

**Franklin Township Trails Advisory Committee (TAC)
Meeting Minutes – May 14, 2008**

TAC Attendees:

Dominic Abbatiello
John Clyde
Jack Connolly
Mark Fortin
Pat Leonard
Frank McLaughlin
Nicky Newby

Public attendees:

Lisa Almac (2037 Amwell Rd.)
Matt Sherak (Butler Rd.)
Nancy Sayer (570 Elizabeth Ave.)
Others (names not provided)

Mr. Clyde called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., and the roll was called. Mr. McLaughlin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello, to approve the March meeting minutes. Following this, a similar motion by Mr. McLaughlin, seconded by Mr. Clyde, was made to approve the April minutes. Both motions passed unanimously. Following this, Mr. Clyde opened the meeting to Public Comment at 7:15 PM.

Public Comment:

Ms. Almac:

- Stated she keeps crime stats for the Franklin Township Police Dept. Pointed out that reports of incidents such as trespassing and suspicious persons, have increased since the section of the Galdi RR Bed between Amwell Rd. and Elizabeth Ave. was posted as Township Open Space. Even worse than this, one of the houses was recently burned in an incident of arson.
- Also noted that residents adjacent to the Smith Rd. property have reported seeing people walking with flashlights along this open space property. Also have been reports of kids partying and drinking in the Memorial Forest at night. Kids have also been seen riding through the Everett property trying to cut around wet areas. Need a gate at the entrance of Memorial Forest with “No Trespassing” signs.
- In light of these incidents, she continues to be concerned for the safety of her and her neighbors.
- She also noted that the Township is having financial troubles, with 20% budget cuts announced, leading to possible lay-offs for 13 Township employees. Why is Township spending money on trails, but still considering layoffs? Why is the Township retaining a paid consultant for the TAC and OSAC?

- She also repeated a prior inquiry as to the status of any possible plantings to restore the overgrowth removed from the Galdi RR Bed behind the Smith Rd. homes. Last meeting, Mr. Clyde answered the same inquiry, indicating that no specific action was planned at this time.
- Ms. Newby responded to Ms. Almac's concerns, stating that the draft PTP calls for vegetative buffering and/or fencing along trail edges to protect privacy of adjacent neighbors and prevent trespassing.

Mr. Sherak:

- Inquired if the recently paved, small notch-out on Butler Rd. was intended as trail head parking. J. Loos confirmed that this is the intended purpose for this newly paved area.

The public portion of the meeting was subsequently closed.

Review of T. Chase's comments on the draft PTP (Part 2):

The following comments from T. Chase are to be incorporated into the PTP per agreement by the TAC members in their discussions of the comments:

- Reiterate requirement for Canal Walk developers to construct bike path eastward along Weston Rd. to the Trezza Farm as agreed to previously in the approval of the development.
- TAC will solicit public input into a suggestion in the PTP to close parts of Canal Rd. to car traffic on Sundays to improve safety for the numerous cyclists using it on the weekends.
- M. Fortin and J. Clyde to once more reexamine the existing bike path along Weston Rd. between Cedar Grove Lane and Elizabeth Ave. with regards to a recommendation in the PTP to extend the existing path to run the full length of the area in question. Mr. Chase indicated that the Planning Board did not require completion of this path so as to minimize further impact to prior residents by the recent new developments. We will examine options that might expand this path on the other side of the road, minimizing impact on residences and maximizing possible space for bikes and pedestrians.

The remainder of Mr. Chase's comments, while greatly appreciated, was felt either to be already adequately addressed in the PTP or to be unnecessary to address in the PTP.

J. Loos also noted that the trails on Six-Mile Run east of S. Middlebush Rd. (from the Jersey Knights soccer field to S. Middlebush Rd.) are now to be officially recognized by the State of New Jersey. Signs are forthcoming. Credit to the volunteers (mountain bikers, equestrians, others) for clearing and improving the trails here.

Motions During TAC Deliberations:

N. Newby motioned, M. Fortin seconded a proposal to remove the use of the word blacktop from the PTP, as a compromise to a previously failed proposal to remove all

M. Fortin
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such recommendations of trail surface-types from the draft PTP. Motions was subsequently modified and eventually dropped.

N. Newby motioned, J. Clyde seconded motion to replace blacktop with “surfaces suitable for road bikes” in the PTP. Motion passed 4-3.

N. Newby motioned, M. Fortin seconded motion to incorporate all of TAC member F. McLaughlin’s comments into the PTP. Motion passed unanimously.

M. Fortin motioned, J. Clyde seconded motion to modify the language of Appendix 13, item #5 on p. 38 of the April 19, 2008 Draft of the PTP regarding the Millstone-New Brunswick Railroad Bed (a.k.a the Galdi RR Bed). The modification proposed would not only recommend abandonment of a paved bike path along the section of the RR bed from S. Middlebush Rd. to Amwell Rd., but would also recommend abandonment of a walking path in this area as well, but only on the condition that the alternative east-west connector path from S. Middlebush Rd. to Van Cleef Rd. is confirmed. This latter option is described in Appendix 13, item #1, of the same draft of the PTP (p.36), and utilizes portions of Six Mile Run. This motion passed by a 4-3 vote.

F. McLaughlin motioned, D. Abbatiello seconded a proposal to adopt a recommendation by Ms. Barrett of the Agricultural Advisory Committee to create a multi-use loop trail in Six Mile Run and Nine Mile Run area.

J. Clyde motioned, J. Connolly seconded motion to incorporate a suggestion from the Environmental Advisory Committee to modify the route of the proposed trail from Amwell Rd. to Elizabeth Ave. This recommendation would move the proposed bike path strictly onto the Memorial Forest access road and away from the RR bed right-of-way, passing through and behind the Memorial Forest track (following old farming access road), returning to the RR right-of-way near Love Nest Farm. This motion passed 4-2 with one abstention.

J. Connolly motioned, F. McLaughlin seconded motion to approve as final the PTP as amended in this meeting for presentation to the Township Council to have it incorporated into the Township’s Master Plan. This motion passed 6-0 with one abstention.

Other Notes:

J. Loos reminded the committee of a tour organized by the OSAC for Township Council members and TAC members on Sat. May 17, 2008.

J. Loos also noted that he had purchased stickers at his own expense to correct the Township’s Eco-Tourism Map with the premature information regarding the Speiden and Little Valley Farms. The Township web site would also be corrected.

Additional Public Comment:

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The TAC re-opened the meeting to public comment in order to accommodate a late arrival, Ms. N. Sayer. Ms. Sayer wished to bring to the TAC's attention the need for safe bike & pedestrian accommodations along Veronica Ave. Feels this area has been neglected to this point. Sees many people walking and biking along this road, and How Lane, possibly heading to Jersey Ave. NJ Transit station. Requests provision for new sidewalks along this route. J. Clyde noted that J. Connolly is serving as the TAC's representative on a new committee formed to look at Rt. 27 sidewalks, and that the PTP does make note of this area and a need for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation, to be coordinated with the other municipalities of interest, North Brunswick and New Brunswick.

The meeting was then adjourned by unanimous motion at 9:40 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING IS WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2008 AT 7:00 PM IN THE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING**