



## **21<sup>st</sup> STREET WATERSHED COMMUNITY LEADERS MEETING**

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Erin Copeland, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Facilitator  
Susan Rademacher, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Notetaker

### Attended by:

Sebastian Foltz/FOSSP, Matt Schaefer/FOSSP, Janice Serra/FOSSP, Sonya Kohlen/SS Community Council, Erin Tobin/PPC, Kitty and Jeff Neubauer/FOSSP

After opening the meeting with a round of introductions, Erin Copeland described the Parks Conservancy's role in helping to support watersheds throughout the city, with a special focus on priority sewersheds identified in PWSA's Green First Plan. One reason to do this can be seen in the success of the Negley Run Watershed Task Force. NRWTF has provided an opportunity for lots of people – from residents to professionals to agency officials -- to stay in touch across the entire watershed to understand what the needs are, and what plans and projects are happening. It has developed plans that are informing decision makers. Watershed Task Forces are a way to provide voice to community. How this one will develop is up to its members; the Parks Conservancy wants it to become whatever is most valuable to its leaders.

Janice said she was hoping for a city representative to be on hand to speak to pandemic impacts. Is the phase 1 green infrastructure and park project funded; is the timeline thrown off? Erin reported that project is in the design phase. Construction is currently scheduled for a May 21 21 start and completion in 2022. Megan said that it shouldn't be too far behind schedule. The next opportunity for public engagement will be Goatfest in July.

*Action:* Erin will ask Meghan Simek/PWSA and Andrea Ketzel/DPW for updates

Greeley Street water problems were brought up. Water comes through Jurassic Valley and crosses over Greeley such that erosion of the street is an issue. Bob stated that the sewers need to be cleaned out and asked whether the street needs to be repaired. Erin reported that she brought the situation up last week with Tom Paulin, Joe Rush and Andrea Ketzel at DPW and with Kara Smith at the Department of City Planning. (Joe Rush lives on the east side of the park.) They are aware of the stream. Erin recommended fixing the infrastructure across from the Community Garden and restoring the stream and wetland in Jurassic Valley.

*Action:* Erin will ask DPW what action is being taken to address road repair and sewer maintenance at Greeley and above.

Bruce Kraus is interested in repaving the Bandi Schaum parking lot. Inlets can't even be located. It would be ideal to do the paving work in collaboration with water management to realize as many benefits as possible. Susan said we should consider this as one system with parking lot reconstruction, stream restoration, stormwater management, storage for irrigation, etc. The Friends were expecting to build the ADA trail near the garden this summer. Because the pavement doesn't extend to the bollards, a quagmire impedes access to the trail. Councilman Krauss is aware that the project requires more than repaving. The group has also requested that the other side of the parking lot be expanded to allow for food truck/festival uses. It's likely that stormwater management has not been part of the discussion. Adding pavement for parking would require additional construction scope. There has been no in-depth feedback yet; the City may not have funding for it.

Erin asked if the group was interested in integrating the projects. The current situation is that a constructed berm is keeping the wetland from draining into the stream valley as it naturally should. The stream is

incised more deeply than should be expected in that section. There is no clear structure for the stream to flow into, and it shouldn't go into stormwater system. It's worth looking at it as more than a repaving project and, in the end, it has more functional value. The stream would overflow to a pipe that outlets to the Monongahela. Kitty loves the scenario and wonders if this is something that can be phased.

Kitty brought up another need which has presented itself over the past year. The Bandi Schaum Trail to the parking lot is paralleled by a gully that carries water and mud and debris onto the parking lot. This is stormwater runoff that needs to be dealt with. SCA was asked to consider as a project for this summer but they felt it was too big and complicated. Kitty also brought the matter to Shawn Traynor, who referred Kitty to a City staffer at DOMI. Possible resources for this work are Landforce, Hollow Oak Land Trust, and Penn State Center.

*Action:* Kitty will provide the contact information for the City staffer.

*Action:* Erin will organize a site visit for a water walk.

Jeff Neubauer suggested looking at the parking lot in two phases. The first phase would be paving so it's suitable for visitors. The second step would be stormwater management and integrated plan. Kitty said her main concern is paved access to the ADA trail. Longer-term, a consultant landscape architect or engineer can be engaged to design the parking lot.

Andrea Ketzler is currently focusing on phase 1, so this is a good time for pre-development of phase 2 on the east side of the park.

Janice asked if we could look at a permeable surface parking lot. Erin said they don't do well as the bottom of hills without a vegetated swale or other means of intercepting particulates and debris because you must keep the debris out of the pores in the paving. Susan offered that there are other kinds of pervious surfaces such as Checker Block, concrete grids, and plastic structural systems that could be suitable for this location.

#### CONVENING

Erin reported that the Parks Conservancy was hoping to convene all the Task Forces and city and agency folks this summer. Instead, due to Covid-19, we will be hosting a month-long online summit during June with activities, videos, etc. All this info will soon be on our website and we'll put out an eblast. Sonya suggests calling it the "Confluence Conference."

*Action:* Please let Erin know if there is specific content you would like to see in the June summit.

Erin offered to host this community leader meeting again if it was enjoyable. Kitty observed that the value of meetings is that people prepare for the next meeting, so there's some accountability. There is value in bringing people together again to find out what's been done in the interim and decide on next steps.

Goatfest is up in the air, but the goats will be on site and there is an intent to do something within Covid-19 guidelines. It will take some planning effort, but will focus on signage, as well as programs like a "goat watch" and a water walk.

*Action:* Erin will get back in touch re Goatfest, and a scheduling a walk-meeting, possibly in August.

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