Introduction

The following drawings and slides depict recommendations for the Mt. Lebanon Parks Master Plan project, which is designed to preserve and enhance Mt. Lebanon’s municipal parks. These drawings and slides were presented by LaQuatra Bonci Associates at an October 7, 2003 meeting at the Recreation Center. The meeting was the third (and final) public forum for the project and was a chance for LaQuatra Bonci Associates to share their recommendations as to how the parks might be able to better serve the various needs of the public.

This meeting was an opportunity for the public to comment and help shape the plans for each of the parks. Presented at the meeting were updated drawings, cost estimates, and phasing strategies for each park.

LaQuatra Bonci is working closely on this project with a steering committee composed of all five Mt. Lebanon Commissioners, some Mt. Lebanon staff members and a representative of the Parks Advisory Board. We look forward to your comments about these drawings. We want to ensure that when final recommendations are made, everyone has had an opportunity to be heard.

Please respond to the website (or contact LaQuatra Bonci Associates) by November 15, 2003.
Here are some questions and comments that were made during the meeting, along with LaQuatra Bonci Associates responses:

1. What is the process from this point forward? Will the Parks Advisory Board determine the priority projects?
   The next step is to post this presentation on the web site and solicit additional public comment. We will then prepare a final report which we hope to have done by the end of the year. The Parks Advisory Board may be involved, we need to meet with them again and share this presentation.

2. What is the bottom line total for the short term, mid-term, and long term?
   There is a chart that depicts all the costs for each park, by phase but the bottom line numbers are about 2 million in the short term, 5 million in the mid term and 7 million in the long term.

3. Why would a pavilion be placed in Twin Hills Park?
   Twin Hills Park is isolated so we felt that an improved entry, signs, a small parking area and a pavilion would create a sense of arrival and orientation for visitors. It could be very small, more like a kiosk or trail marker common in state or national parks.

4. Was there any thought for Twin Hills being a dog run?
   We had made that suggestion previously, but there was concern among the Steering Committee that there would be great opposition to it from Scott Township and Carriage Park Apartments. Twin Hills is located within Scott Township and we need to seek approval from them.
5. How do you get a pilot project for a dog run started?
   *Those who feel a dog run is important should get organized*

6. There are two distinct opinions of dog runs, that of the dog owner vs. the home owner. How do you just “try out” a dog run to see if it will work?
   *We recognize that this issue can be contentious. That is why we suggested that dog runs are implemented on a trial basis, with opportunity for public comment.*

7. Are there other locations for dog runs that aren’t adjacent to homes? What about Robb Hollow Park?
   *There are homes adjacent to Robb Hollow Park, similar to Iroquois Park.*

8. Are the trails designed primarily as footpaths or can they be used for mountain biking as well? Mt. Lebanon does not have an abundance of bike paths in the community.
   *We did not consider mountain biking appropriate in the parks. They are not large enough, bikes create erosion and there are conflicts between bikers and walkers. It was not something we heard during the focus groups or previous meetings.*
9. Is there a way to relocate or create a smaller scale skate park (even temporarily) that could happen in the near future?
   *The breakdown for short, mid and long-term projects is not cast in stone. We placed it in the mid-term category because a new concert site will need to be found before the skate park could be built.*

10. How many concerts/activities occur at the current concert site during the year?
    *Between 5 and 10*

11. Did you decide on a contractor for the skate park?
    *The design, layout and components within the skate park have not been selected. The master plan only identifies an appropriate area, puts a number to the cost and places it within a timeline. The design is something skateboarders could assist with.*

12. What kind of sports would be permitted at the skate park facility, would it be strictly for skateboards or would BMX bikes be allowed?
    *During one of the focus groups, both skateboards and bikes were discussed. We have not suggested that only one should be allowed. If both are permitted that may impact the type of elements planned. Again, the design is something skateboarders could assist with.*
Comments Voiced from Meeting Attendees

1. Glad to hear that Dog Parks are being proposed. Where there is money ‘coming in’ projects will get done. Dog owners should organize and make this dog park happen. With money raised it can move to its fruition, even volunteers could help.

2. It is important to organize priorities. We want a skate park in the short term and can’t wait for the mid-term. There is lots of support for this project. Funding and support will move it forward.

3. Funding and volunteers would help create the skate park. Everyone in Mt. Lebanon uses McKinley Park because skateboarding is prohibited here.

4. There are negatives to dog runs. Dog runs should be spread throughout the community. Iroquois is not the place for a dog run as it is surrounded by residences.

5. There are a lot of kids here that are supporting the skate park. Don’t put it on the “back burner.” They can volunteer their time to help with construction and organize to find funding.
6. We should create sign-up sheets so that dog run and skate park supporters can better organize themselves.

7. Twin Hills Park is isolated. Neighbors watch the type of cars that are parked there. Neighbors keep an eye on the cars especially when walking alone in the park. Safety needs to be considered.

8. You (the design team) have done precisely what you were asked to do. Don’t lose site of the difference between a neighborhood park and a community park. There is tension when a neighborhood park is made to be a community park. For example, Twin Hills should be a neighborhood park. This difference between neighborhood vs. community park needs to be kept in mind.
Master Plan for Mt. Lebanon’s Parks
Master Planning Process

Public Meeting #1 (January 2003)
introduction to park system, no proposals yet, discussion

Focus Groups / Interviews (March and April 2003)

Public Meeting #2 (May 2003)
preliminary suggestions, discussion

All materials available on Mt. Lebanon’s Web Site

Public Meeting #3 (October 2003)
Recommendations and cost estimates
Goals of the Master Plan

Create a unified park system with consistent, inter-connected elements

Enhance each park’s special qualities

Utilize space efficiently to achieve balance

Accommodate current demands and provide flexibility for future

Protect, preserve and enhance natural resources

Develop short and long-term implementation strategies

Consider maintenance
Basis for Cost Estimates

Every element (even if it is remaining) is priced to be re-built

All elements placed into one of three categories:
Short-term, Medium-term or Long-term
any feature can move up or down on the priority list in the future

Some items in long-term category are options
Should be re-evaluated in the future

Not all elements are new – many are items that need to be maintained
Cost/benefit: options for select materials = range of costs

Cost figures were determined as if all work was bid in today’s dollars
no consideration yet for volunteers, donations, grants…or inflation
Mt. Lebanon’s Parks

Williamsburg Park
Rockwood Park
Church Place Park
Country Club Park
Highland Terrace Park
Iroquois Park
Meadowcroft Park
Sunset Hills Park (Brafferton)
Robb Hollow Park
Twin Hills Park
Hoodridge Park
Bird Park
Mt. Lebanon Park
Williamsburg Park

Quiet neighborhood park
Play equipment is dated
Sledding in winter
Courts in good shape
Invisible from street
Great for picnics and parties
Lacks level lawn area
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Williamsburg Park ~ Recommended Plan
Country Club Park

Heavily used by neighborhood kids
Swings and play equipment
Woodlot is used informally
Need a place for parents to sit
Court only has one basketball hoop
Toys roll down slope
Sandbox is nice but attracts animals
$67,481  $70,360  $47,590
Brafferton – Sunset Hills Park

Baseball field is in poor shape (slope)
Surrounded by wooded, steep slopes
Parking is an issue during games
Lack of good entry or sign
Few amenities to serve neighborhood
Steep entry path
Nice secluded setting
Sunset Hills Park ~ Recommended Plan

- Convert 1/2 of Basketball Court to Playground to Serve Neighborhood
- Re-build Entry Path to lessen slope
- Define Entry with Extended Sidewalk, Pier and Sign
- Fix existing field
- Maintain portion of wooded slopes between fields and parking lot
- Path at base of slope
- Create parking lot to take pressure off neighborhood streets (Clearing and grading are required but would still appear wooded)
Natural Areas Study

In-depth scientific analysis of existing conditions
(Flora, Fauna, Soils, Geology and Hydrology)

Develop projects to renew natural areas (not just woodlands)

Develop sustainable maintenance practices

State-of-the-art restoration techniques and invasive removal strategies and guidelines for planting
(use of natives vs. exotic plants)

Training and Education of Volunteers and Public Works staff

Twin Hills Park  Bird Park  Robb Hollow Park  Hoodridge Park
Natural Areas Study

Set a framework for the preservation and enhancement of natural systems

- In-depth scientific analysis of existing conditions
  - Flora and Fauna
  - Soils and Geology
  - Hydrology

- Develop projects to renew natural areas (not just woodlands)

- Develop sustainable maintenance practices

- State-of-the-art restoration techniques and invasive removal strategies

- Establish guidelines for planting (use of natives vs. exotic plants)

- Training and Education of Volunteers and Public Works staff
Trails within the Parks

### Sidewalk
- Trails should connect and create loops or circuits.
- Trails should respect the lay-of-the-land (topography).
- Public trails should not dead-end, lead to private property or be placed near dangerous features.
- In areas that are very steep, wet or environmentally sensitive – existing trails should be removed and/or relocated to more appropriate locations.
- Trails should have periodic benches, signs or mile markers to indicate distance.

### Pathway

### Woodland Trail
Bird Park

Steep, Wooded natural place
Used for walking and jogging
Don’t touch it!
“Escape” from dense neighborhoods
Loved to death
Soccer field is heavily used
Issues with erosion & trail use
Used by Schools, Boy Scouts
Educational Mission
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Bird Park – Recommended Plan

[Diagram of Bird Park with various recommended plans marked, including:
- Re-Build as a “Green” Parking Lot
- Per and Sign
- Re-Build Stream Head Wall
- New Pedestrian Bridge
- Renovate Trail
- Renovated Soccer Field
- Renovated Woodland
- Woodland Restoration Pilot Project
- Define Park Boundary and Trail Entry with Per
- Restore Woodlands
- Repair Erosion and Over Compacted Soils
- Restore Stream and Barks
- Renovate Trails
- Pave Trail to Field
- Re-Build as a “Green” Parking lot
- Native Planting on Steep Slopes
- Woodland Edge]
Twin Hills Park

Beautiful and wooded
Unspoiled by development
Steep
Only one public access point
Surrounded by private property
Located in Scott Township
Erosion and invasive species
Great place to get away
Twin Hills Park ~ Phasing Plan

$0 $342,260 $314,020
Robb Hollow Park

Steep and wooded
Public Works facility
Limited public access
County road widening project
Stream valley being filled-in
Rental property in current use
Topography limits use
What can be done with it?
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Robb Hollow Park ~ Restoration and Trail Plans

Stream Restoration
Meadow Planting
Minimal Woodland
Extensive Woodland

Existing Trails
(To Be Maintained)
New Trails
(or Re-Built)
Trails to be Removed
Hoodridge Park

Unknown to residents
Steep wooded valley
Public access is limited to walkway
Utility lines throughout site
Land-locked by private property
What can be done with it?
Conservation District is not part of park
Healthy woodlands in select locations
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Hoodridge Park ~ Restoration and Trail Plans

- Stream Restoration
- Meadow Planting
- Minimal Woodland
- Extensive Woodland

Existing Trails (To Be Maintained)
New Trails (or Re-Built)
Trails to be Removed
Church Place Park

Heavily used by neighborhood kids
Lawn is as important as equipment
Equipment in deep shade – damp
Difficult to maintain
Steep slopes on both sides
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Church Place Park ~ Recommended Plan

- Create Multiple Entry Points at Each Feature
- Prune Lower Branches from Other Trees
- Consolidate Play Equipment into (1) Structure, Provide Smaller Places for Younger Children
- Remove Large Tree on South Side to Let Sunlight into Playground
- Hedge and Small Trees to Screen View of Parking Lot
- Grade Slope to Create a Maximum 3:1 Bank to Easie Maintenance
- New Pavilion Moved to Corner
- Regrade Area to Create More Level Ground
- Permanent Slope with Dense Evergreen Groundcover
New play equipment that takes advantage of grade change and provides activities for a variety of age groups.
Rockwood Park

Nice neighborhood park
Steeply sloping terrain
Who uses the two parking lots?
The basketball court is unsafe
Play equipment is dated
Pavilion is small
Lacks level area for neighborhood use
New Pavilion Centered on Lawn

Consolidate Play Equipment, Relocate Pieces that are New

Mark Entry with Sign and Pier

Ragrade to Create Level Lawn Area

Fence Along Street

Trees to Remain

Mark Entry

1/2 Basketball Court

Additional Play Equipment

Accessible Pathway

Create New Entry with Sign and Pier
Highland Terrace Park

- Very steep topography
- Play equipment and court on opposite sides of the road
- Invisible when driving by
- Equipment is not kid-friendly
- Difficult to maintain
- Access through neighbors property
Meadowcroft Park

- Lighted courts are heavily used
- Deteriorating fences and paving
- Lacks handicap accessibility
- Baseball field is school property
- Parking lot must remain for residents
- Trees are nice and hide the courts well
Baseball Field on School District Property

Create Accessible Ramp to Tennis Courts from Upper Level Basketball Court

Parking Lot

Create Handicap Accessible Entry

Relocated Fence to Bottom of Slope, Construct Ramp, Repair Lawn Areas
Iroquois Park

Nice neighborhood park
Unknown to those outside neighborhood
Scattered, dated play equipment
Lack of level areas for neighborhood use
Walkway to Galleria
Stream valley is under-utilized
Basketball court is well hidden
Many large mature trees
Mt. Lebanon Park

Place where everything occurs
Everyone uses it & everybody drives
Pavilions need electric/water service
Access to pavilions limits use
Parking difficult during multiple events
Some play equipment in poor shape
Lacking trails and pathways
Entry sign is almost invisible
Provide variety for all residents
Mt. Lebanon Park ~ Tennis Parking and Entry
Improvements to surface, entry and fences
Drop-off, steps and walks are repaired
Concert site remains as-is
Create upper-level skateboard facility
(still visible, separated from basketball)

New site must be found for concerts and movies
Consolidate equipment into destination playground
Pavilion (near parking) at entry
Levels that step up, each with different equipment
Retain trees and stone walls
If having only full-size courts is problematic – develop a multi-purpose court geared primarily for younger children, in close proximity to playground and pavilions.

Create amphitheater along western slope (retain trees, utilize topography, use stone to match walls)
Mt. Lebanon Park ~ Baseball Parking Lot
Mt. Lebanon Park – Trails and Walkways
Dogs in the Parks

Needs to be isolated from houses

Must be accessible for maintenance

Must not displace any current activity

Must have available parking

Fenced on all sides (benches, trash can)

Installed on a trial basis
Athletic Fields

Field needs we heard about:
(3) Rectangular Fields
(3) Baseball/Softball Fields

That goal cannot be met within these parks

Alternative Strategies for Additional Field Space

Pursue acquisition of additional property for field complex
Or
Partner with School District to improve School District fields with synthetic surface

Summary
Ecology of the Parks

Enhance and create healthy woodlands

Stream bank restoration

Create non-existent habitats such as meadows

Natural Areas Study

Should provide valuable knowledge and thus influence projects throughout the system

Woodland edges