

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
WALNUT AVENUE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2024 AT 5:30 P.M.
Draft MINUTES

1. Call to Order (*E. Baiada*)

Lee Abberley	Member
Christine Hesser	Member
Amy Jacoby	Member
Nick Matteo	Member
Robert McGrath	Member
Adrienne Smythe	Member
Katie Widmeier	Member
Jim Lee	Commissioner Liaison, Ward 3

Guests:	Christopher Marcinkoski	PORT
	Nick Jabs	PORT
	Gary Pogue	Resident, Oreland
	Seth Harrison	Resident, Erdenheim

2. Approval of Minutes from October (*All Members*)

The Committee did not review minutes.

3. New Business (*All*)

Welcome Port Architecture and Urbanism, LLC: The team at PORT joined the committee for an informal brainstorming session to establish a foundational baseline for their project. Christopher Marcinkoski and Nick Jabs engaged with the committee, emphasizing that while the project is slated to commence in full force in January, this preliminary session was designed to gather valuable input. They aimed to align the project's direction with the community's aspirations by seeking insights from neighbors and residents about their visions for the site. The discussion was thoughtfully guided by the following key questions:

- What kinds of activities would you like to see in this new park?
Committee Response: The committee confirmed a shared vision for developing a multi-generational park designed for people of all ages, abilities and interests to enjoy throughout the year. A walking path accommodating all age groups emerged as a top priority for the site. Additionally, the committee expressed a strong interest in preserving the existing tree line to create a natural privacy berm between neighboring homes and commercial properties, fostering an oasis-like atmosphere within the park.

A welcoming water feature was also discussed as a potential centerpiece for the site. Seth Harrison, representing the Springfield Soccer Club, advocated for a multi-use sports fields comprised of artificial turf with lighting. While the committee acknowledged the appeal of this feature, concerns were raised about overprogramming the park and potential traffic issues from visitors outside the township. The committee supported the inclusion of a practice field to balance functionality and community needs.

- What kinds of activities do you NOT want to see in this new park?
Committee Response: The committee collectively expressed disinterest in including pickleball courts in the design due to concerns about noise pollution and the proximity to nearby homes. Additionally, they emphasized that there is no interest in installing lighting for parking lots or fields, as all Township parks operate from dawn to dusk. Concerns about heavy traffic to the site were also highlighted, reinforcing the need for careful planning to balance accessibility with maintaining a peaceful community atmosphere.
- How should this new park relate to other Springfield Twp. facilities?

Committee Response: Springfield has a rich history of family traditions, and this park should be a meaningful reflection of those values, fostering a sense of community and connection for future generations.

- What is the biggest opportunity here?

Committee Response: This project presents a unique opportunity to transform a site with a troubled and overlooked past into a beautiful space for the community to share and cherish. Educating visitors about the extensive journey to revitalize the area will underscore the importance of community effort and resilience. By emphasizing multi-generational use, the park will celebrate shared family experiences and traditions, creating a legacy of unity and connection for all who visit.

- What is the biggest obstacle here?

Committee Response: A significant obstacle will be overcoming the perception that insufficient efforts were made to ensure the site's safety. The stigma surrounding this location, ingrained through generations, has created lingering fears of contamination. To address these concerns, the Township must prioritize transparency and education, effectively communicating the rigorous measures taken to restore and secure the site. Building trust will be key to reshaping public perception and fostering a sense of safety and pride in the park.

4. Old Business (*All*)

None.

5. General Public Comment (*All*)

None.

6. Commissioners' Report (*S. Ratsavong*)

No report.

7. Call for Adjournment (*E. Baiada*)

January 1st Meeting Canceled for Holiday

Next meeting: Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 5:30 pm