

increased sense of Page 2 of 3 ownership and value especially since COVID19, as I'm sure many of the County's Parks have experienced the same. So hopefully you can appreciate the sense of being blind-sided by an announcement that a place that many of the community have used as an outlet from their current stay-at-home lifestyles was abruptly being taken from them and being disturbed during a time when they most need it. It seems that if FCPA had more community engagement during the development of this project, then the unrest that is being conveyed by many in our neighborhoods would not be so extensive and could have been mitigated.

A little community history that appears to be missing from your emails to residents and on your project website. Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley conducted a survey of residents of Long Branch and Red Fox Neighborhoods via survey monkey in the fall of 2015. Among the questions of the survey was a yes or no question on whether to pave the trail. Roughly 200 participants received the requests to take the survey. The survey results showed that 56% of voters were not in favor of paving the trail. Friends of Long Branch knew that the FCPA had interest in paving the trail and so we organized a community meeting at Kings Park Community Center on January 12, 2016 and invited the Park Authority to speak to residents regarding the options for trail improvements. Notable representatives from FCPA present at this meeting were Dave Bowden (P&D Director), Liz Cronauer (acting Trail Manager) and Ed Richardson (Area 4 Maintenance Manager which includes Long Branch Stream Valley Park). FCPA gave their presentation and held a Q&A session. From that event, most attendees were not in favor of the trail. Most residents at that meeting supported 'giving funding from this proposed "Capital Improvement Fund" to the "Maintenance Budget" so they could do more needed upkeep with items like drainage improvements'. Note: FCPA clarified the improbability of this action and provided explanation. FCPA stated that the trail improvement project was not currently funded and they were merely gathering community interest if and when funding became available on 'which parks to utilize this funding source'.

In May 26, 2016, a public meeting was held at the Olde Creek Elementary School was hosted by Somerset South HOA and Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley. The flyer that went to community members (see attached) set the agenda to discuss the overall trail plans for Long Branch Stream Valley, but was to focus on the "the corridor along the north side of Long Branch connecting the existing trails at Smokewood Park and Pickett Road crossing, along with other potential connecting routes to Old Forge, Olde Creek and Somerset South". Again this meeting was purely to educate the public on proposed projects which at the time did not have funding and gauge whether the community had interest when funding was available.

Since those meetings in 2016, no project updates or proposed plans were shared with residents of the communities adjacent to the park who would be most affected. No information was gathered from communities on specific issues within the park, unless provided from complaints Maintenance received from residents.

In light of this information and lack of sufficient recent community engagement, Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley respectfully recommends the Park Authority do the following:

1. Put a hold on any park closures or land disturbance activities until FCPA hosts an online video meeting to
 1. explain the Departments step/timeline it took for development of the project - what public involvement did it conduct, how was the scope of work developed, who was consulted/notified of the project progress during the project development process, what was the proposed and ultimate timeline of the project development, what due diligence was followed in development of the project, what studies were conducted to evaluate impacts and support the design. Page 3 of 3

2. hold a Q&A for FCPA to address participants previously submitted questions about the project which should be announced to be submitted prior to the meeting giving FCPA time to generate adequate answers.
2. Coordinate with DPWES to ensure that the project will not conflict with the Watershed Management Plan of Long Branch Central initiating this Fall. Seems that spending funding on paved trails or drainage improvements that will be damaged, relocated or reengineered to be more eco-friendly would be a waste of funding.
3. Work with a task force made of (Braddock District Office, FCPA, relevant Friends groups & Neighborhood CA/HOA, etc...) to develop a specific Comprehensive Plan for Long Branch Stream Valley to identify future community supported improvement projects such as infrastructure improvement projects, watershed improvements projects, etc...

Our group will be contacting the Civic Associations and HOAs in the Long Branch - Central Watershed as well as the Supervisors office in addition to FCPA requesting their assistance and support in having these recommendations come to fruition. I'd be happy to share any responses from the community with the FCPA and speak with anyone one of you directly regarding these requests or the project in general.

Respectfully,
 Bryan Campbell
 Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley
 President



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