

**MINUTES  
PUBLIC MEETING  
September 13, 2016**

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**MARSHALL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
525 PLEASANT HILL ROAD  
WEXFORD, PA 15090**

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The following persons were present:

SUPERVISORS	Thomas Madigan, Chairman Phillip Troy, Vice Chair Jason Bragunier Anthony (Jack) Candek
MANAGER:	Neil D. McFadden
RECREATION DIR:	Heather Cuyler Jerry
ENGINEERS:	Art Gazdik Mark Edelman, EPM Architecture
Others:	40 Others

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Mr. Madigan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Madigan introduced himself and made the following statements.

My name is Tom Madigan, I am the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I would like to welcome everyone for taking time out of your lives to join us this evening. I am going to talk just briefly about what we have done up until this point and what we have in mind for this evening's meeting. After I conclude my remarks there will be a brief presentation led by Heather Cuyler Jerry, Parks and Recreation Director with Mark Edelman from EPM who was the designer for the plans that we are going to be discussing this evening. After their presentation we will open up the floor to public comments and questions. Which is what will be the bulk of this evening. What we are looking for this evening is feedback on the concepts that are going to be presented. This is not a final plan. This is not a hearing for site plan approval. Those things are very far down the road, should they come to pass. No decisions have been made, there is no approved plan, contrary to what you may have heard. What we are going to be presenting this evening is a Concept Plan for the Altmyer Park Property, which includes a proposed renovation to the barn that is currently on the property. The Concept Plan or Master Plan for the Park is a work in progress. Some elements seem to have a consensus; other do not and again nothing has been approved. How we got here, for a number of years, the Township through prudent fiscal management and outstanding work of our staff, particularly, our Township Manager, has operated with a balanced budget year in and out. Year out we have not had to raise taxes, keeping in mind that we are only one of the taxing bodies. I am not talking about the County or the School District, which also tax your properties. We have not had to raise taxes in as long as I can remember. We have one of the lowest Property Tax Mileages in Allegheny County and have for quite some time and yet we have managed still, to not only operate at a balanced budget, but to accumulate a surplus which is now about 3.8 million dollars. Over the years we have looked at the surplus and considered what various things we could and should do with it. We have considered from time to time, not just this Board, but prior Boards the concepts of a tax rebate or lowering taxes. Tax Rebate is administratively complex and has really been a non-starter every time it has come up. And with respect to lowering tax payments, the concern has always been that should taxes be lowered and there be an Economic Downturn or other change of Events that would put the Township's Operating Budget at a deficit that we would then be faced with having to

raise taxes. For a variety of reasons that was unappealing. So having considered and rejected those notions, we have looked at other needs. Recently we did a five year proposed; excuse me, Five Year Budget Look Ahead making some estimates about Township Growth and Revenues and looked at a Five Year Capitals Needs Summary and we identified a number of things that we have or expect to allocate a portion of that 3.8 million dollar surplus to address. Those include such things as Fire Department Sub Station on Knob Road, in anticipation of additional needs once the Western Part of the Township starts to build-out, which we expect it to do in the upcoming years. Improvements to Knob Park, including replacement of the Children's Playground and Warrendale Streetscaping to name just a few. As I have said, those things have all already been budgeted or the anticipation as if they will be budgeted in upcoming years. So those are not either or projects. We are not talking about, we do with the Park or we do those things. Those are stand alone projects that we intend to do. The other issue that we looked at in the past, and I expect may come as part of a natural part of tonight's conversation is the idea of a Community Center or a Community Pool. Again, we have looked at these issues in the past um in fact the 2008 Master Plan looked at a Community Pool. And the Consultant that we worked with made some conclusions and recommendations. One of which was that he believed that the Community was undersized to make a pool feasible. He said that studies typically show that you needed a population of a minimum of 15,000. But again, that is an issue that we have revisited from time to time and may again in the future. But the point I wanted to make is those are really apples and oranges. When we are talking about the Park, the Altmyer Park, we are going to be looking at tonight. A Community Center or pool aren't really realistic options for that piece of property. First of all, the property is simply too small to accommodate either a Community Center with Recreational Facilities or a pool. It is not an appropriate piece of property for that use. That being said, it's understandable for people to bring into the conversation, well what about the money that your considering spending for Altmyer Park and using that to build a Community Center or a Community Pool somewhere else in the Township. And again the point is really just to clear we are talking about apples and oranges. It's not like we can take the money that we are thinking about spending on the Park and use it and build a Community Center or pool elsewhere. Those are much larger projects at a much greater expense that would require in addition to whatever funds we took from the surplus. Additional funding most likely would have to be raised through a Bond issuance. So again, not to say that these are not potential projects for the future or that we have rejected them. It's just to point out that its really apples and oranges and those are not things under consideration for this evening and this piece of property. So the last thing I would like to just briefly cover is how we got here today. So back in the Summer of 2014 an opportunity was brought to us by Representative Turzai, who has just enter the room, thank you for joining us Mike, to acquire the Altmyer Property for \$300,000.00. \$250,000 or that coming from State Funding through a GEDF Grant. In September of 2014 the Township decided to pursue that opportunity and we approved expenditure of \$50,000 to purchase the property and accepted the \$250,000 Grant, the thought of being several full. One, the 2008 Master Plan had identified a need for Recreational Services in the Southern part of the Township, this property being located in the Southern part of the Township, was thought that it might be able to help fulfill that need. Secondly, it was just a fabulous opportunity and whatever we decided to do with the project, even if we ultimately just did nothing and sold it down the road. The opportunity was a fantastic one and we felt it could not be passed up. In the Fall of 2014 we solicited proposals for the design of the Community Park. We ultimately retained Mackin Engineering which prepared what some of you may have seen called the Altmyer Park Draft Master Site Plan. After a series of public meetings held by the Recreation Committee. In January through about June of 2015 they held monthly, multiple monthly meetings, that were attended by as many as 50 people were they solicited input on the various uses for that piece of property. That input went into the Makin Engineering Proposed Master Plan, which was presented to the Board in the Summer of 2015. We talked about it over a series of meetings throughout 2015. We weren't entirely satisfied with the Plan, particularly its use of the Barn.

In January of 2015 the Board approved that funding of an Architectural Study for the barn. Focusing on the barn and other structures on the property to evaluate their condition and potential uses for those properties. That again was the subject of a number of Board Meetings throughout 2016. Also during 2016 we requested and had presented to us a Business Plan from the Recreation Department as to proposed useage for the barn. Then in June of this year the Board was presented by Mr. Edelman. His review of the structures on the property, his recommendations that several of them raised and 3 options for the barn. Options A B and C which basically involve Option A simply making the repairs necessary to ensure the structural integrity of the barn. And making it functional on a seasonal basis. Option B weatherizing the barn and making it functional all season. And then Option C which is actually enlarging the barn to increase its potential uses and adding some facilities such as bathrooms and kitchen facilities, limited kitchen facilities. The Board reviewed those options and there was a consensus that given the relatively small marginal additional costs between Option C and the other 2 options. That if we were to proceed to do something the barn that Option C made the most sense because it gave us the most additional use, if you will the biggest bang for the buck. But we weren't entirely sure and we want despite the efforts of the Recreation Committee and some of the outrage in terms of Township Surveys and other things that Heather had done to get community input. Given the size of the project, given the size of the proposed expenditure, we wanted to make a concerted effort to get additional public input. We had materials prepared that were available at Community Day including a survey. We made additional outreach efforts through emails and reaching out to some Community Boards and I believe Home Owners Associations mailing lists to distribute the proposed plan for the barn and the property and schedule this meeting to bring everybody here so that we could get your input. And that is what we hope to do this evening. With that, I will turn it over to Heather or Neil. Which one of you is going to MC? Heather.

Ms. Jerry welcomed Representative Turzai, who wanted to say a few words. She thanked him for his support of Parks and Recreation.

Representative Turzai expressed his appreciation to the Board and the Staff of Marshall Township for thoughtfully taking the time to gather Community input. He expressed his belief that whatever is decided for Altmyer Park, the Board and Staff would make the right decision regarding the property. He emphasized that the barn preservation and the green space are critical components to Altmyer Park. He said a lot can be done to a parcel of that size to enhance the quality of life in a community.

Ms. Jerry welcomed the public and thanked them for their participation. Over the last 2 years there have been around 30 meetings conducted regarding Altmyer Park. Ms. Jerry reviewed the Master Site Plan. The project has been scaled down from the original plan. Ms. Jerry hopes that once a decision is made regarding the barn the project can expanded from there. The barn is iconic to this area and a landmark. There were several different uses for the barn that have been considered. One being to keep the barn much like the Elias Fry Barn, a seasonal use. The Elias Fry Barn is a popular rental facility in Marshall Township. There are many weddings, larger events, graduation, birthday parties in that facility. The facility is also used for summer camps for the Parks & Recreation Department. It being a seasonal facility it is not useable after the end of October. Keeping the barn the same size but as a year-round facility and also expanding the barn have also been considered. With the costs of the 3 options not varying very much, expanding the barn seems to be the best option out of the 3 to be considered. Ms. Jerry introduced Mark Edelman.

Mark Edelman from EPM Architecture. One of the first things Mr. Edelman has done is to review the existing facility to determine if it is suitable to be reused as a public facility. The barn was built as a workable utility barn. It is in a very prominent location. The out buildings were also looked at. Most of

the out buildings were determined to not be economically feasible to convert for public use. Structural Engineers have determined that the barn is a suitable facility for public use. The Altmyer barn was built in the early 1900's.

Mr. Edelman reviewed the first Option. The first option retains the existing barn structure. Keeping all the things that are associated with the barn structure, the shape of the roof and the siding etc. At present the barn is not suitable for all-season use. He talked about how to retain the character of the barn so that it is easily recognizable as the Altmyer Barn with a comfortable interior space. Well insulated, energy efficient and useable for occupants on a year-round basis. He reviewed his recommendations for insulating and updating the barn. Using contemporary materials to improve the condition of the barn while keeping the character. He thinks it is important to maintain the simplicity of the barn even through the addition. The addition on the top portion of the barn opens up the space allowing for more room. He continued to review the expansion plan, adding restrooms and outdoor space for programming. There is also an outdoor, overlook patio space. A limited kitchen facility is located in the lower level of the facility. There is a ramp system to get participants to the lower level from the upper level.

Mr. Gazdik reviewed the site plan. He has worked to simplify the Mackin Site Plan to include what the Board felt were the elements that they would like to see in the Park initially. On the east side of the park is the parking area that will support the barn. The entrance, directly across from Cole Road will have a signal and a circular turn-around once you enter the park. The area to the west of the circular turn around, which is a pervious surface, can be used for over-flow parking for bigger events, farmers markets etc.

The site plan shows a small addition on the barn for a restroom. But the proposal from Mr. Edelman is to add a larger addition out the back of the barn. To maintain the upper level patio space with the circular ramp system. The ramp system is to be revised so that the decking will be to the west side of the barn and not the southern side so it is further from the road (910). There are circulation trails throughout the park. There is a naturalized playground area. The Naturalized Playgrounds being a Statewide Initiative, making Grant money available. The western side of the park is primarily open green space.

Mr. Edelman has produced costs for the Architectural improvements to the barn. For Option C the cost is about 1.76 Million. A cost estimate for the site development is \$900,000., bringing us to a total of 2.5 million dollars for the project.

Programming for the Parks and Recreation Department has grown 140% in the 16 years since Ms. Jerry started at Marshall Township. Currently the department has minimal indoor, all-season space to conduct programs. This limits the programs the Township is able to offer the public. As the community grows, we are realizing a need for larger indoor space year-round. Mr. Madigan added that there has been some evaluation of the market for renting the Altmyer Barn for weddings and parties. The seasonable barn in Knob Hill Park is in high demand in the summer. Ms. Jerry has indicated to the Board that she feels the facility would be in demand which would help to defray operating costs.

Mr. Mcfadden reviewed the status of the curb cut application. The Township is proposing to repurpose the driveway that existed to the Altmyer Farm and Market. The driveway had to be relocated slightly to make it a full plus configuration so a signal would work at that intersection. In order to make that happen, there were a few utility poles that had to be relocated and that has delayed the application with PennDott. Marshall Township built the signal that exists at Cole Road and 910 and will pay to modify that signal for the four-way intersection. What the Township does not want to do with Township Money is to improve the State Highway. It has been brought up that the intersection would benefit from

a turn lane. It would, but should Marshall Township pay for the improvements for a low-volume driveway application. Our Park traffic will be non-peak hour and low volume. The result of the application should be known within the month.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Christi Wilcox, 502 Manor Road

She would like to see sidewalks down 910 for foot traffic.

Ron Krousher, 493 Cardinal Drive

Is highly in favor of the plan for the park but has a few concerns. There is already an issue with the traffic on 910. He was also concerned about the noise factor associated with the Rentals in the Altmeyer Barn.

Joan Richmond, 1368 Royal Oak

The park being in her backyard. She thinks it is a great plan, but is concerned about boundaries. She has already installed a split-rail fence in her backyard. She has a serious concern regarding the groundhogs on the property there are more than a dozen on the property. Thrilled the grass is getting cut.

Betsy Smith, 813 Birchfield Court

She wanted to know if there is water on the property.

Jeff Hoover, 1376 Royal Oak Drive

All for the plan but had some concerns his property being closest to the buildings. Right of way concerns and concerns about people parking in front homes to get to the park. He would like to see a fence. He is also concerned about the location of the parking lot, and the noise and lights from the cars.

Jaime Dean, 140 Cardinal Drive

She loves the project. She would like to see the barn preserved. She had a question regarding the amount of parking spaces in relation to the building occupancy.

Francios Bitz, 1640 Pleasant Hill Road

He thinks there should be a sidewalk down 910. He also had concerns regarding buffers.

He would rather see a new facility. Not in favor of keeping the barn.

RJ Melnyk, 135 Warrendale-Bakerstown Road

He addressed the residents who would be living near the park. He has lived near Warrendale Park for 53 years. He has watched it grow from a ballfield to a very nice park. Considers Marshall Township to be a very good neighbor and has never had any issues with boundaries.

Heather Laurent, 121 Meadowvue Drive

Question regarding the material used for the trails. She would like to see trails in the park so she could walk her dog.

Ellen Blackburn, 231 Seasons Drive

She is in favor of the Park. She liked the idea of the trail throughout and would love to see a fitness trail along the trail. She would like to see the barn stay and be a sustainable building.

Kathy Sain, 1130 Timber Ridge Drive

Not in completely opposed to the park. She questioned the costs for renovating the barn, she would like to see another alternative. She would like to see something built bigger and newer. She had several safety concerns regarding safety and 910 and the liability. She would like to see a fence and would like sidewalks on the south side of 910. She asked about maintenance and upkeep costs. She mentioned people not knowing what was happening in the Township.

Dave Schneider, 150 Wildflower Lane

He thinks the project is ridiculous. He sees no historical significance in the barn. Mentioned there should be a turning lane. He had several complaints about Warrendale Park. He does not think the Township maintains the recreation facilities we have and should not spend the money on this project.

Gary Herbert,

He addressed the audience. He believes the Township will provide a buffer for the concerned neighboring properties. He said whatever the Township does will be done the right way.

Dave Briskey, 907 Summit Drive

He is anxious for the park to be developed. He thinks it will be a benefit to have a park close to home for him and his neighbors to use. He would like to see the barn stay. He would like to see a turning lane.

Kathy Quigley, 2750 Cole Road

She is not sure if she thinks the money should be spent on the project. She also thinks the traffic on 910 is horrible. She is opposed to a sidewalk on 910.

Jeff Hoover, 1376 Royal Oak Drive

He would like to see a gate on the entrance of the park. He was concerned about late-night rentals bothering the neighboring properties.

Francois Bitz, 1640 Pleasant Hill Road

He would like to see the property kept as greenspace. He would like to see the barn as is and maybe be used as a farm market. He would like to see Community Gardens and a Greenhouse. He is not for the Playground.

Krista Dignazio, 1650 Warrendale-Bayne

She thinks it is a wonderful idea. She rents the Elias Fry Barn frequently and loves it.

She would like to see the barn stay.

Mr. Madigan thanked everyone for coming. Any decisions will be advertised.

Adjourned at 9:15