

Minutes of Chester Park & Rec :
Tuesday, July 11th, 2023

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm

In Attendance: John Ivimey, John Williams, Aaron Page, Parks and Rec Commission members Kristin Dean, Keith Lundgren, Dawn Saunders, John Saunders, and many others

Welcome remarks from Aaron Page- Thankful for all who have helped him in the first 50 days of being Parks and Recreation Director. Also thanked those in attendance for this informational meeting and introduction of John Ivimey, John Williams, and Mike Abramson (absent) as the Boardwalk advisory committee.

Presentation of Boardwalk project beginnings by John Ivimey- multiple conversations with Chester residents for the past 20 years and the process has stalled many times, so we are looking to do this in a methodical way and propose a workable project through park and recreation, Charlene, Mike A and John W.

Baby steps- looking for neighbors to consider the project for their support and then figure out approval from P&Z, Inland Wetlands, and then on to fundraising.

We are trying to get the neighbors to understand the balance of cost, impact on neighbors and timeline.

Presentation by John Williams: North Quarter Park Path and Boardwalk to Downtown Chester
Objectives 1) To create a safe, natural walking path connecting North Quarter Park to downtown Chester as an alternative to using Main Street sidewalks and multiple road crossings. 2) To expand community recreational enjoyment of North Quarter Park property and wooded areas. 3) To promote residents' awareness of, and appreciation for Chester's wetland environments. See Full Presentation attached to these minutes.

Alan (Cemetery Association) voiced concern about dog walkers allowing their dog off leash and entering private property; similar to his concern that too many residents are letting their dogs off leash in Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Stephen Holmes inquired about the construction of the boardwalk and John replied that Inland Wetland and construction companies will be providing building strategies.

Dave Hoogkirk – Resident of School Lane, says GIS survey doesn't show his property. Concerned about citizens looking into his property and dogs defecating. Wondering why the sidewalk idea from prior years didn't go through. Is against the plan to build the boardwalk. His neighbor Bob Potter (absent) also wants to share that he's against the project.

Patrick McGannon- Concerned about some details, including pulling people off of main street, which neighbors actually use North Quarter Park and who exactly is going to use this boardwalk? Will it be ADA compliant- can we complete the sidewalk project that links downtown to NQP first? Concerned that the boardwalk will be on invasive species. Boondoggle that nobody will use.

John W reminded Patrick about the objective of the plan is to bring recreational enjoyment not simply to bring people to downtown.

Sam Cooper- watched the park expand, heard about the idea, likes the boardwalk plan, and says thank you for the idea.

Cary Pollock - concerned about lack of privacy, and that signs with rules on them are not followed, is against the project

Stephen Holmes- concerned about the privacy of abutters and that a fence should be built potentially and to be sensitive about Kim Tyler's property. Also concerned that a wider trail with a boardwalk will encourage too many people. Is concerned that the boardwalk will need some sort of barrier for Kim Tyler and that he's speaking on her behalf.

John W's response- Inland Wetlands will provide suggestions for how the boardwalk should be integrated into the wetlands, along with landscape construction professionals.

John Ivimey responded that they are all ears and if Kim Tyler would like a fence or plantings that we would integrate as much as possible.

Cary Hull – wondering about if there can be a platform looking out over the cove area. If this boardwalk project doesn't connect historically with the town that she doesn't see the point of a boardwalk.

Lisa Wahle – Conservation Commission; habitat improvement would help the plan. There is Japanese Barberry that needs to be removed. She is also concerned about only monthly inspection. She is in favor of a protective screen that is not invasive and Conservation Commission could help planning of that. Also concerned about a potential barrier for animal movement in the area

Ivey Gianetti: Avid hiker that loves the park and other section of trail and thinks it would be wonderful to be in nature with ground and land under her feet instead of sidewalks and roads.

Dawn Saunders, Park and Recreation Commission Chairperson: Concerned about safety and security. What about people that are allergic to bees? There are no cameras. Might attract teenagers, don't know what might happen. Safety should be paramount.

John Saunders: 15 feet is plenty of room for a privacy fence or fencing. Thinks only need two feet and thinks there is plenty of space. In favor of the boardwalk and it might be helpful about for our town image.

John Williams asking neighbors that have concerns to hopefully connect for a working group to figure out ideas for plans and strategies to help.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12pm

Motion to close the meeting Kristin Dean; 2nd by Dawn Saunders

Attachment: PRESENTATION on BOARDWALK

