



MEETING DATE:

October 27, 2015

TIME:

3:30-5:30 PM

PLACE:

**Billerica Park
12690 Promise Road
Fishers, Indiana 46038**

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Rodney Retzner, Cecilia Coble, Corby Thompson, Tim Russell, Natalie Teyema, Jocelyn Vare

Members Not Present: Cathy Ferree, John Amos

Others Present: Caleb Gutshall, Connie Nimmo, Matt Walker, Sue Harrison, Adam Zaklikowski

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The Steering Committee and Co-Chairs met to discuss the progress of each task force. The Committee asked the Parks and Open Space Task Force to address a few additional items.
 - Define the purpose of open space.
 - Discuss how density and land use affect park and open space requirements.
 - Evaluate impact of parks and open space on the community.
- Current residential open space standards are mostly undefined in the development process.
 - The Unified Development Ordinance requires a minimum of 20% open space per residential project.
 - This number can be adjusted for Planned Unit Developments.
 - Developments featuring 1.75 dwelling units or less per acre are exempt from the requirement.
 - Fishers' open space requirement is congruent with national standards.
 - This requirement may not make sense for every development. An example would be the Nickel Plate District.
 - Open space serves many different purposes, such as stormwater management, preservation, recreation, buffering, etc.
 - The function of the open space should be considered in the development process.
 - There are no active open space requirements.
 - Developments may benefit from distinguishing active and passive uses of open space.
 - Amenities should be prioritized and considered in the development process.
 - An a la carte menu of amenities can help ensure open space is thoughtful and functional.
 - Pocket parks become more important in higher density areas that feature smaller lots as residents.
 - Neighborhood open space is also important when there is limited access to municipal parks. However, it becomes less important when residents are in close proximity to a municipal park.
 - Standards may be relaxed for neighborhoods with easy access to regional parks.
 - Payment in-lieu-of would strengthen regional parks. The fee could be utilized to acquire additional parkland or improve amenities within existing parks nearby.
 - The development process generates revenue for parks through impact fees.
 - The fee is only assessed once in the primary plat process.
 - Impact fees help invest in regional parks.
 - Often times, open space is a secondary thought.
 - Open spaces should be a focal point the community. A good example is Holland Park.
 - Different active and passive open space can the cost of a development.
 - End products can be inefficient or not well utilized.
 - Citizens tend to use municipal parks instead of neighborhood open space.
 - Sometimes, open space is strategically acquired by the City.

- This is difficult as many poorly maintained properties pose cost and liability issues.
 - Homeowner’s Associations are expected to maintain open space as it is privately owned land.
 - The cost of maintenance can be financially straining, causing features such as perimeter landscaping to be overlooked as time goes on.
 - Many HOAs don’t maintain open space, such as detention ponds, etc.
- Current development standards require paths that do not connect to anything.
 - Ideally, the City will fill all gaps to create a connected community.
 - Linear parks such as the proposed greenways will help connect trails.
 - Trails should connect subdivisions to different areas around the City. A good example of this is the Monon Trail, which was initially heavily remonstrated.
- Low Impact Development offers innovative ways to utilize open space.
 - The City will consider adopting an LID ordinance in the near future that incentivizes LID design.
 - LID options include bio swales, rain gardens etc.
 - Currently, LID prohibitive as contractors experienced in LID installation and maintenance are difficult to find.
 - The City could offer maintenance for a fee.
 - HOAs should be given maintenance schedule to help sustain the open space.
 - Natural resources are preserved in LID as the development is built around the topography and ecology of the land.
- Most commercial spaces do not utilize open space.
 - The necessity of open space depends on the character of the commercial property. For example, a suburban employment campus will have more open space than an urban center.
 - Open space in commercial areas should focus on landscaping.
 - Open space offers a place to socialize.
 - Opportunities for the highest quality open space interactive public art, sledding areas, etc.
 - Many high school students use the chalk wall on 116th Street for their senior pictures.
 - Saxony and West Clay are good examples of innovative commercial open space.
 - The UDO should be revised to accommodate an “a la carte” menu of open space options and amenities that focus on quality, character, and innovation over quantity.

ACTION ITEMS

- Revise parks plan to include action items that will revise to the UDO open space policy per the discussion. – Staff

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [Open Space Requirement Analysis](#)
- [Noblesville, IN Ordinance No. 29-08-13](#)
- [Austin, TX Ordinance No. 20111215-096](#)