

THE SMITHFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING – DECEMBER 11, 2024, AT 6:00PM

A Special Meeting of the Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on December 11, 2024, at the Smithfield Township Municipal Center at 1155 Red Fox Rd, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301, and via Zoom.

Present are Supervisors Jacob Pride, Robert Lovenheim, and Michael Albert, Engineer Missy Hutchison, Conservation & Recreation Director Alex Jackson, and Township Manager Julia Heilakka. Also present are Middle Smithfield Township representatives: Supervisor Mike Dwyer and Parks & Recreation Manager Chris Rain.

Also present are Tim Freeman, Efe Ozgun, Vicky Ozgun, Mike Reed, Charlene Spezza, Marguerite Vecchio, Tara Vecchio-Freeman, and Danny Younger.

1. **Chair Jacob Pride calls the meeting to order at 6:03PM.**

2. **The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.**

3. **New Business:**

- a. **Presentation: Overview of Project Process.** Missy Hutchison overviews the scope of work for the project, which is dictated by DCNR. Two study meetings have already occurred, and this is the first public meeting. Key person interviews are ongoing and a citizen survey is live. At the next public meeting, she will present two to three concept plans and an analysis of the key person interviews and survey. So far, 90 surveys have been completed; statistical relevance requires about 300 responses. Nine of seventeen key person interviews have occurred.

Missy Hutchison discusses that key persons are Sue Melchiorre of PACT, Jen Shukaitis from Pocono Heritage Land Trust, a Prices Landing resident, State Rep. Tarah Probst, Kettle Creek, the River Runner, Dr. Gingrich for the dig site, Mike Reed of Pocono Disc Golf, Laura Spinner from the Boy Scouts, Chamberlain Canoes, Pocono Mountain Visitors Bureau, the constable, and Shawnee Fire Company.

Tara Vecchio-Freeman notes that both Jen Shukaitis and Tarah Probst are democrats, and asks why Dr. Gingrich is included. Jacob Pride replies these interviews are not political. Alex Jackson states Dr. Gingrich is working with the Smithsonian and is the leading master on this site. Marguerite Vecchio questions why commercial companies are being contacted for a potential private boat launch. Missy Hutchison replies it helps to gauge interest. Robert Lovenheim suggests contacting the National Park Service and the River Sojourn group. Vicky Ozgun suggests contacting Edge of the Woods and Delaware Adventure. Jacob Pride suggests contacting State Senator Brown.

- b. **Presentation: Existing Conditions Site Analysis & Observations.** Missy Hutchison presents the existing conditions on the site, which include information from GIS, a survey from Frank Smith, and FEMA maps. She confirms the 2013 FEMA map has not been revised or amended.

- c. **Discuss: River's Edge Park Development Ideas.** Missy Hutchison discusses ideas for amenities, which include: fixing the existing pump track, expanding the bike track, a jump line, a loop trail, expanding natural trails, kiosks, a nonmotorized boat launch, restrooms, an open air theater, bird watching, and parking lot improvements.

Jacob Pride discusses fencing. Michael Albert discusses the bike park. Efe Ozgun discusses this and other bike parks in the area. Michael Albert suggests a playground. Missy Hutchison discusses paving the bike park track. Michael Albert discusses a loop trail, open spaces for unstructured play, picnic benches, and a skate park. The Board discusses phasing for the amenities.

Tim Freeman discusses the decline in use of the bike park since its opening, and paving and maintenance concerns. Mike Reed discusses redoing the bike track and suggests expanding the disc golf course to 18 holes. The Board discusses park fees for out of county visitors. Mike Dwyer disagrees with charging a fee. Michael Albert and Mike Dwyer discuss why the fee structure was imposed and collections. Mike Reed recently installed a disc golf course in Paradise Township.

Tara Vecchio-Freeman suggests an exemption from the fee for frisbee golf users because they maintain the course. Jacob Pride states ESYA and little league members also do not pay the fee. Michael Albert states he'd prefer to not have to charge anyone, but the fees came about because of excessive trash left by irresponsible park users.

Charlene Spezza and Mike Reed both support the disc golf course. Michael Albert states the Board has heard nothing negative about disc golf, and suggests not installing an amphitheater, bathrooms, or gazebos.

Danny Younger discusses the Shawnee Minisink dig site, and would like the site to be protected and have an educational component. He suggests contacts at the State Historic Preservation Office. Michael Albert discusses a boardwalk with a fence over the dig site so people can see it but can't access it. The Board discusses information kiosks. Alex Jackson states the site has artifacts from different time periods.

Robert Lovenheim asks if the public wants a kayak launch, and suggests putting one along Cherry Creek instead. The Board discusses a launch. Tara Vecchio-Freeman expresses frustration with the idea of a boat launch. Jacob Pride states no formal action has occurred regarding a boat launch.

Tara Vecchio-Freeman expresses concern that a boat ramp will bring more foot traffic for river access and recounts a drowning that occurred in the area. Tim Freeman states the park is in flood zone; a sloped ramp will allow water to flow into the park easier.

Michael Albert recounts turning people away who want to use a private boat launch near him. Jacob Pride states that not once has the Township ever decided to put in a boat launch. Mike Dwyer recommends removing the idea of a boat launch. Michael

Albert suggests focusing on elements that most people want. Missy Hutchison states the River Runner said this area would not be a good pickup or drop off spot.

Jacob Pride questions if the parking lot should be paved or gravel. Tara Vecchio-Freeman states the area must be pervious. Missy Hutchison states paving in a floodplain is permitted. Julia Heilakka states A2 stone is considered impervious. Tara Vecchio-Freeman states none of her neighbors are allowed to have pavement. Michael Albert states flood ways are more restrictive. Tara Vecchio-Freeman expresses concern for additional flooding. The Board discusses paving versus ADA.

The Board discusses that bathrooms are not feasible at the site, and may be better suited for Minisink Park if installed. Missy Hutchison does not recommend moving the entrance to the park. Jacob Pride discusses sight access control, and that he'd prefer to be able to lock the park completely. Marguerite Vecchio discusses bathroom maintenance and a light at River's Edge. Tim Freeman asks why the light is on if the park is closed. Michael Albert responds it is for security, but the intent is for no spillage off the property.


Alex Jackson discusses a kiosk for the history of the railroad. Marguerite Vecchio provides 22 paper surveys to Missy Hutchison and gives 24 Right-to-Know Requests to Middle Smithfield Township. Missy Hutchison will let the Township know when she is prepared to schedule the next meeting.

4. **Public Comment: None.**

5. **Adjournment:** There being no other business before the Board, Robert Lovenheim motions to adjourn, Michael Albert seconds. Vote: all in favor; meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Minutes Recorded by Julia Heilakka

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Heilakka
Township Secretary