



March 16, 2010

MEETING NOTES

Project:	Smedley Tract Master Plan	Project #:	09076.10
Location:	Middletown Township Building	Meeting Date/Time:	3/16/2010 7:00 PM
Topic:	Public Meeting #3	Issue Date:	3/26/2010

NOTES:

1. Pete reviewed the three concepts that were developed during the planning process.
 - **New Entrances:** A new entrance labeled 21 on the Draft Master Site Plan was added, which is across from the driveway to the Penncrest school property. A second entrance labeled 9 was also added. With this layout, the Township would be able to gate the main entrance to keep the barn and residence area private, in keeping with the historic and residential nature of the site. The central drive would then only be used by the tenants. The entire interior drive area, including between the barn and the residence could be opened on busy days and for events.
 - **Future Road Improvement:** A possible new PennDOT road was drawn in on the southwest corner of the property, which if ever built, could serve as another potential park entrance, with connection to a drop-off circle that was also added to the plan.
 - **Garden:** An area was set aside near the house at 79 N. Middletown Rd for a formal garden/horticultural display or demonstration rain garden.
 - Pete reviewed the details of the plan in the "Farm Core" area, which includes an area for community garden plots, an events courtyard which could host a variety of Township activities, fencing to delineate the courtyard and provide privacy for the residents, as well as a walled courtyard and a picnic grove.
2. Pete discussed the phasing of the plan and recommended the following:
 - **Phase 1:** barn stabilization through donations, grants, and the possible formation of a "Friends of the Park" non-profit organization; temporary parking and trail development through selective clearing, grading, and laying woodchips.
 - **Phase 2:** Development of the west field (Field A) softball fields and soccer field with new driveway entrance and parking.

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- Phase 3: Development of the community gardens, test barn renovation
 - Phase 4: School house residence renovation (demo back addition and re-build, new windows, electric, heating) with largely volunteer labor
 - Phase 5: Development of the east softball and soccer fields (Field B)
 - Phase 6: Renovation of the barn
3. Dale Frens of Frens & Frens Architects discussed his review of the various buildings situated on the property. Dale stated that the short-term challenge is for everyone to agree on the names for the buildings, since they all have obtained more than once reference over the years.
- For “Oak Lawn” (a.k.a the school house, 79 N. Middletown Rd), Dale’s short-term recommendation was to remove the wood frame addition and paving around the house to divert water away from the foundation. Oak Lawn was built during the 2nd quarter of the 19th century. Long-term recommendations include preserving the stone house and putting the mechanicals (kitchen/bath) on the second floor.
 - The house known as “Hilltop” (746 W. Rose Tree Rd) was built around 1920 and is in very good condition with no capital improvements needed. The wagon barn that goes with the house has also been maintained, but will eventually need improvements to the sill that was added after the original barn structure was built.
 - The short-term recommendations for the Bank Barn include removing the deteriorated southside forebay which had been added on to the original structure, temporarily stabilizing the barn with a shoring wall, new rafters and a temporary (10 year) roof made of metal or plastic. The remaining eastern wall is leaning and should be taken down to five feet. This will maintain the original footprint and create a garden space. Dale recommended that the outsheds be kept. Eventually, the ground floor of the barn can be turned into four-season space, and the second floor can remain “barnlike” and be used as a three-season space. The main part of the barn has the date 1812 carved into the wood floor.
 - The “Test Barn,” according to Dale, would be the easiest to convert for use based on accessibility issues. It is at ground level and could be converted to activity space and have an area carved out for bathroom facilities that would serve the entire park.
 - The house known as “Longview” (742 W. Rose Tree Rd) is attached to the test barn. According to Dale, it was originally built as support for the dairy, then converted to a residence. Because of its proximity to future public space, it will be unlikely that it can be used again as a residence and may best be used for storage.
 - The “Spring House” (740 W. Rose Tree Rd) is a small well-kept house that used to actually be the spring house for the farm and was turned into a residence.
4. Public Comments
- Mary Ann Eves read a statement regarding Oak Lawn on behalf of the Middletown Historical Society (to be posted on the Township website) which will be included as part of the final master plan report.
 - John Bartholomeo questioned the community need for the additional playing fields and suggested that instead, a pond might be built on the property. Lorraine Bradshaw responded that the committee had

investigated the need for additional athletic fields, had spoken with various athletic groups, and determined that the need is present.

- Peter Wolff commended the outcome of the planning process and asked if the orientation of the fields could be changed to maximize field use. Pete Simone responded that the fields are located based on a north-south orientation to minimize sun glare. This orientation is also required by DCNR, as part of this plan is funded through the state.
- Another audience member asked if porous asphalt could be used in the development of the driveways and parking to help with stormwater management. Pete responded that although it is not written directly into the plan, it is definitely something that should and can be considered.
- Betsy Barnes, Director of the Middletown Free Library, asked if there were intentions of building a library in the Bank Barn space on the property. Pete responded that that particular use had been written as an option into the Deed Restrictions and that it certainly could be an eventual use for the space. Dale added that building uses can be plugged into the spaces over time. Long term rehab of the building to convert it to some specific civic function may be achieved with the development of its own outside funding stream.

5. The concept plans and draft report will be available on the Township website on or around April 1.

NEXT MEETING:

Public Meeting #4 - Final Plan Presentation June (date to be announced)