

TOWN OF BEDFORD
RECREATION & PARKS DEPARTMENT



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TO: Town Supervisor Chris Burdick and Town Board members

FROM: Brian McCabe, Chairman of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee

DATE: August 18, 2017

RE: Report on the Proposed Family Bike Area – Pump Track at the Katonah Memorial Park

In February of this year the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee (RPAC) received a proposal for the creation of a Family Bike Area – Pump Track at the Katonah Memorial Park. Prior to submitting the proposal the Family Bike Area – Pump Track Committee (Bike Track Committee) comprised of Jeff Tannenbaum, David Bradford, David Klagsbrun and Robert Siegel) solicited suggestions from Katonah Memorial Park Association (KMPA) through its president, Anne Hanley, to identify potential locations within Katonah Memorial Park which might host this new park feature (we have been advised that the KMPA has not taken any position with regard to the proposal).

At the March 8th RPAC meeting the Bike Track Committee made a formal presentation to RPAC. RPAC, while very receptive to the possibility of a new recreational opportunity in Bedford, had concerns about the appropriateness of placing this new park amenity in Katonah Memorial Park. RPAC agreed to host a public forum/information meeting & site walk for the community's awareness and feedback regarding the proposed family bike area and pump track. The forum was held on April 19th at the Katonah Village Library and was attended by over 80 people including members of the Town Board. A site walk was part of the RPAC and Bike Track Committee's outreach to the community. Held on Sunday April 23rd at the Katonah Memorial Park, roughly 40 people attended the informal information meeting that included a walk of the area proposed for development into a Family Bike Area – Pump Track.

RPAC recognizes the strong Katonah hamlet/community support the Bike Track Committee has generated for its proposal. RPAC and the Department wish to acknowledge the passionate and dedicated efforts of the Bike Track Committee on developing the proposal for the Town's consideration. The activity proposed for introduction to Bedford is new and unique for the Town, County and most of New York State. We applaud the committee on its efforts, attention to detail and the creation of the video that accompanied the proposal.

Since the April information meeting and site walk the Department's staff with RPAC have had meetings with Town officials, the Bike Track Committee, consultants, selected by the Department's professionals as well as with the neighbors on Wildwood Road regarding the proposal. A complete list of meetings is provided.

In preparing this report for the Town Board RPAC relied heavily on the updated Katonah Memorial Park Master Plan (Master Plan) completed in the spring of 2012 by the Chazen Companies of Poughkeepsie, New York. The Master Plan was the outcome of many stakeholder meetings which included KMPA, several Town departments, a number of neighborhoods that border the park as well as the many user groups of the park. A copy of the Master Plan is attached. *In the master plan report under section 2.0 Inventory and Analysis in 2.1 Overview*, there is a reference noted on page 8 of the strong identification to "our park", residents enjoying the park as it is and the high value placed on the undeveloped wooded areas and trails. The Master Plan cautioned the Town against introducing major new facilities that would alter the character of the park. In section 3.0 "Synthesis and Mission" found on page 26, it is noted that the park should continue in its role as a community park for the residents of Katonah and that the park should not serve as a regional facility nor should any major new facilities be constructed. Also under section 3.0 "Synthesis and Mission", the mission statement refers to Katonah Park retaining its rural character and continuing to be a good neighbor to nearby residents while providing recreational opportunities for residents of Katonah, as well as the rest of the Town.

The RPAC also relied upon the professional advice and expertise of Town consultants and other agencies/individuals to draw information that assisted in developing a report for the Town Board as summarized below. Full copies of reports also are provided.

Evan Associates – Environmental Consultants

With authorization from the Town Supervisor, Beth Evans of Evan Associates prepared a written report on the environmental impact to the wooded area at Katonah Memorial Park associated with the development of the Family Bike Area – Pump Track. A copy of the July 20th memorandum is attached. In the report there are five (5) potential environmental impact areas listed with a narrative for each.

- Tree clearing and loss of habitat
- Impact to tree roots
- Potential for soil erosion
- Potential for degradation of water quality
- Location of the project site within the NYC DEP Watershed.

The report concludes with acknowledging the potential benefits of the proposed family bike area – pump track and her belief that the location within Katonah Memorial Park has significant environmental restraints associated with it. The report encourages the Town to explore an alternate location that has a flatter topography and less tree cover. An alternative location would allow for the family bike area – pump track to be built, landscaped and maintained in the manner described in the informational materials without potential significant environmental degradation or long term maintenance costs.

James J. Hahn Engineering P.C.

Hahn Engineering has a long history with Katonah Memorial Park and the storm water issues associated with the unique layout of the park. A memo dated July 26th related to performing a storm water study in the area in and around the proposed family bike area – pump track outlines the potential work associated with storm water management. A proposed 20-30 hours of schematic design work for approximately \$2,500.00 was not acted on at the time it was proposed. The potential costs of design, construction and maintenance of a storm water treatment plan for this area could be a significant cost to the Katonah Memorial Park District. At this time Hahn Engineering has not performed any work associated with this project other than 2 site visits and issuing their memorandum.

Sava Tree - Tree Care Company

In late April the Sava Tree Company was contacted to perform a site inspection of the area proposed for the Family Bike Area – Pump Track. At no cost to the Town, Sava Tree did a site review and prepared a memorandum with their initial observations and comments. Their site inspection was done during a time when the green and red markers showing the proposed area layouts were easily identified. There were two main areas of concern regarding the detriment to the trees; compaction of soil and change of grade. The opinion is any tree within 10 feet of a path will have moderate to severe compaction to a portion of their root zones. This could lead to decline or death of some trees. Should the Town require more in depth information Sava Tree can refer us to their consulting group. A copy of the Sava Tree memorandum is provided.

Spain Agency – Town Insurance Carrier

Representatives of the Spain Agency and NYMIR met with Town staff to perform a site walk at the proposed Family Bike Area – Pump Track at Katonah Memorial Park in mid-May. The Spain representative and NYMIR representative did not have other facilities within NYS to compare to since a Pump Track is a relatively new park amenity. There is no current loss /claim data to analyze. Their observations were while there would be no noticeable increase to the Town's insurance policy any future claims as a result of injuries sustained while utilizing this area could have the potential of significantly increasing the Town's premiums in the future.

New York Municipal Insurance Reciprocal – NYMIR

In a memorandum dated June 9th from Steve Curlen, a Senior Risk Control Specialist, five (5) recommendations were made to the Town regarding liability concerns related to a Family Bike Area – Pump Track facility. All of the recommendations would need to be considered should the project move forward at this location. A copy of the memorandum is provided.

Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee & Recreation and Parks Dept.

RPAC and Department staff also gave much consideration to a number of topics/issues related to the proposal as follows:

1. There is great concern about the fit/appropriateness of the Family Bike Area – Pump Track in any of the three hamlet parks based on recommendations under the master plans of all three hamlet parks and significantly constrained space – the parks are “built out”.
2. There are concerns expressed about whether or not a single acre of land is sufficient for this type of recreational opportunity.
3. There are serious concerns regarding the “good neighbor” impact to those residents on Wildwood Road. The opinion of RPAC and Department staff is that Wildwood Road would experience increased traffic. There are concerns about safety issues related to the increased traffic on the road.
4. Wildwood neighbors presented their concerns associated with the proposal to the RPAC at their May 10th meeting. A copy of the concerns listed is provided.
5. The new seasonal parking area was intended to offer parking relief to groups utilizing Razor Field. There is concern about adequate parking should the Family Bike Area – Pump Track be built.
6. There was much discussion about the potential for bikers going “off course/trail” into undesignated areas of the wooded areas as well as onto the trails. The concern being the greater impact to the wooded area with newly created “bike trails” and other bike “features” as well as the increased risk of biker vs trail walker conflicts.
7. The Department’s staff has expressed concerns about the level of supervision this new park feature would require. While appropriate signage would be part of the requirement for the area, we anticipate the need for some level of supervision/oversight through spot checks, potential permitting processing and permit checks.
8. The Department’s staff has expressed concerns on the type and level of maintenance the Family Bike Area – Pump Track would require. The designer thought it was reasonable to assume 7-10 hours every two weeks would be required for routine inspections and maintenance. Weather (heavy rains, freeze thaw impacts) and facility use would dictate the need for additional maintenance. It also is reasonable to assume there would be pre-season preparation work required for the area.
9. The Department’s staff is concerned about the impact this new park feature would have on Katonah Memorial Park District’s operating budget and doubts current staffing levels would be adequate to provide the anticipated maintenance requirements.
10. The Town Blue Collar Teamster leadership were presented with the Family Bike Area – Pump Track proposal for their feedback on the volunteer utilization aspect of maintaining the area. While very supportive of the concept and proposal the Teamsters felt that once built, the care and maintenance of the facility was their “work/responsibility”. Volunteer cleanup /maintenance events would require teamster involvement and cost. This could potentially be a person for person (teamster/volunteer) match staffing requirement.

Conclusion

While the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and Recreation and Parks Department staff support the concept of a Family Bike Area – Pump Track they do not see the fit of this new park amenity in any of the Town of Bedford Parks especially in Katonah. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and Recreation and Parks Department recommends that the Town Board consider reaching out to neighboring communities to gauge interest in a regional Family Bike Area – Pump Track facility as well as engaging Westchester County Parks Recreation and Conservation about the possibility of featuring a Family Bike Area – Pump Track at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation.

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and Recreation and Parks Department would be happy to work with the Family Bike Area – Pump Track Committee on these two possibilities if they feel it would be beneficial.

The Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and Recreation and Parks Department would like to thank the Family Bike Area – Pump Track Committee for their dedication and passion with this proposal and hopes to work with them moving forward as other options are explored. The Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and Recreation and Parks Department would also like to thank the Town Board for including us in the proposal review process.

If requested, The Family Bike Area – Pump Track project binder will be provided to the Town Supervisor.

Should the Town Board require further study or conversation regarding the proposed Family Bike Area – Pump Track, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee and Recreation and Parks Department staff would be happy to work with the Town Board and Family Bike Area – Pump Track Committee. Thank you.

Cc: Family Bike Area – Pump Track Committee
Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
William Heidepriem, Superintendent of Recreation and Parks
Daryl Ann Sudlow, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation
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