

**COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025**

Present: David Bialek, PharmD, R.Ph, Susan Powell-Chair, John McMullan, Vince Visoskas.

LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. Meeting with representatives from Locust Hill Gateway Park Project Team to discuss a proposed connection to the Township owned Darlington Tract.

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Jay Townsend, owner, gave an overview of the proposed connection to the Darlington Tract. He proposes to open up 20 plus acres and an 18th Century farmhouse as a gateway to abandoned sections of parkland on the Baltimore Pike side of Chester Creek. He proposes building a prefab footbridge across the creek. The approach from the Baltimore Pike side will be through what is now the Locust Hill Professional Center. The Townsend family restored the house and currently leases out office space to help defray maintenance expenses. He explained that Middletown Township abandoned a portion of the Darlington Tract, and the Township owned property on the Chester Heights side of the creek because there was no bridge or crossing to get to the other side except by crossing through the creek or the SEPTA train track which was not permitted. He explained that his non- profit would pay for the bridge but would like Middletown Township to construct and maintain the berm and ramp that connects to the bridge on the Middletown Township side of the creek. Mr. Townsend will pay for the berm on their side of the creek.

Mr. Townsend stated he has been cleaning up the area since the storm in 2015 which caused considerable damage both to his own home and to the open space area. He has been cleaning up the area on both sides of the creek ever since. Mr. Townsend distributed a map showing the proposed location of the bridge as well as a proposed new section of trail. Mr. Townsend stated his goal is to preserve the open space between Baltimore Pike and Chester Creek and to make it accessible to the public. He proposed an area for hiking the trails as well as a Welcome Center in the existing professional center. The site already has parking, restroom facilities, a maintenance shop, a conference room, and a garden. He proposes this welcome center can also be used for lectures and classrooms.

Mr. Dave Damon, H. Gilroy Damon Associates, has designed a footbridge to cross Chester Creek. He explained that permits will be needed from DEP as well as the Army Corp. of Engineering. He stated it will also need Zoning approval. He explained the installation of the prefab bridge will need a large crane, so they needed to find appropriate sites in order to accommodate this crane. He explained the bridge will need to be high enough to accommodate the flood plain. He said the ramp will be approximately 12 - 15 feet long and elevated above the existing grade to have minimal impact on any potential flood waters. Ms. Powell asked about the timeline for the project, and Mr. Damon explained the permitting process will take 6 to 8 months. Mr. Bialek stated he liked the idea and stated as a member

of the Finance Committee he will look into funding for the proposed ramp as well as ongoing maintenance costs.

Mr. McMullan asked what are the next steps for the Township? Mr. Townsend said he will put together a proposal.

Mr. Bialek stated in theory he is in favor of the project but needs estimates to see if they can budget for this project.

Mr. Townsend ended in saying this proposed project will take approximately 2 1/2 years before the bridge opens.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Browne". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Sharon Browne