY REPORT – BILL KEOUGH

Mr. Keough stated that CRPR is looking to hire a temporary natural resources position to review park amenities and plan events. Ferguson residents should have received their summer 2022 activity program guide. Mr. Keough stated that he is pushing for more inclusive playgrounds that would accommodate the handicapped population. In addition to the Whitehall Road Regional Parks inclusive playground he would like to see programming happen for a miracle league. Mr. Keough noted that the Authority has had multiple meetings that discussed reorganizing the responsibilities of the CRPR. Parks Committees in all municipalities may see an impact by this.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Antolic entertained a motion to adjourn the Thursday, June 9, 2021 Parks and Recreation meeting at 6:00 pm.

JERRY LEARN, SECRETARY
FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is one of the most important statements an organization can develop to help define and direct the success of a project or plan. A mission statement is a clear, succinct description of an ideal future and provides a vision of what success would look like. It is essential in helping employees, volunteers and others understand how their work supports the larger purpose of the agency. Therefore, a good mission statement should state what the plan is all about, what its reason is for being, and what its purpose is. An organization can develop a mission statement by answering the following questions:

- Who are we?
- Whom do we serve?
- What is our purpose?
- What are the essential elements of our parks, open spaces, and recreational amenities?

EXERCISE #1 - INSTRUCTIONS:

A. Please read the examples of Mission Statements on the following pages and **RANK THEM** in order from **1-4**.

1 = Least Favorite and 4 = Most Favorite

B. You may also highlight portions of each Mission Statement that you particularly like, to craft into a whole new Mission Statement that you can add on the final page.

..... SEE EXAMPLES NEXT PAGE.....

EXERCISE #1 – 2009 RPOS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW

Bill, James, Centrice

In the 2022 RPOS Plan Update, the design team is responsible for updating the Plan Recommendations for the Township to utilize in parks, recreation, and open space planning, funding, and maintenance decisions for the next decade.

To begin that process, the design team would like the Township to provide their input on the Recommendations that were approved in the 2009 Plan Update.

Here are some questions to guide the review process:

- Which recommendations are still relevant?
- Which recommendations do you feel need to be changed/are no longer relevant? Why?
- Which recommendations have been implemented?
- Which recommendations have not been implemented? Why not?
- What are you hearing from your local recreation/sports associations and organizations? Is that input reflected in existing recommendations?

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Please review the 2009 RPOS Plan Recommendations on the following pages.
- **CIRCLE** recommendations that are still relevant.
- **Place an R** over recommendations that need to be **are no longer Relevant** or need to be **Revised**.
 - Please provide a brief explanation why.
- **CHECKMARK** the recommendations that have been implemented.
- **Place an X** over recommendations that have **NOT** been implemented.
 - Please provide a brief explanation why.

2009 RPOS Plan Recommendations

GENERAL

1. The Township should adopt this update to the Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan to be used as a guide for future park, recreation, and open space development and to continue the Township's compliance with the PA Municipalities Planning Code.

Recommendation: Number 1 should be reworded as it is obvious. It should highlight the PA Municipalities Planning Code, as that is codified, but also reference compliance and/or support of DCNR initiatives to ensure the plan follows DCNR's protocols for future funding.

Next Steps: HRG to provide revised version to Board and Parks Committee for review and approval.

2. The Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan should be updated again in five years to assure that the proposed changes consistent with anticipated development.

Recommendation: Update wording to include either no more than ten years or update in 5-10 years and develop a dashboard of progress indicators.

Next Steps: HRG to provide revised version to Board and Parks Committee for review and approval, using the timeframe of "should be updated again in no more than ten (10) years". Township staff to discuss steps for developing a dashboard.

3. The Board should establish an advisory committee to oversee implementation of updating of the plan and to advise priorities.

Recommendation: Reword. The Board should integrate the Parks and Recreation Committee (PRC) to interact with and oversee the implementation of updating the plan and to advise priorities.

Next Steps: Township staff to discuss next steps for developing a dashboard that is regularly reviewed by the PRC, and the Board as necessary, to track progress of the plan and use data to prioritize implementation decisions and updates.

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

1. The Township should adopt a minimum set of standards for parkland development. The recommendations for minimum development of parkland are:

a. Each park which has been only partially developed should be fully developed to meet the master plan recommendations.

- b. Each park which has not been developed should have a master plan completed and development started in incremental stages.
- c. During the master planning process the Township should ensure that there is an appropriate mix of active and passive recreation areas in each park to meet the needs of the park users. In addition, the public should be actively involved in determining the facilities that are constructed within the park.
- d. The minimum facilities within each park should include a playground, picnic area, active recreation area and park trail that connects to adjacent bike paths.
- e. The facilities planned in each park should be flexible in use (i.e. soccer and ballfield) and should be converted to meet changing needs.
- f. The Township should provide CIP funding each year to develop portions of the park.

Recommendation: This section will be reworked with a focus away from minimum standards. The goal of the plan should be one that does not have a monoculture of parks, but one of a diverse mix of recreation opportunities that are derived from what the parks' locales and geography offer. This revised section should focus on connectivity, inclusivity, fiscal responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

For "f.": Funding is typically allocated "as needed." By utilizing the proposed dashboard and inventorying the assets of the parks, funding can be distributed as needed and be prioritized by data and resident need.

Next Steps: Revision of this section keeping it general to the goals and objectives. HRG may be able to help look at the assets and provide direction and cost analysis for the prioritization of upgrading the parks' assets.

2. The Township has established and should continue to utilize a standard master planning process as outlined below:

- a. A park planning consultant is retained to prepare the master plan.
- b. A public meeting is held to obtain input from the public prior to the development of alternatives.
- c. The consultant prepares several alternative conceptual plans based on citizen input.
- d. A second public meeting is held to obtain input on the individual concepts and to determine which alternate or combination of alternatives is preferable.
- e. The consultant prepares a final master plan alternative based on input from the public which is reviewed by the Board of Supervisors.
- f. A public hearing is held by the Board of Supervisors Prior to adoption of the master plan.
- g. The Township may apply for a grant or use capital funds to develop either a portion of or the entire park.
- h. The Master Plan design shall be posted at each park location.
- i. As a general policy, the Township considers a park master plan good for approximately 15 years. If grant funding requires a newer master plan, the Township will evaluate updating the master plan prior

to the 15-year limit. In addition, if the implementation of the Master Plan improvements has not been undertaken within the 15-year time frame, the Township will consider redoing the Master Plan. (Put the original sentence back into the document for reference – it somehow got deleted).

Recommendation: This section will be revised to be more concise and less prescriptive. The goal will be to shrink it from eight items to four (or to what is sufficient) to have a dynamic process that can adapt to the needs of the Board and PRC. Language in this section will focus on public participation based on what DCNR requires as it adds weight in grant applications. Instead of focusing on consultants only, language such as “professional” and “multidisciplinary committee” will be incorporated to leave flexibility in the planning process. Ideally, this process will be more flexible and less mandated. For the Master Plan updates, implementing a 10 to 15-year period timetable in between complete plan revisions would be ideal. There will also need to be language that allows for interim check ins on the progress of the plan, focusing on needs that might trigger a plan review regardless of the timetable. Sustainability, equity, and the interests of the public, along with provisions for “Initial” vs. “Subsequent” park master plans need to be included in new verbiage. The proposed dashboard will be utilized in this review and update process for data-driven prioritization.

Next Steps: HRG to provide a revised list of steps and wording.

3. The Township should complete development of partially developed parks. The partially developed parks are:

- a. Homestead Park
- b. Fairbrook Park
- c. Meadows Park
- d. Suburban Park
- e. Tudek Park
- f. Haymarket Park
- g. Greenbriar / Saybrook Park
- h. Autumnwood Park

Recommendation: In understanding that parks are ever evolving, it is hard to pin them down as “complete.” With that in mind, if DCNR does not require this standard with master plans, this section should be removed, understanding that the proposed dashboard will help track the progress of park implementation.

Next Steps: HRG to determine if DCNR requires a level of completeness with master plans.

4. The Township should continue to utilize the Official Map to designate future parkland locations.

Recommendation: Numbers 4, 6 and 7 below (bold italicized) should be combined as “The Township should use the Official Map as one of the mechanisms to designate future parkland, bike paths, and open space areas.”

Next Steps: HRG to provide revised version to Board and Parks Committee for review and approval.

5. The Township should continue to utilize a regional master planning process for the development of community parkland.

Recommendation: This section should be discussed at its own, dedicated meeting.

6. The Township should determine the status of the following bike paths and, if appropriate, depict on the Official Map.

a. See list on page 38 of the plan.

7. The Township's Official Map should be revised to add the recommended open space areas. The recommended open space areas are:

a. Open Space 1 – adjacent to Overlook Heights which is owned by PSU and will be developed as an arboretum.

b. Open Space 2 – The Miller Caves, Scotia Barrens and Beaver Branch Gorge.

8. The Township should continue to pursue the purchase of agricultural conservation easements to manage growth and to preserve the industry of farming. This will allow the cost-effective provisions of services to residents located within the growth boundary.

Recommendation: This section should be removed from the PROS plan but should be included and re-emphasized other places such as the Master Plan and Strategic Plan.

Next Steps: Ensure Agricultural Conservation is enshrined in other plans.

9. The Township should limit the rezoning of RA land outside of the growth boundary as a strategy for the preservation and provision of adequate open space.

Recommendation: This section should be removed from the PROS plan but should be included and re-emphasized other places such as the Master Plan and Strategic Plan.

Next Steps: Ensure Agricultural Conservation is enshrined in other plans.

10. The Township should pursue additional forms of open space preservation such as greenways and linear parks.

Recommendation: Number 10 and Number 11 below (bold italicized) should be reconsidered with a diversified list that qualifies additional concepts such as greenways, linear parks, food forests, and connectivity (bike path mapping).

Next Steps: HRG to identify additional examples of linear parks, pop-up type open spaces, permaculture, and parkland connectivity.

11. The Township should coordinate the timing, funding, location, and maintenance of bike paths with adjacent municipalities where connections are feasible.

12. The Township should continue to pursue the opportunity to purchase open space adjacent to existing park facilities to expand recreational opportunities.

Recommendation: Recommended rewording: “The Township should embrace the opportunity to purchase open space adjacent to existing park facilities to expand and ensure the connectivity and fiscal and environmental sustainability of recreational opportunities, open spaces, trails and greenways.”

Next Steps: HRG to provide revised version to Board and Parks Committee for review and approval.

ORDINANCE REVISIONS

1. The Township Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance should be updated regularly to ensure consistency with the goals and objectives of this Plan.

Recommendation: Number 1 and Number 2 below (bold italicized) should be combined and reworded to say, “The Township Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance should be updated regularly to allow for consistency with the goals and objectives of this Plan.”

Next Steps: HRG to provide revised version to Board and Parks Committee for review and approval.

2. The zoning ordinance should be reviewed regularly to determine whether there is a need to revise the requirements to assure the protection of environmentally significant areas of the Township.

REGIONAL / COMMUNITY

1. The Township should actively support the acquisition and continued operation of other parks and recreation facilities in the Centre Region. Many facilities, although located in adjacent municipalities serve residents of Ferguson Township. Some facilities, such as the Millbrook Mash, Welsh and Park Forest Pools and the Senior Center are designed to serve the region. The recently acquired Oak Hall and Whitehall Road parkland parcels are also examples of facilities with a regional focus. These community facilities contribute to the level of service enjoyed by residents throughout the region.

2. The Township should utilize services of the CRPC to ensure that the plans of adjacent municipalities are compatible with this Plan Update.

3. The Township should continue to work with the COG to support the regional funding acquisition, development and operation for parks, trails and open space.

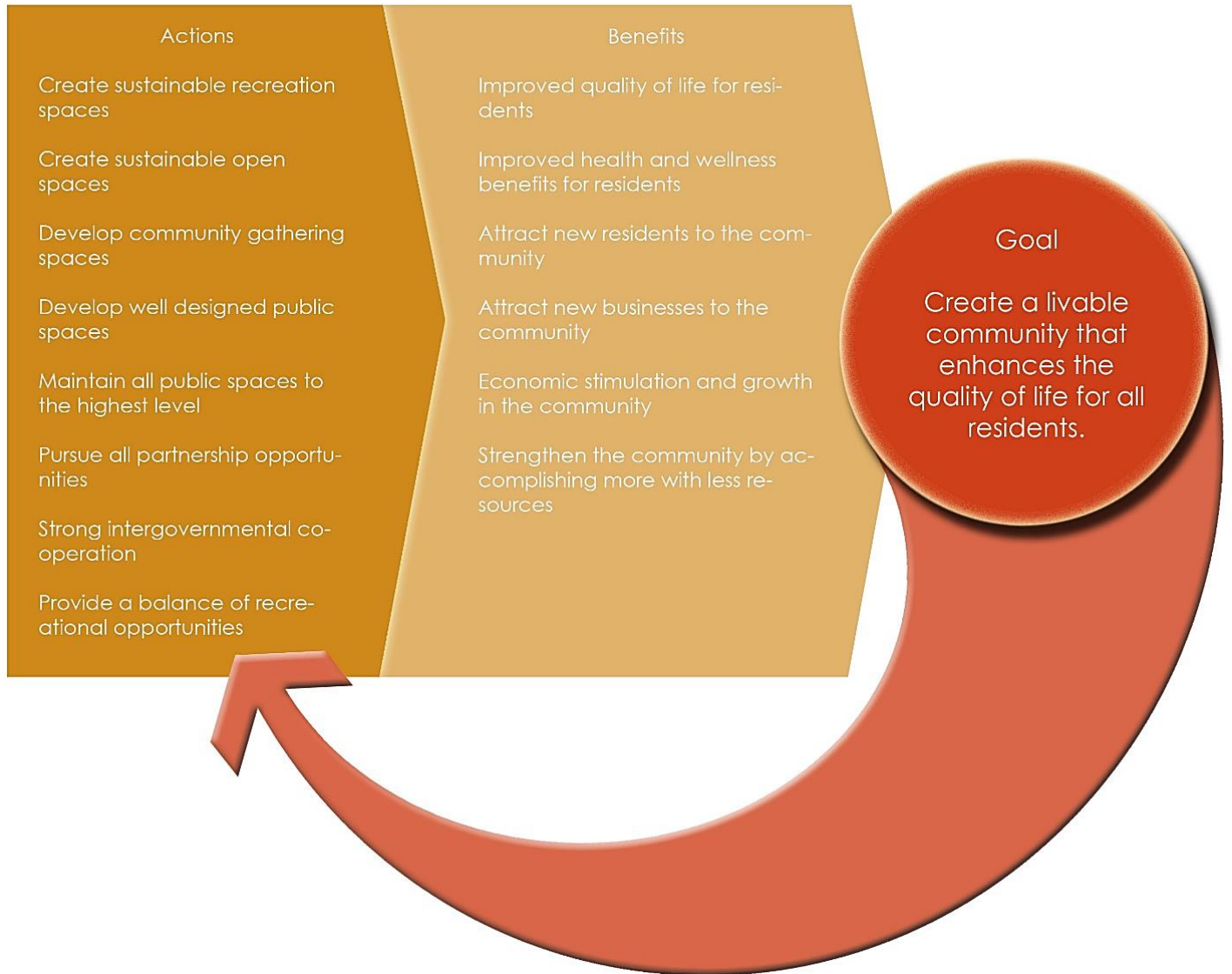
Recommendation: This section should be discussed at its own, dedicated meeting.

FINANCING

1. The RPOS Planning Committee Recommends that increasing taxes for the purpose of developing, maintaining and operating recreation and park facilities should be avoided.
2. The Township should pursue creative funding alternatives to develop the parks and bike paths and preserve open space.
3. The Township should continue to set aside a portion of each year's budget for parkland purchase or development.
4. The Township and the CRPR should continue, and look for opportunities to expand, the program for accepting financial contributions to acquire, develop and maintain parkland.
5. The Township and CRPR should continue, and look for opportunities to expand, the Park Partners program to maintain parks and recreation facilities.
6. The Township and CRPR should continue to apply for available grants on a yearly basis.

Recommendation: This section should be discussed at its own, dedicated meeting.

EXAMPLE #1 - BUTLER AREA



EXAMPLE #2 - WHITPAIN TOWNSHIP

The Whitpain Township Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Update 2021 -2030 is our blueprint for **CONSERVING** our open space and natural resources, **ENHANCING** our parks and recreation facilities along with their maintenance, and **CONNECTING** our community through trails, programs, and partnerships.

EXAMPLE #3 - JACKSON TOWNSHIP

This Implementable Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was initiated to increase high-quality recreation opportunities in the region to meet the needs of existing residents as well as the rapidly growing population of Jackson Township. The Townships strive to sustain quality recreation for existing and new park users and provide excellent recreation facilities and programs to its population.

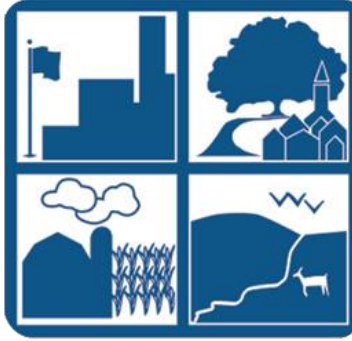
EXAMPLE #4 - LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP

To improve the quality of life by providing recreational, leisure and aesthetic opportunities for all citizens, and by conserving and enhancing the environment. We will accomplish this mission by providing quality programming, making the best use of existing resources, development supportive constituency, pursuing effective collaboration and partnerships, and consider acquiring additional park lands, as well as preserving natural features.

RESULTS:

RPOS Plan Mission Statement				
	Most Favorite	2ND CHOICE	3RD CHOICE	Least Favorite
BUTLER AREA PLAN				
WHITPAIN TWP PLAN				
JACKSON TWP PLAN				
LOWER SWATARA TWP PLAN				

Or Add Your Own Variation Below:



STAFF REPORT

August 11, 2022

- 1.** The Parks Committee and Board of Supervisors Joint Worksession took place on July 12. HRG attended in person to review the 2009 Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Plan.
- 2.** Staff held a “Municipal Mixer” event at Greenbriar Saybrook Park on August 3. The event was attended by HRG, Ferguson Township Public Works, Ferguson Township Police, Penn State Transportation Services, Spin Bikes, the Bicycle Shop, Brazilian Munchies, and Sunset Slush. The event provided HRG an opportunity to gain resident input into the park master plan process and provided residents with bicycle safety instruction.
- 3.** Staff met with the Centre Region Parks and Recreation Director and Centre Region Council of Governments Executive Director to discuss the removal of soccer goals in need of repair as well as invasive species management in Fairbrook Park.
- 4.** The Township no longer employs a staff member certified to conduct playground inspections. Staff met with CRPR and discussed a schedule for CRPR to conduct inspections. Inspection reports will now be received in the fall. CRPR will also inform the Township of “remove or replace” items on a rolling basis.
- 5.** Suburban Park, Phase 1 design is completed. The project is waiting for funding by DCNR before it goes to bid.
- 6.** Songbird Sanctuary, Phase 1 project design will begin late summer or early fall with work possibly being completed by Public Works this winter, according to priorities and scheduling.
- 7.** Staff working to develop a scope of work for grant application for the next phase.