

Parks, Recreation, and Shade Tree Advisory Board  
Dickinson Farmstead Meeting

Minutes of Tuesday, February 28, 2017

A joint public meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Shade Tree Advisory Board and the Dickson Farmstead Study Committee was held on Tuesday, February 28, 2017, in Plymouth A room at the Greater Plymouth Community Center. The meeting began at 6 PM.

Present were the following:

Parks, Recreation, and Shade Tree Advisory Board members Kim Pennington and Patti Trask (both also on Dickinson Farmstead Study Committee), Barbara Thompson, Jason Sugalski, Jennifer Dow, Bryan Renneisen, Neil Clark, and Board Secretary Rosemary Winterbottom.

Plymouth Township Council Liaison Chris Manero.

Parks and Recreation Director Karen Franck, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Phil Brady, and Building and Grounds Director Rick Carbo.

Plymouth Township Manager Karen Weiss and Zoning Officer David Conroy.

Montgomery County Planning Commission member Michael Stokes.

Consultant Ann Toole, Parks and Recreation Planner from Toole Recreation Planning.

Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) and Plymouth Meeting Historical Society member Nancy Brown, who was also representing the Dickinson Farmstead Study Committee.

Dickinson Farmstead Study committee member Gregory Ensslin.

Consultant Michael Friedhofer from Landmarks SGA (part of Stromberg/Garrison and Associates)

Karen Franck welcomed everyone and stated the purpose of the public meeting to discuss the Dickinson Farmstead. Ann Toole and Michael Friedhofer were then introduced. Ann Toole explained she is a Parks and Recreation Planner (Toole Recreation Planning) who has worked with Plymouth Township for many years, even before the building of the Community Center. Michael Friedhofer explained he is with Landmarks SCA, which is part of planning and design practice Stromberg/Garrison and Associates.

Mr. Friedhofer began a powerpoint presentation which included and discussed the following:

– Overview of the site

○ Aerial view

○ Condition analysis

All structures on the site have been assessed; most are in good condition but require maintenance. A cyclical maintenance plan is being put together for the property.

Ann Toole noted that this is a unique project in a historical part of Plymouth Township. The township will be able to acquire the property at less than full value, and can then apply for grant funding. Three rounds of grant funding to be applied for will begin in March and run through July-2017. Securing of grants is most successful if plans and specifications have already been done.

○ Photos

Dickinson House – Original construction in 1740, with later additions on each side of original structure. Roof has been replaced and stucco has been redone. There is a tenant using the second floor.

Albertson House – Original construction in 1810, with later additions on each side of original structure. Roof has been replaced and stucco has been redone. Historical Society has their offices in this building.

Carriage House and Wagon Shed – Used by the tenants of the Dickinson House.

Smoke House and Privy – Structure has been stabilized. Roof has been replaced.

Barn – The barn has two sections; the large section is the original structure. The roof was totally replaced in the 1980's, but has a hole which needs to be repaired as soon as possible.

○ Site Plan

○ Schematic Site Programming Diagram

Ann Toole noted that the Cross County Trail goes by this location, and the site could possibly be a location for a trailhead.

Michael Stokes (Montgomery County Planning Commission) explained the

Cross County Trail which is expected to eventually connect to Willow Grove. This location could possibly be used to develop parking for access to the Cross County Trail.

Nancy Brown (Historical Architectural Review Board) detailed the Historical Society use of this property. Nancy explained that the Historical Society considered several other alternatives to sell the property, but they felt the Township was the best option to keep the history portion included. She further detailed some of the past activities that took place in previous years with the Plymouth Meeting Historical Society.

There were several questions/concerns from audience members:

Julie Volz expressed concern over whether the site would be overdeveloped. Ann Toole explained that the Master Plan will determine what will be developed on the site.

Phil Aiello (Kings Road) asked if there were any plans to restore the pond; this has not been addressed.

James Roller inquired as to what the conceptual phase will entail. Ann Toole explained that it is expected that the site will blend in with the neighborhood. Concerns from neighbors will be taken into account. Traffic concerns will be addressed. Julie Volz added that traffic on Sierra Road is horrendous, with many people using the road as a cut-through.

Greg Ensslin questioned how grants will be used and any financial impact on the township. Ann Toole explained how grants are funded by various agencies, with township matching funds varying by agency. Karen Franck stated that updates on grants will be provided through Plymouth Township Newsletters. Greg Ensslin also questioned the long-term plan for the existing buildings, and Karen Franck noted that the consultants will be providing suggestions.

Sandy Bahn (Yellowstone Road) also expressed concerns over traffic. Ann Toole stated that traffic flow is a specific element of this project. Jim Bahn related a recent occurrence of grid-locked traffic at the Germantown Pike/Butler Pike location.

James Cosgrove asked if the property will have gates that can be closed at night. Ann Toole stated that the use of gates will be a topic to be studied.

Plymouth Township Council Liaison Chris Manero noted the potential cost of not developing the property and how that could impact the neighborhood.

Ann Toole thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She noted that e-mail addresses on the sign-in sheet will be used to notify attendees of future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Winterbottom