

**Meeting Minutes: Central/Buchmiller/Sunnyside Parks
Master Plans
Public Meeting #1**

Date: September 27, 2006
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Kiwanis Pavilion #22 - Central Park
By: Ann E. Yost
Project No.: 06LAN-01

Persons Attending: James Hackett, Director, Lancaster County Parks and Recreation
Laurie Brown, park user
Wilson Brown, park user
Lisa Sanchez, park user
Jim Oplinger, park user
Connor Oplinger, park user
Don Freeman, park and environmental center user
Bonnie Freeman, park and environmental center user
Chad Kramer, skatepark user
Mark Achtermann, PCA&D
Susan and Thomas Troop, park user
Melissa and Miah Kramer, skatepark users
James Williams, skatepark user
Judy Willis, homeschool park user
Doug and Carol Ritter, residents
Kay and William Byrnes, park users
Tim Draude, Muhlenberg Botanical Society
Ad Crable, Lancaster New Era
Jim and Lee Amigh, residents
Vern McCauley, resident
Matthew Mozzachio, par professional
Jeff Howe, resident
Mary Ann Schlegel, park user
Tomas Culton, resident
William Pelham, resident
Carol Marsk, resident
Walt Royer, resident
Joanne Rafferty, park user
Ann Kink, park user
Josh Parmer, park user
Theodore Schaefer, YSM

Emily Leckvarcik, YSM
Chuck Strodoski, YSM
Ann Yost, YSM

Purpose of the Meeting: To introduce the project to the public and seek input regarding the park from park users to guide the park master plan.

Of Record:

8. J. Hackett open the meeting by welcoming everyone and briefly describing the project.
9. A. Yost introduced the project team and YSM.
10. A. Yost provided an overview of the project area and the planning process that would be used to develop the master plan. The project is the development of a master plan for Central Park and Buchmiller Parks and an evaluation of how a trail can be developed to link the two parks, Sunnyside Peninsula, and the community. A master plan is a blueprint for the future. The planning process will include the evaluation of existing facilities and activity areas, the sites natural resources, and the opportunities the parks have to enhance recreation experiences. The process will look at how the park functions, address problems and explore ways to enhance the visitors experience. The process will investigate existing operations functions such as maintenance, management, revenue policies, security, etc. The master plans will be a holistic look at the two parks and it will make recommendations for future actions.
11. A. Yost described the planning process for developing the master plans which will include a five part citizen participation process to include:
 - Working with an advisory committee.
 - Conducting key person interviews / focus group forums.
 - Meeting with elected officials / County administrators to keep them informed.
 - Holding three public meetings.
 - Holding an open house in the park to gather input from casual park users.
12. A. Yost reviewed the work completed to date and noted a few of the preliminary findings of the planning process. To date the project has been initiated with the advisory committee with a meeting that explored goals for the parks. Site analysis is underway and nearly completed and research and benchmarking with other park systems is underway. The preliminary findings noted at the meeting included:
 - The woodlands are generally healthy and a valuable resource but somewhat fragmented throughout the park.
 - Water resources are an asset to the parks but not readily accessible to the public in many areas.
 - Invasive species are present in the parks but do not appear to be an overwhelming problem at this time.
 - The trail systems are fragmented and need improvement.
 - There is a desire for the parks to be more convenient to use. Suggestions to date include drinking fountains, restrooms, drop-off/turn-arounds, and water in the garden plots.
 - There is a desire to see more native plantings, managed meadows, and control of deer in the parks.

13. A slide show was presented that showed photographic and aerial images of the two park sites and Sunnyside Peninsula.
14. The meeting attendees were separated into four groups for a breakout brainstorming session. Two questions were asked of attendees and the responses were recorded on flip-charts. Each group was asked to rank their highest priority items by voting on the flip charts. The responses are noted below by group and the number of votes are noted in parentheses. Following the exercise a reporter from each group presented the results to the entire audience.

Group #1

What are your ideas and the opportunities you see for the two parks?

- Expand the environmental center (5)
- Maintain natural areas, let areas passive (4)
- Build staff to improve programs (2)
- Upgrade and implement skate park improvements (2)
- Improve signage, wayfinding, and park maps (2)
- Add adult environmental education (2)
- Provide year-round restrooms in more locations (2)
- Improve recycling availability in the parks (1)
- Provide a pavilion near the environmental education center (1)
- Implement a citizens advisory board for the parks (1)
- Allow natural succession to reduce fragmentation (1)
- Provide more canoe/kayak water access opportunities
- Provide emergency boxes throughout the parks
- Develop separate bike paths

What are your concerns about the parks as they currently exist?

- Need for better access to the parks, consider bus shuttle between parks (2)
- Implement skate park plan (2)
- Proper use of resources – don't spend so much time mowing grass that doesn't need to be mowed
- Loss of natural habitat
- No year-round environmental programs
- Communication between park officials and staff
- Loss of "quiet" places
- Safety – vehicular corridors

Group #2

What are your ideas and the opportunities you see for the two parks?

- Improve the skate park – unsafe as constructed and does not function well. (16)

- Provide more continuous hiking trails which do not cross roads – safety concern (3)
- Provide a building/pavilion in the garden plot area that could have multiple uses such as tool exchange storage/checkout, location for education session on organic gardening and other topics, restrooms, water access, plant exchange events. (2)
- More playgrounds with trees in Central Park (2)
- Allow dogs off lead and provide safe areas for dogs in the parks (1)
- Provide running/bike lanes on park roads (1)
- Maintain and protect natural areas
- Provide a restroom by the skate park
- Involve skaters in improvement to the skate park
- Provide drinking fountains and lights at the skate park – lights are a possible revenue source
- Expand swimming pool hours for lap swimming in the early am. and other times
- Provide permanent aesthetic fencing of the garden plots
- Provide more barbecue grills, picnic tables and other amenities at the skate park and other places throughout the parks
- Provide canoe and kayak rentals
- Allow and provide access to the creeks for swimming

What are your concerns about the parks as they currently exist?

- Safety of skate park users, due to poor concrete surface (14)
- Landfill seep poses an environmental concern (1)
- Too many ball fields – why are ball fields lighted if the park is closed at dark – inconsistent policy
- Too much pavement – keep the park natural
- General safety concerns – such as crossings of roads

Group #3

What are your ideas and the opportunities you see for the two parks?

- Preserve natural areas and resources (7)
- Maintain the parks as a get-away, not an extension of the city (6)
- Implement dog walking restriction south of Golf Road and provide more pet waste dispensers/receptacles throughout park. (4)
- Promote and preserve animal habitat (2)
- Open Buchmiller barn for use (2)
- Provide opportunities to explore potential archeological sites, early settlements (1)
- Use the old railroad corridor in Buchmiller Park as a connection into the city (1)
- More enforcement of park rules

- Provide trails in Buchmiller Park that do not conflict with the disc golf by reducing course from 18 to 9 holes.
- Keep disc golf course away from pavilions in Buchmiller Park.
- Promote all the forgotten features that the Parks have to offer and determine which are underutilized before adding more.
- Add another tennis backboard in Central Park
- A pavilion or outdoor classroom area is needed outside of the Environmental Center.

What are your concerns about the parks as they currently exist?

- Better and appropriate trail maintenance (2)
- Place in the park to bring hurt animals to recover (2)
- There is a need for more benches (1)
- Golf Road is a problem with traffic – it is a short cut and speeding traffic creates a dangerous situation with park users – widen and delineate pedestrian space along the road with a berm separating traffic and pedestrians (1)
- Vegetative fragmentation in the park – native plantings, replace/plant more trees, protect from deer, invasives are a big problem and getting worse

Group #4

What are your ideas and the opportunities you see for the two parks?

- Preserve as much land of the parks as possible from further development (9).
- Provide an all-weather shelter in the nature education area – an enclosed shelter would provide opportunities for year round programming. Facilities in the nature education areas are inadequate (5)
- Develop park outreach programs - there is concern that the park programs are not reaching all segments of the population. i.e. different cultures, low come, seniors (2)
- The park staff and others should show respect for the naturalists and include them in park initiatives (2)
- Preserve the natural area so it is available for the next generation (2)
- The park is an extraordinary facility and the park's natural character should be a priority for preservation (1)
- Appeal and educate the youth to use the park (1)
- Nature education should be emphasized to help the next generations appreciate the natural environment (1)
- Institute bicycle and horse patrols rather than vehicle drive bys to enhance park safety – provide more public contact (1)
- Provide rail trail connector
- Promote the use of what is already in the parks rather than build more facilities – the park is used, but perhaps not a lot of people realize it is there and its value.

- Central Park presents a great opportunity to experience the outdoors, especially along trails
- The skills of the naturalist staff should be better recognized and use to benefit the public.
- Consider the park as a resource for research of natural resources

What are your concerns about the parks as they currently exist?

- Nature education staff is overused (programmed) and under supported (5)
- Golf Road is a safety concern – especially for pedestrian park users that cross the road (2)
- The County’s insurance policy is not favorable to small contractors. Some programs have been scrapped, because the County requires all contractors to be self insured and hold the County harmless. (1)
- A concern was voiced regarding charging impact fees (1)
- The parks department maintains the trails at a too high level of maintenance. Plants should be allowed to come out closer to the trail bed.
- Create more opportunities to recycle waste products within the parks
- The naturalists should be involved more in the grounds maintenance decisions
- Restrooms should be cleaner and the soap dispensers could be filled.
- Buffers should be developed around new developments near the park sites
- There is a need to market the parks and educate the public about the parks and their tremendous potential - Market the distinctive quality of the park.
- Facilities in the parks should provide for the needs of all populations, i.e. mentally and physically challenged.

8. The meeting was concluded with a thank you to everyone for participating. This meeting was the first of three meetings where general public input will be sought.