



VISTA 2025 Goal 1:

Maintain and enhance “quality of place” as a key component of economic health

Goal 1 Team Meeting

September 13, 2016

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: W. Boulton Alexander, Kim Brumbaugh, Michael Cotter, Denise Day, Mimi Gleason, Don Hannum, Beth Harper-Briglia, Claudia Hellebush, Ernie Hollings, Michelle Kichline, Molly Morrison, John Theilacker

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Ellen Ferretti, David Sciocchetti

Molly Morrison

Opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and invited those in attendance to introduce themselves. Asked if there were any questions or comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. John Theilacker noted that he was in attendance at the previous meeting but not listed. No other comments received.

Moved on to the first agenda item which was a report on the Natural Lands Trust (NLT) project in Coatesville. Noted that it began as a needs assessment and morphed into a five year plan. Indicated that NLT worked with a consultant (Ann Toll of Toll Recreation Planning) to develop plan and that the effort had a focus on implementation.

Described general current conditions in Coatesville: significant population turnover, growing younger, city underserved in terms of parks, many parks with deferred maintenance. Other issues: recreation facilities were aging and declining in quality;

maintenance was a challenge; swimming pools were a major issue; significant community support for good recreation

Described project steps: established study committee, held public meeting, conducted online questionnaire, conducted stakeholder interviews, held focus groups and developed plan.

Reviewed findings: Safety and security stood out as critical; cleanliness stood out; need for programs and good information on programs stood out

Discussed recommendations: Build capacity, Build community, Build facilities

Capacity recommendations: No targeted city recreation staff - start advisory council and park safety ambassador program; Commit some city staff time to recreation; Align volunteers; Hold summit on safety and programs; Work towards green stormwater management

Community recommendations: Leverage KaBoom playground project; Enhance communications; Coordinate programs; Participate in the planning for the Chester Valley Trail

Facilities recommendations: Complete KaBoom; Focus on Palmer Park; Assess pools versus alternatives like "splash pads"; Develop parks master plan

Noted positive support from City Council for the overall effort.

John Theilaker

Looking at South Mill Trail – South Coatesville-Modena-Coatesville

Claudia Hellebush

Asked about the budget for the plan

Molly Morrison

Responded that this was a difficult questions to answer as many elements of the plan are not yet developed. Added that the focus was on less expensive low maintenance approaches to providing quality recreation.

Michelle Kichline

Suggested that thinking on municipal pools is changing due to staffing and liability challenges.

Denise Day

Commented that the YMCA operated the main city pool until it had physical problems this past year. Added that the costs for repairs were estimated at over \$1 million for both city pools. Stated that, despite challenges, kids still need to learn to swim – drowning is still a danger.

Claudia Hellebush

Noted that splash pads avoid the risk of drowning.

Molly Morrison

Noted that funders get frustrated with a lack of focus and responsiveness. Stated that city/neighborhood capacity is the key. Added that a framework to sustain any recreation improvements is needed. Commented on the potential of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation (WFRF) grant.

David Sciocchetti

Briefly described the Wells Fargo grant status noting that work on a resident driven plan for improving the community was underway with a deadline of March 31, 2017 to report back to WFRF. Submission of the plan could open the door to implementation funding for the proposed revitalization activities in the plan.

Pat Bokovitz

Noted the importance of the parks to the diverse residents of the City of Coatesville.

Mimi Gleason

Commented on Marsh Creek and the importance of outdoor recreation available to a diversity of people with a diversity of languages.

Molly Morrison

Commented that communities come together at recreational facilities.

Pat Bokovitz

As part of the updates portion of the agenda, described urban center events to date including a West Chester event focused on economic development strategy, a Kennett event focused on problem properties. Noted the upcoming event in Phoenixville focused on – image/marketing. Added that the County's 16 centers vary in terms of their goals and readiness for marketing and need to craft their own specific message. Noted that the urban center forum events were being coordinated by the Chester County

Department of Community Development, the Chester County Planning Commission and the Chester County Economic Development Council.

David Sciocchetti

Commented on the concept of the “mentality of marketing” noting that many every day activities can be a part of a marketing effort.

Claudia Hellebush

Asked who was invited to the forum.

Pat Bokovitz

Responded that urban area elected officials/staff/main street/business of the urban areas were the targets.

Ernie Hollings

Asked about Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs and was advised they will be attending. Noted that there was no county level organization for boroughs and added that there were discussion underway to possibly include the boroughs in the Chester County Association of Township Officials (CCATO) activities.

Michelle Kichline

Noted that the process of Landscapes 3 was underway with a stakeholders event on the topic of open space preservation being held today.

John Theilacker

Announced the Bike the Brandywine event noting that there were 80 and 40 mile loops adding that it was not a race

David Sciocchetti

Provided a brief update on the proposed Return on Environment event noting that efforts were underway to identify a lead business partner.

Michelle Kichline

Thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.