



TOWNSHIP OF FERGUSON

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Neighborhood Association Open Forum Minutes Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Township Staff Attendees:

- Assistant Township Manager, Jaymes Progar
- Planning and Zoning Director, Jenna Wargo
- Township Arborist, Larry Maginnis
- Chief of Police, John Petrick
- Communications Coordinator, Lyndsey Biddle

Ferguson Township Residents & HOAs:

- Kristi Brawley, Saybrook (via Zoom)
- Caitlan Smith, Paradigm Properties (via Zoom)
- Ronald McLaughlin, Greenleaf Manor (via Zoom)
- David Martin, Stonebridge (via Zoom)
- Greg (Szymik?), (via Zoom)
- Pete Jung, Stonebridge (via Zoom)
- Mike Desmond, Golden Orchards
- Omari Patterson, The Landings
- Daryl Duran, English Meadows
- Tara Shaffer, Saybrook
- Andrew Wess, Foxpointe (Hunters Chase)
- Bob Burbash, English Meadows
- Michael Markowski, Ridgefield Terrace
- Nancy Wolf, Turnberry North Village II

- I. Welcome Message – Assistant Township Manager, Jaymes Progar started the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees.
- II. Discussion Topics (7:05 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.)
 1. Township Update
 - a. Mr. Progar announced that the 2024 Operating Budget is about to be wrapped up.
 - b. Mr. Progar introduced a grant the Township received from the Department of

Community and Economic Development for the amount of \$32,500 to offset the costs of participation in the Strategic Management Planning Program.

2. Parks and Recreation Update

- a. Mr. Progar introduced a grant the Township received for \$386,000 towards construction of Cecil Irvin Park Phase II which should kick off next year.
- b. He also explained Greenbriar-Saybrook Park Playground equipment replacement has been finalized and equipment has been ordered. It will likely be constructed in the spring of 2024.
 - Nancy Wolf (Turnberry North Village II) asked if improvements include updates to the perimeter path or just the playground. Mr. Progar explained it just includes the playground which was budgeted for 2023. The rest of Phase I improvements have been included in the Capital Improvement Plan to be done in 2-3 years.
- c. Suburban Park construction is well under way and should be finished by the end of 2023.

3. Public Works Update – Township Arborist, Larry Maginnis

- a. Mr. Maginnis gave an overview of Township engineering projects:
 - i. The Blue Course Drive paving project was recently completed between Circleville Road and Martin Street.
 - ii. Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) were installed at the intersection of West College Avenue and Bristol Avenue.
 - iii. Street light conversion to LED lights in Pine Grove Mills is nearly finished. The lights are functional, and installation of light control structures should be completed by the end of the year.
 - iv. The Cherry Lane school zone flasher project is still in the design phase.
 - v. The Transportation Alternative Set Aside (TASA) project will widen the shoulder to create bike lanes and extend sidewalks in areas of Pine Grove Mills. This is still in the design phase.
 - vi. The 2024 Draft Budget includes potential projects including paving a section of Nixon Road, Earnest Lane, Science Park Road, and Sandy Drive.
 - vii. Mike Desmond (Golden Orchards) asked about possible CATA bus stop improvements as well as the purpose of an older bus stop. Jenna Wargo, Director of Planning and Zoning, answered she's unsure about the structure.
 1. Mr. Progar introduced Omari Patterson as the Township's CATA representative. He gave an example of a bus stop on Blue Course and Circleville. The Township investigated what illumination existed at the bus stop and found there was none,

so Public Works considered redoing the crossing and adding a mid-block pedestrian shelter, but feedback from the public suggested moving the bus stop to another location which is what was done in the end.

- viii. Pete Jung (Stonebridge) asked about snow removal trouble spots in the Township. Mr. Progar suggested directly contacting David Modricker, the Township Public Works Director.

b. Mr. Maginnis gave a stormwater update.

- i. Multiple meetings, surveys, and environmental assessments have been completed regarding the Pollution Reduction Plan. Concept design has been reviewed by the Department of Environmental Protection and additional details of the project are currently being reviewed.
- ii. The Park Hills Drainageway Project bidding process is complete and construction is expected to begin by late 2023.
- iii. Pipe lining is set to begin shortly, and pipe cleaning is under way. Mr. Maginnis explained that the cleaning process requires special treatment of wastewater and debris.

c. Mr. Maginnis provided an update on trees:

- i. The Township-wide oak wilt moratorium was lifted on November 1, 2023. The annual moratorium is in place from April to November to prevent the spread of oak wilt from tree to tree. He explained he and his team have been busy addressing pruning requests, including areas along Blue Course Drive, Westerly Parkway, Nixon Road, and Overlook Heights.
- ii. Mr. Maginnis stated he has also been working on a lot of canopy lifting, sidewalk clearance, and street clearance.
 - 1. Mr. Wess asked if the low limbing was done in-house. Mr. Maginnis acknowledged that it was and discussed the standards of 8-foot clearing in residential areas, higher on arterial roads.
- iii. The Arborist has also been working on the latest tree pruning contract. Mr. Maginnis explained that the Township works on up to 500 street trees on a five to seven-year rotation. He added that the Township is required to pay prevailing wage which explains cost increases.
- iv. Tree Replacement - Mr. Maginnis explained that about 40 trees have been removed at this point. Following the Urban Forestry Management Plan, the Township has a goal to plant 30 additional trees beyond what are normally replaced.
 - 1. Mr. Wess asked if there is a plan to replace invasive species. Mr. Maginnis gave an example of Bradford Pears which are invasive but luckily do not have a long lifespan, so the

Township is letting them phase out and then replacing them with proper species.

- v. Mr. Maginnis completed about 35 plot surveys to identify egg mass hot spots to forecast how bad spongy moths will be next year. He put in a proposal for aerial spraying which is currently being considered.
- vi. Outreach – Mr. Maginnis met with high schoolers at State College Area School District to demonstrate equipment and introduce opportunities in urban forestry. He also introduced an upcoming tree education event for children in grades K-4 at Schlow Centre Region Library.
- vii. Mr. Maginnis introduced a new Tree Stewards program that is in the works for those who would like to be a liaison for trees which would include training, workshops, more.
- viii. Omari Patterson (The Landings) brought up the fallen honey locust seed pods which fall later than the Public Works leaf collection truck keeps going around the community. He asked if the leaf collection schedule could be made longer to make sure these get picked up.
 - 1. Mr. Wess asked if the leaf truck can handle the seed pods and if it gets damaged from sucking them up. Mr. Maginnis said he will look into this.
- ix. Mr. Maginnis concluded that he does workshops such as pruning, tree care, etc., if any HOA's would like to arrange an event.

4. Public Safety Update – Chief of Police, John Petrick

- a. Chief Petrick introduced himself and his goal to keep Ferguson Township safe with a focus on community policing.
- b. He introduced the Police Department's Re-Accreditation through the PA Chiefs of Police Law Enforcement Commission which is a very complex process to prove the Township is meeting the highest standards. Chief Petrick explained only 15% of police departments in the state have this accreditation.
- c. Chief Petrick addressed home security tips. He suggested reaching out to the police department for a vacation home check if residents plan to be away from home for an extended period. He also suggested not posting vacations on social media until after returning home.
- d. Chief Petrick discussed common scams and asked residents to not readily give out personal information.
- e. Chief Petrick addressed winter safety and asked that residents leave enough time to drive slowly. He gave a reminder to make sure vehicle windshields are free of snow on the sides and top. Violators may be ticketed. He also suggested keeping an emergency kit, food, and water in your vehicle. He recommended use of 511PA.com to check road conditions before traveling.
- f. Chief Petrick notified attendees that the police department offers free gun

locks to keep homes safe which can be picked up at the Police Department lobby.

- g. He also discussed the issue of porch pirates as there is a rise in theft of holiday package deliveries. He suggested asking a neighbor to look out for packages and to install doorbell cameras.
- h. Chief said speeding is the number one complaint received by the Police Department and explained legislation is pending to allow municipal police officers to use radar, as the current method is complex and hard to give citations due to limited sight, requirement to clock speeds by hand, etc.
 - i. Mr. Desmond brought up a recent accident where a pedestrian was killed at Bristol Avenue. He addressed blind spots and dangers for bicyclists and pedestrians. Chief Petrick offered to pass Mr. Desmond's comments on to the Township's Public Works Director.
 - ii. Mr. Desmond added that he has seen a large increase in the number of pedestrians in recent years and showed concern that some may avoid walking or riding bikes due to the dangers. He added that he would like to see more pedestrian improvements.
 - 1. Tara Shaffer, Saybrook mentioned a crosswalk near Turnberry with speeding cars and addressed concerns for pedestrian safety.
 - a. Mr. Desmond suggested a flashing light like what is currently used at the crossing on Blue Course Drive might work there.
 - i. Chief Petrick added that the Police Department oversees speed enforcement while engineering projects like signage fall under public works, but he will take all these suggestions to the Public Works Director.
- i. Mr. Wess asked Chief Petrick how the Police conduct speed enforcement. Chief Petrick explained that officers do speed details at hotspots and intersections. Mr. Wess requested that a speed detail be set up at Foxpointe.
- j. Mr. Patterson brought up concerns over speeding near the Landings and Bristol Avenue. He asked if there is any way to arrange traffic calming in the area of Park Center Boulevard.
 - i. Chief Petrick replied a digital speed sign could possibly be set up to remind drivers to slow down, but Public Works would have to look into the traffic calming aspect of it.
- k. Mr. Wess asked if the Township has tried limiting parking to only one side of the street to calm traffic in problem areas. Mr. Progar suggested the Board could potentially discuss this to request a traffic study.

5. Planning and Zoning Update - Planning & Zoning Director, Jenna Wargo

- a. Ms. Wargo introduced the Township's full-time ordinance officer and reminder

residents that all vehicles must be off roads following two inches of snowfall. She added that sidewalks must be cleared within 24 hours. One warning would be issued followed by citations.

b. Ms. Wargo discussed current land developments. She explained how to find Township Maps on the website at www.twp.ferguson.pa.us/planning-zoning/pages/township-maps and introduced the interactive zoning map with various features to explore zoning districts.

i. Ms. Wargo explained the Land Developments page www.twp.ferguson.pa.us/activeplans is constantly updated. Here, residents can view plans currently under review, those conditionally approved, and those that are recorded.

1. Mr. Wess asked about the status of the Rutters development. Ms. Wargo expects a plan to soon be submitted.

2. Daryl Duran (English Meadows) asked about activity on the west side of Blue Course Drive. Ms. Wargo replied she has not yet received any meeting requests or plans for this lot.

3. Mr. Desmond asked about zoning for a property near Golden Orchards.

c. Mr. Duran asked if there is another cable company coming to the Township. Mr. Progar explained a franchise agreement was made with Shentel to allow expansion, but Jenna Wargo added there have not yet been any requests to add infrastructure.

d. Ms. Shaffer asked about parking registration requirements in her neighborhood for guests. She explained it is complicated to register every guest that visits. Ms. Wargo suggested putting homeowners' own cars which are already registered on the street and allowing guests to park in the driveway.

i. Mr. Patterson asked how the license plates are tracked. Ms. Wargo explained that the Ordinance Enforcement Officer uses a device to capture photos of plates which gives details about parking registration.

6. Mr. Progar thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.