

Meeting Minutes

Borough of Ford City, PA *Study Committee Meeting No. 1*
Community Trail and Park Master Plan
Meeting Date: Thursday, February 26, 2004 6:00 p.m

Attendees:

Timothy Malec	Ford City Borough Council
Homer Pendleton	Ford City Borough Council
Terry Tokarek	Ford City Borough Council
Steve Krochta	PennDot Manager
Marc Mantini	Historian
Henry Herbst	Watershed Association
Jim Ramage	Rails-to-trails Association
Kim Petrie	Greater Ford City CDC
Cathy Rudosky	Teacher/GFCCDC Board Member
Jim Pashek	Pashek Associates, Ltd.

Hand-outs

- Scope of Work
- Meeting Agenda
- Schedule

The following represents a brief review of discussions held during the above meeting:

1 Introductions

- 1.1 Jim Pashek introduced himself. He went on to describe Pashek Associates as a Landscape Architectural and Community Planning firm, providing site design, geographical information systems, and recreational and community planning services. He explained that Pashek Associates has completed a number of park master planning projects specifically for the Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (DCNR), like the plan we are beginning for Ford City. Because of this, Jim stated that the firm is quite familiar with the necessary procedures to ensure a successful process.
- 1.2 The rest of the study committee introduced themselves and mentioned their interests in the project.

2 What is this project all about?

2.1 Jim reviewed the handout outlining the Scope of Work, which broadly includes five phases:

- A. public participation
- B. background data collection
- C. site and activity analysis
- D. design
- E. cost analysis

The final product would contain all of the information gathered and produced throughout the project in a letter-sized, bound, report format. A master plan drawing will illustrate the proposed improvements.

2.2 A key change in the Scope of Work is the area to be master planned. The Request For Proposal (RFP) and Proposal submitted by Pashek Associates was largely limited to a narrow area along the river. Now that the development proposal for the land between the proposed park and the trail along Third Avenue has been withdrawn, this master plan will be looking at ways of integrating the proposed light manufacturing with the park. Resources include the Industrial Redevelopment Plan by Mullin & Lonergan and the engineering completed by Olsen Engineering.

3. Discuss Schedule

3.1 Jim reviewed the proposed schedule, provided as a handout. In March, base mapping would continue to be developed, a “kick-off” article for the papers written and the site would be analyzed. In April, the next study committee would be held to further discuss the opportunities and constraints for the site and prepare for the public meeting scheduled for later in April. The goal would be to have the majority of the plan completed by September so this study could form the basis for a grant application to DCNR in October.

4. List ideas, issues, and observations

4.1 Study Committee members offered important comments pertaining to the riverfront park/trail. These included:

- Pool 6 is one of the finest pools on the river; river activities proposed for this area should compliment those in Kittanning – there are fishing contests, boat races, and a river-fest; the Gateway Clipper comes up for fall colors and there is an XMAS in July celebration.
- There are few opportunities for boat access to the river.
- The Three Rivers Rowing Association has been looking at a parcel of land near the bridge for a boathouse for this area.

- There is an opportunity for a marina in the park; need to be aware of private marina immediately downriver of the park.
- The new bridge sidewalk is a great place to view boat racing and other river activities.
- Historically, Ford City has not had access to the River. The industries and railroads precluded access. The high wall along the park has protected the town from flooding (since 1913).
- There is a marina in Verona near the Greek Orthodox Church that provides access to the river with similar height constraints. Trolls on Washington's Landing is another example.
- The floodwall needs some repair, is 100 years old, built by PPG for glass manufacturing.
- There is an opportunity across the river for loop, nature trails. There is an old spoil pile owned by PPG. There are sports fields located there now.
- Another opportunity is to develop a trail that runs up Tug Mill Run, along an old trolley line, through Ford Cliff, Ford City. There is a waterfall along this proposed route.
- This trail should be thought of in the context of future trail from Pittsburgh to Buffalo, New York.
- The park has land in both Ford City and Manor Township.
- There is an opportunity for this park to become a regional trailhead site.
- A proposal has been submitted to lease a portion of the site for a coal company to off-load barges, into trucks. Could be a 3-5 year lease.
- Consider trees, gazebos, and sidewalks like Kittanning Park. There is no need to duplicate their amphitheater. Maybe a barge could be used for special events concerts. Also consider picnic tables and shelters. The shelters can provide cover from a sudden rain shower.
- Lighting should be provided for safety. There is a standard historic-looking light fixture selected by the City.
- The future plan should provide for emergency access to the park.
- The industrial history of the area has created a "brownfield" with inherent restrictions. Any excavation for footings or utilities must require encapsulating the soil excavated or removed to a legal spoil site. No food processing or Housing is permitted on the site.
- The non-park land is proposed to be light industry, like an RIDC park (in O'Hara Township on Route 28). May have offices, but minimal retail.
- The park/trail must provide access to the river from the City and employees in the industrial park.
- The City is using a grant to construct a handicap accessible ramp from the Third Avenue parking area up onto the rail-trail.
- Consider Bocci courts, horseshoes, maybe tennis courts in the park area. Restrooms should be planned, along with overlooks.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 *The next Study Committee meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, April 1, 2004, at 5:00pm, at the GFCCDC offices. Note the change in time!*
- 5.2 We have scheduled the first public meeting for Thursday, April 29, at 7:00pm.
- 5.3 There was a brief discussion of ways to get young people involved in the planning process including meeting with the Junior Lions Club (LEO-Mayor Powell), Vo-tech kids, scouts and other youth groups. We could also meet with the middle school student council or other student group.
- 5.4 Steve Krochta suggested we contact Daryl St. Clair, PennDot Bike/Trail Coordinator.
- 5.5 Jim will coordinate with Council members to get a “kick-off” letter submitted to the papers.

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek Associates and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Any clarifications to these minutes must be submitted in writing to Pashek Associates. No response implies acceptance of these meeting minutes as written.

Prepared by:

Jim Pashek, RLA, AICP
March 1, 2004

Meeting Minutes

Borough of Ford City, PA *Study Committee Meeting No. 2*
Community Trail and Park Master Plan
Meeting Date: Thursday, April 1, 2004 5:00 p.m

Attendees:

Timothy Malec	Ford City Borough Council
Homer Pendleton	Ford City Borough Council
Terry Tokarek	Ford City Borough Council
Steve Krochta	Resident
Marc Mantini	Historian
Henry Herbst	Watershed Association
Jim Ramage	Rails-to-trails Association
Kim Petrie	Greater Ford City CDC
Cathy Rudosky	Teacher/GFCCDC Board Member
Eugene Banks	Ford City Borough Planning Commission
Donna Piper Rupert	Allegheny Valley Land Trust
Jim Pashek	Pashek Associates, Ltd.

Hand-outs

- Meeting Agenda

The following represents a brief review of discussions held during the above meeting:

1 Comments on Community Background and Press Release

- 1.1 Several suggestions were offered. Pashek to verify the length of trail as described at the top of page five of the Community Background. Rupert provided a number of comments on ways to improve on the text.
- 1.2 In addition to the modifications suggested for the press release, Petrie will resolve the location of the public meeting and add any other information relevant to the plans for the meeting.

2 Site Analysis and Program review

- 2.1 Pashek reviewed the Site Analysis plan and photos of the existing site. The committee then offered a number of additional thoughts for the site analysis. They included:
- A. Obtain Olsen drawings for the proposed entrance into the site off Sixth Street and suggested parking leading to the Pattern Shop. *(Petrie to contact Olsen to have Olsen send the information digitally to Pashek)*
 - B. The Power line shown on the site, in line with Seventh Street has a fifty-foot ROW. It is likely that this line will be removed as part of a sub-station relocation proposed by the power company. *(Petrie to obtain site plan information regarding a new substation for inclusion on the master plan and get that information to Pashek)*
 - C. The boundary between the park and the proposed development was located based on negotiations with a developer that was going to develop the site. The developer agreed to a park line that was roughly 40 from the retaining wall. The park line also extended down to Second Avenue along 128 to allow for a trail loop. The park also included a larger area at the Pattern Shop end to allow for future parking.
 - D. There have been discussions regarding a dock area for transient docking and the Gateway Clipper on the northern end of the parcel, where a vertical retaining wall exists.
 - E. The Gas Line running along the park, north to south will be abandoned. The Dominion Peoples line under the river and crossing the site near the Veterans Bridge will remain. *(Petrie to identify the size of the ROW)*
 - F. The Ford City easement on the south side of the Veterans Bridge is for a water line. A review of the easement would allow a determination as to whether the easement could be used for a trail.
 - G. There was some discussion as to which municipality owned land adjacent to the ramp leading to the Veterans Bridge. *(Krochta to obtain PennDot drawings with ROW and any easements identified in this area)*
 - H. Petrie will provide Pashek draft site covenants developed to protect the Borough's rights when development occurs on the site.
- 2.1.1 The proposed park should include the following:
- A. 2-3 Gazebos or shelters and a restroom, probably located closer to the southern end of the site.
 - B. Overlooks might be cantilevered over the river, not unlike the Mt. Washington overlooks in Pittsburgh.
 - C. Consider a bark park for those trail users walking their pets.

3. Discussion of the Conceptual Plans and sketches

- 3.1 Jim reviewed several sketches to further refine the ideas proposed for the park. There seemed to be concurrence with the following:
- A. We should show a trail connection under the Veterans Bridge, coming out onto Ross Avenue; and a connection to the railtrail on the northern side of the bridge ramp, as originally proposed. (*Pashek will be meeting with the PennDot Bikeway coordinator, Daryl St. Clair on April 6 to review the proposed trail alignment*)
 - B. A Rowing Association building and parking will continue to be shown next to the bridge. (*Pashek to further define the site requirements for that river use*)
 - C. We talked about having plazas in 2-3 locations with elevated, covered viewing platforms (or cantilevered viewing platforms).
 - D. The northern end of the park will serve as the most active area with small amphitheater and docks. We talked about incorporating an accessible ramp from the docks to the trail at the top of the retaining wall, through a series of switchbacks that can double as access for the amphitheater seating steps.
 - E. Historic interpretation of the region and the industry near the site remains important. (*Study Committee members to identify research items; Pashek to visit library for additional resource material; Mantini loaned Pashek a brochure on Trolleys of Armstrong County*)

4. Public Meeting

- 4.1 Study Committee will discuss opportunities to further market the public meeting, extending invitations to groups in the area. *Petrie will sort out final meeting location. Pashek will provide a flyer for distribution. **The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 29, at 7:00pm***

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 ***The next Study Committee meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, May 13 2004, at 5:00pm, at the GFCCDC offices.*** Please attend. We will be going over the public meeting comments and beginning discussing master plan alternatives. Your input is important.
- 5.2 Petrie will distribute a list of key people we should consider for interviews. Once we have an updated list, we will begin those interviews with the goal of having them complete by May 1.

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek Associates and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during

the meeting. Any clarifications to these minutes must be submitted in writing to Pashek Associates. No response implies acceptance of these meeting minutes as written.

Prepared by:

Jim Pashek, RLA, AICP
April 2, 2004

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Meeting Minutes

Borough of Ford City, PA *Study Committee Meeting No. 3*
Community Trail and Park Master Plan
Meeting Date: Thursday, May 27, 2004 5:00 p.m

Attendees:

Timothy Malec	Ford City Borough Council
Steve Krochta	Resident
Henry Herbst	Watershed Association
Joanne Haneke	Chamber
Ron Steffey	Resident
Donna Kornasiewicz	Greater Ford City CDC
Cathy Rudosky	Teacher/GFCCDC Board Member
Jim Pashek	Pashek Associates, Ltd.

The following represents a brief review of discussions held during the above meeting:

- 3.1 Pashek reviewed the status of the planning efforts. At the public meeting, many of the ideas generated earlier by the study committee were discussed. There seemed to be concurrence with the direction we were headed. The goal of this meeting was to further review the public meeting comments and discuss the refinements of the plans presented tonight.
- 3.2 The draft master plan was then discussed at length with the following observations noted.
 - A. The committee wanted to continue to show an amphitheater on the northern end of the site. Pashek is to meet with the Corps of Engineers to discuss feasibility. Kornasiewicz is to provide the name of the COE representative familiar with issues at the park. She was also to provide the latest substation drawings so we could coordinate the amphitheater location with those proposed improvements. Power lines currently planned between the existing river crossing and substation may need to be relocated for the amphitheater. Steffey suggested that the amphitheater be oriented as much to the northwest as possible to avoid having audiences looking directly into the setting sun. The stage area should be graded to just a few feet above the normal pool level so people could fish off the platform.

The study committee liked the sloped lawn area above the more formalized seating area as an alternative to watching the river or attending events.

- B. Kornasiewicz to provide Pashek with draft ordinances for the proposed office park next to the park.
 - C. Two boating scenarios were presented to the study committee. The preference was the non-motorized concept. It was suggested that there be an area on the circle drop-off to pull off the circulation aisle to allow someone to take their car-top boat off and carry it down to the water's edge. The committee thought the Fish Commission boat launch in Roston would adequately serve the area. They did like the idea of boat docks for transient use.
- 3.3 Use native plant species when considering planting, for durability and educational value.
- 3.4 There was some discussion regarding the phasing of the project. The following was the consensus of the committee on phasing:

Phase I	Trail development, to include conduit for lights, new handrail where required, signage
Phase II	Assuming the first phase funds cannot complete the trail, this phase would complete the trail, including lighting for entire trail length
Phase III	Construction of the Amphitheater
Phase IV	Continued construction of the Amphitheater
Phase V	Cantilevered Overlook
Phase VI	Boathouse area

Annually, concurrent with above phases: Trees and other plantings.

Ultimately, the ability to secure grants and the development of partnerships will impact the phasing plan. For example, a partner may have access to funds for the construction of the boathouse, moving that project ahead of other proposed improvements.

- 3.5 ***The next Study Committee meeting will be scheduled for early to mid August, at 5:00pm.*** Please attend. We will be reviewing the draft master plan report and plan. Weather permitting; we may hold the meeting at the park. Your input is important. A meeting notice will be sent to the committee in mid-July.

3.6 Pashek will prepare a display board for use at Heritage days (June 29-July 4).

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek Associates and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Any clarifications to these minutes must be submitted in writing to Pashek Associates. No response implies acceptance of these meeting minutes as written.

Prepared by:

Jim Pashek, RLA, AICP
June 4, 2004

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Meeting Minutes

Borough of Ford City, PA *Study Committee Meeting No. 4*
Community Trail and Park Master Plan
Meeting Date: Thursday, September 23, 2004 5:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Timothy Malec	Ford City Borough Council
Homer Pendleton	Ford City Borough Council
Ron Olsen	Local Engineer and Business Owner
Henry Herbst	Watershed Association
Joanne Haneke	Chamber
Mark Haneke	Resident
Donna Kornasiewicz	Greater Ford City CDC
Marc Mantini	Resident and Local Historian
Jim Pashek	Pashek Associates, Ltd.

The following represents a brief review of discussions held during the above meeting:

- 4.1 Pashek presented a brief review of the draft report. Copies were handed out. He requested review comments be forwarded to Donna Kornasiewicz by October 15, 2004. In addition, Pashek wanted to review in more detail the draft master plan and the phasing plan. In general, the plan was well received. The following is a list of observations made by the committee.
 - A. It was suggested that the public river overlooks in Bridgewater in Beaver County might be a good example of positive public river overlooks and access.
 - B. There was some discussion regarding the planting. Pashek noted that the intent of the plantings would be to provide predominantly native species. Although the majority of the river's edge is above the river, behind a floodwall, there would still be an attempt to begin to restore the riparian buffer, primarily as an educational tool and to bring a forested edge to the banks of the river. It was suggested that Ferns have been shown to modify soil in a positive way.
 - C. Mr. Olsen asked if the relocation of utilities that would be required by the proposed development was included in the cost estimate. Pashek noted that there were some numbers for infrastructure costs but the actual costs would need to be refined once relocations were finally

determined. In addition, some of the relocation costs might be borne by the new office development building on the site.

- D. A comment was made that when planning for utilities for the park, plan for sufficient electrical power for Heritage day activities and other community events.
 - E. Regarding the DCNR grant that is being prepared for submission in October, the Borough is investigating the possibility of providing in-kind services for building the trail and other activities.
 - F. The phasing plan was discussed and consensus was to move the playground to the last phase.
- 4.2 The next steps are for Pashek to present at the second Public Meeting on October 4, respond to draft comments and finalize the master plan, submit the sketches to the Corps of Engineers for their comments and the draft report to DCNR. Pashek hoped that this would be done by the end of the year.
- 4.3 The next meeting will be a presentation to the Public at the Borough Council meeting on October 4, at the Library, at 5:30pm. The presentation will be televised.

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek Associates and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting.

Prepared by:

Jim Pashek, RLA, AICP
October 19, 2004

Meeting Minutes

Borough of Ford City, PA

Public Meeting No. 1

Community Trail and Park Master Plan

Meeting Date: Thursday, April 29, 2004

7:00 p.m

Attendees:

Timothy Malec	Ford City Borough Council
Homer Pendleton	Ford City Borough Council
Terry Tokarek	Ford City Borough Council
Marc Mantini	Historian
Jim Ramage	Rails-to-trails Association
Kim Petrie	Greater Ford City CDC
Cathy Rudosky	Teacher/GFCCDC Board Member
Donna Piper Rupert	Allegheny Valley Land Trust
Jim Pashek	Pashek Associates, Ltd.
Ron Olsen	Olsen Engineering
Steve Kozuch	Ford City Borough Council
Ray Boarts	Greater Ford City CDC
Donna Kornasiewicz	Greater Ford City CDC
Bill Oleksak	Resident
Ted Kornasiewicz	Resident
Dylan Piper	Trail User
Nancy McIntire	Resident

The following represents a brief review of discussions held during this public input meeting:

1 Introductions and how this meeting fits into the master planning process

- 1.1 Pashek began the meeting by explaining the master planning process for the riverfront park/trail. A critical part of the master plan is public input. In addition to this public meeting, we will be meeting with a study committee and contacting key people in the community regarding their opinions.
- 1.2 Concurrently, we are beginning to evaluate the site for opportunities and constraints and understanding the planning that has already been done for the project area.
- 1.3 In a few months, we hope to come back to you at a second public meeting to present our ideas for improvements to the area and get public support for that plan.

- 1.4 The goal for this meeting is to obtain input from attendees on the issues and opportunities that this park presents.

2. Ideas, issues and opportunities

- 2.1 Pashek listed several facilities proposed in discussion at the study committee meetings. They included:

- Boat docks
- Trail under bridge
- Regional trailhead
- Trees
- Gazebo/picnic shelters
- Amphitheater
- Signage that tells the industrial heritage story
- Restrooms
- Boat building for non-powered boats

- 2.2 The meeting attendees then began listing ideas that they thought would be appropriate for the park.

- Trail developed wide enough that public safety vehicles could travel
- Any improvement must be designed as low maintenance
- Shady areas for park users is important
- Extend the trail north, toward Kittanning, along the river
- The encapsulated area is in the boat area – may cause construction difficulty
- The trail under the Veterans Bridge would improve on trail safety
- Existing trail is very safe – consider lighting the trail for after dark use
- Plans for office/industrial use should allow weekend park users to use their parking areas – shared parking would save on construction costs for the park and reduce impervious area
- Check the 100 year flood fluctuations – thought the range was large
- Future employees of the industrial park would most likely use the park during lunch
- Provide a Sixth Street connection to allow easy access from town to the park trail
- The existing power substation near the riverfront is proposed to be moved and possibly put underground
- Plan a park environment with trees, flowering shrubs – an amphitheater should be mostly grass and some concrete walls – provide places to stop and rest and watch river life
- Provide bike racks

- Consider an exercise course along the trail
- Continue to discuss who owns the park, who maintains
- Several thought the park would be a selling point to future businesses
- Consider horseshoes/bocce courts

2.3 Pashek closed the session by thanking everyone for attending and asked them to look for future announcements regarding a second public meeting where the draft master plan will be presented.

The next Study Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 27 at 5:00 pm at the Greater Ford City CDC Office. Please try to attend.

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek Associates and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting. Any clarifications to these minutes must be submitted in writing to Pashek Associates. No response implies acceptance of these meeting minutes as written.

Prepared by:

Jim Pashek, RLA, AICP
May 4, 2004

Distribution: all study committee members

Meeting Minutes

Borough of Ford City, PA

Public Meeting No. 2

Community Trail and Park Master Plan

Meeting Date: Monday, October 4, 2004

5:30 pm

The following represents a brief review of the presentation before Council at a special council meeting held just before the normally scheduled meeting.

- 2.1 Pashek began the presentation by explaining what a park master plan was. He suggested the following important elements needed to be included in any master plan:
 - A. Public involvement – this is critical
 - B. A review of the existing site, called a Site Analysis, to establish a base-line of opportunities and constraints
 - C. Development of various planning ideas (or Design Concepts) in response to public input, the site constraints and professional input
 - D. Evaluating the various ideas and building consensus around one proposal for the idea for the site (the Master Plan)

- 2.2 Public Input took the form of a public meeting on April 29, steering committee meetings, interviews, survey of people attending Heritage Days and input from the Ford City Area Community Development Corporation. Key Goals were identified, including:
 - A. Enhance opportunities for commercial development, creating good jobs within the Borough
 - B. Provide public access to the River after years of industrial barriers
 - C. Create a river-oriented trail to complement the Armstrong Trail (and to create a safe route under the Veterans Bridge and route 128

- 2.3 After a review of the Site Analysis, Pashek reviewed some of the facilities that were suggested most often through the public process. They included:
 - A. Riverfront Trails
 - B. Amphitheater for small community events

- C. Non-motorized boat area (in partnership with local canoe, kayak and skull enthusiasts)
 - D. Small playground
 - E. Fishing and overlook opportunities
- 2.4 These facility ideas and alternative design concepts evolved into a draft master plan that underwent several revisions as the committee and others reviewed the plan. Pashek described the master plan of the park as a visitor might experience the park. He also reviewed the design concepts for the office/light industrial complex. The key is to market the complex as having outstanding access to the river. The Borough needs to adopt design guidelines that avoid the unattractive metal buildings of most other industrial parks and ensures that this employment center is an asset to the community. Toward that end, the following design ideas for the office part of the site were recommended.
- A. Manufacturing should be located closer to the Armstrong Trail and Offices should be located closer to the river.
 - B. There should be a range of building sizes, from 30,000 to 75,000SF. The current Master Plan suggests a layout with 325,000SF.
 - C. Site amenities in the office/light industrial park should include sidewalks, street trees, streetlights, hedges screening parking lots, and parking lot masses broken up into smaller areas.
 - D. Finally, environmentally sensitive storm water management should be required, including vegetated swales and wetland habitats and less emphasis on curbs, inlets and underground piping.
- 2.5 Funding for an improvement to the community like this project can be complex. We envision accessing grants and funding through partnerships. The site will be ranked high by the state because it is a riverfront site, it is a brownfield in an urban area, and the design proposed in the master plan proposes using growing greener and smart growth principles. Partners might include non-profit groups like the Three Rivers Rowing Association and businesses that move into the office park.
- 2.6 The following development phases are recommended to Council. We recognize that each development may require multiple phases, depending on the availability of funds.
- A. Trail
 - B. Amphitheater
 - C. Non-motorized boat access
 - D. Water Playground
- 2.7 Council expressed strong support for the planning process and the master plan developed by the study committee. They voted to apply for the grant from DCNR to fund the first phase of construction for the trail.

2.8 Next steps. Pashek will incorporate all of the public comments received on the master plan and submit the plan for review by the Corps of Engineers and DCNR.

The information contained in these minutes was recorded by Pashek Associates and represents our interpretation and understanding of the discussions that occurred during the meeting.

Prepared by:

Jim Pashek, RLA, AICP
October 19, 2004

Distribution: all study committee members