

Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
November 17, 2016

Name: Tom Beil

Title: Township Manager

Organization: Upper Saucon Township

Interview Time: 9:00 am

Interviewer: JSG

- 1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?
  - Township Manager – oversee it all
  
- 2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?
  - A lot more potential than Haring property
  - Adjacent to Township park
  - Constrained by floodplain, wetlands and stream
  - Would like to create a “Learning Park”
    - Allentown – park near Fish Hatchery Rd
    - Have signs and planets
      - Start out with the sun, walk to mercury, etc. – all to scale – give people an idea of how far the planets are, base on scale
      - Would like to do something like that
  - Learning Park
    - Math / Science
      - Use fixed objects – math lesson how to figure out the height
    - Cultural element
    - Historical element
      - Ex. Trenton, NJ – plaza with summary of WWII – interspersed with what was happening in Trenton
      - Maybe use the history of Center Valley – and relate world events to what was happening in Center Valley
    - Environmental element
    - Solar
      - See how much electricity is generated – have a meter
  - Lots of educational opportunities
  - Near the schools
  - Kids walk to the park

- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
- None, really
  - It just can't be a weed patch along the road
  - Needs to provide environmental education
  - Experience and learning
  - Active education
  - Needs a parking area, needs a trail
  - Amazing opportunities to learn something
- 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?
- Challenges are the remaining trees from the nursery
    - The ones left are lopsided, and have problems
    - Need to see what happens with them
  - The existing home on the site
    - Concerned that they may not be able to save, in a cost effective manner
    - Sees it as a money pit
    - Maybe could be retrofitted for restrooms
    - If we can't save the building, maybe elements could be saved
      - Maybe the "log cabin" that's supposed to be in there
      - Could be used for educational purposes
      - Maybe turn it into a pavilion and use the logs
      - Maybe preserve one wall, and put a timeline on it
- 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
- 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
- It's not in a good location, in the middle of nowhere
  - Most residents can't find it
  - Bad access
  - Ex. Structures are in bad condition
  - Barn – maybe worth preserving
  - Don't need more active fields
  - Maybe turn into a walking park – like the Velodrome
    - But already have the rail trail
  - Would like to sell it as a preserved farm
    - Put it back into active farming
    - Would take a loss on it – paid 1.6M, with cons. Easement, may be able to get 700K and then use the profits to purchase more Open Space
    - Lehigh County is working on a program for farmland preservation

- Sees the only real opportunity as farmland preservation and maybe a basic trail (sell it with a trail easement reserved.)
- Maybe there is a way for a developer to purchase the developments rights and sell to developer
  - Thinks Township would like to be the broker (like the Buckingham model)
  - Include in the report and cite the basic concept on how it works
- Thinks best us is as a farm
- Township also owns Tumblebrook Golf Course and could sell the development rights, too, and use the money as seed \$ for more preservation
- Need to find the receiving area for TDR program
  - Trucking parcel north on 309
  - Change parcel from industrial to residential and increase density
- Other uses
  - Community Gardens
  - Dog Park
  - Polo field
- Doris suggested “star gazing”

7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?

- There are two existing wells – were part of the farm
  - Township tested them for inclusion in the Township water system
    - Would need to wait for water lines in area
  - Need to retain the rights to develop the 2 wells

8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?

9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?

10) Any additional comments or concerns?

- Preservation can take many shapes and forms
- Copperhead Grills – sw
  - Want a trail from the Township Building, down Preston and to DeSales
- Bits and pieces exist ( along HS)
- Need the piece from 378 to the main entrance of the park
- Not in favor of a skate park

Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
November 17, 2016

Name: Rick Dreves

Title: Teacher

Organization: Southern Lehigh School District

Interview Time: 12:30

Interviewer: JSG

- 1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?
  - High school – Freshman Biology and AP Environmental
  - Background – park and resource management
  - Taught in Maine – did lots of stream stuff
  
- 2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?
  - Nature trail – stop/pause stations with educational boards
  - Note key points of succession on trail, or in the area
    - With a crib sheet for where things are located
  - “Generic” picnic spot – a place to relax and take time to enjoy a quiet moment
  - Could take their classes – but would have some needs
    - Space with picnic tables to put their stuff
    - A pavilion to keep everything dry, and be out of the sun
    - Power would help
    - Access to the stream and key succession areas
    - Focused on water – because that’s the equipment he has
    - Need area to be flexible
      - Tables, flat surfaces
      - Not doing lecture – doing application
  
- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
  - Only timeline – doesn’t want to get his hopes up too fast, and too soon
  - Bathroom facilities – definitely needed
    - OK with port-a-johns
  - Running water
  - Power outlet
  - Maybe a need for a storage unit for gear – difficult to bring gear sometimes to the sites
  
- 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?

- 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
- Stream
  - Riparian corridor
- 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
- Succession
  - Arrested succession – keep the areas in arrested phases
- 7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?
- Access is an issue – they have permission to walk to Benckini – but not to Haring
  - Would need to get permission and transportation
  - Duck blind viewing area
  - Wildlife viewing area – provide opportunities for wildlife photos – while remaining hidden
- 8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?
- 9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?
- Succession
  - Habitat
  - Arrested succession
- 10) Any additional comments or concerns?
- He is also a girls soccer coach at the high school
  - Same needs at both schools
  - Need parking lot space for busses

Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
January 5, 2017

Name: Erin Frederick

Title: Horticulture & Natural Resources Educator, Statewide & Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Steward Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Master Gardener Coordinator

Organization: Lehigh County PSU Extension

Interview Time: 10:30 am

Interviewer: Valerie Liggett

- 1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?
  - Resident, was on EAC; coordinates master gardener program and master watershed stewards program for Lehigh Valley
  - Does what can to support township
- 2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?
  - Did a stream assessment that went through the Benckini property
  - Would be great to incorporate trails, interpretive signage, nature and environmental education
  - Good way to showcase ‘wild’ aesthetic that people can adopt in their own landscapes
  - DCNR has guidelines on sustainable park management – preserving/enhancing meadows with native plants
  - Definitely pay attention to invasive species and habitat management
- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
  - Doesn’t have any concerns as long as it’s done correctly and sustainable practices are actually used
- 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?
  - Streambanks severely eroded; stream restoration project would be beneficial
  - Most severe cut banks she has ever seen are just off property
  - Landstudies came out to see what would be done (on park property)– had several suggestions to alleviate erosion; included recommendations in Saucon Creek Watershed Management Plan (DCNR has a copy)
- 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
  - General aesthetic of the property – unmanicured area

- 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
  - If buildings are salvageable, use for community space
  - Depending on farmland and infrastructure use for seed farm, land and infrastructure for beginning farmers
- 7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?
  - Same as Benckini
- 8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?
- 9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?
- 10) Any additional comments or concerns?
  - Can plug into volunteer groups
  - Demonstration garden plots might be valuable
  - Rain garden/rain barrel exhibits
  - Should help Twp. with MS4 requirements.

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Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
November 17, 2016

Name: Tom Gettings

Title: EAC Chairman

Organization: Upper Saucon Township

Interview Time: 9:45 am

Interviewer: JSG

- 1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?
  - Was director of photography at Rodale
  - 16 years at Wildlands Conservancy
  - Background in open space, conservation easements, and open space for the community
  - Need to find a way to make the new parks fit in with what the Township already has
  
- 2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?
  - Need to incorporate into Community park
    - Very popular, especially with the Rail Trail
    - It's a "gem" in the Township
    - Connect it with parking and trails, bridges
    - Extend what the community park has to offer
  - Passive recreation along the creek
  - Old water works – maybe more basketball courts
  - The creek has a real role to play
  - Historic feature – remnants of the log cabin
    - Need to capture the history
      - Level it and have a replica
      - Save the cabin and share the history ( in context in the Township)
      - Use to help teach
  - Bring students to the park
    - History is best taught locally
    - Expose kids to the history of where they walk and live
  
- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
  - No real concerns – the EAC is doing good work
  - Creek is eroded, but people in community can restore it
  - They have already talked about the house
  - Can't really go wrong – it's so close to the Community Park

- 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?
  - Was a tree nursery
  - Concern with some of the trees
  - GreeTree – come in with big tree spades
    - May be a way to sell the trees to people that want mature trees
    - Ex. Bob Rodale Park near the Velodrome – used mature trees
  
- 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
  
- 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
  - Right across the street from Lutron (SRT on other side of Lutron) – he uses Lutron parking lot when he goes to the SRT
    - Spoke to a VP at Lutron – would be willing to talk with Township about elements in the park – passive recreation for Lutron employees
    - Need to meet with Lutron and include them in the plans (interview them)
  - Feels it should be a destination
    - Maybe Haring could be a destination along the SRT for picnics, maybe a lake for fishing
  - Trail connectivity – connect from Haring through Lutron to the SRT
    - Have it be the terminal destination in UST
  
- 7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?
  - Nothing if the oversight of the EAC and Park and Rec are together on it – no surprises as long as they keep meeting and are supporting each other and the park
  
- 8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?
  - Barn and buildings – no need to save unless they have merit – the insurance company says they need to come down (Doris Clegg)
    - Suggests we bring the PHMC out to look at them
    - Thinks it's just another old farm
  
- 9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?
  - Make it a little “gem”
  - Make it something for Lutron people, too
    - Not a bandshell, or anything like that
  - See it as a place for a loop trail – 1-2 mile loop to start and end at your car
    - A comfortable walk
    - Come back to the start
    - Would make it a destination
      - By car
      - From SRT
  - Doesn't think it should be just an open field

10) Any additional comments or concerns?

- With the EAC and Park and Rec people in the loop and having an open dialog with the Township- it should be a balanced park
  - Not all active recreation
  - Not all environmental preservation
  - Need to mention that we are more than doubling the park space in the Township
    - Hopewell – active field
    - Benckini – embrace Community Park
    - Haring – on its own
  - The three new parks are balanced – and in all regions of the Township
  - Need to connect the parks with trails, wherever possible
- Maybe Dog park should be at Haring (as a destination) and not at Benckini
  - To attract people to Haring

Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
November 17, 2016

Name: Dave Marchek

Title: Teacher

Organization: Southern Lehigh School District

Interview Time: 11:45

Interviewer: JSG

- 1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?
  - 8<sup>th</sup> grade science – Dept. Head of Science Dept. at the middle school
- 2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?
  - Have already used the Community Park (needed police to stop traffic for the walk)
  - Need a way to get students to the park
    - Flora study
    - Stream study
  - Safe access is the major impediment
  - Envision this as a place that takes them out of the textbook and out of the classroom
  - Wants to know the extent that nature will be in the natural habitat
  - Wants to see natural, and functioning in its natural state
    - Open areas
    - Meadows
    - Stream
  - Enhance environmental education
    - 7<sup>th</sup> grade – chemistry, biology, anatomy
    - 8<sup>th</sup> grade – geology, astronomy, ecology
      - Very interested in the ecology piece of this
  - The school campus is too sterile
  - See this as an opportunity of the students to use the outdoor classroom
    - Benches, no white board needed
  - Walk, maybe busses
  - Maybe need an outdoor classroom space
    - Staging area
  - Areas along water - riparian corridor – a few areas (maybe 20” wide) for small groups to gather and do studies
  - Would like to see an area where they could “dig” in – for hands on testing
  - Would like to see options for a biodiversity study in the future
  - Bird blind
  - Sees the stream as a unique feature –

- Would use this quite a bit
    - Show the importance of agriculture and the importance of ag.
- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
    - Access is the major concern (and accessibility)
    - Safety
    - Need to cross 378 to get there
    - Need trails / access to the creeks and bodies of water
  - 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?
  - 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
    - Preserve as much as possible of the natural features
      - Sees it as a great contrast to the athletic fields
  - 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
    - Opportunities for controlled plant succession
    - And education about succession
    - Need for outdoor education classroom
      - Design, build, and launch their own model rockets – need open space for that
    - Stargazing, for the community – maybe a bit too specific
    - Daytime use
      - Aquatics
      - Flowing streams
      - Remnants of tree lines
      - Former agricultural use
    - Bring in the butterfly nets and magnifying glasses
    - Look at fragmented habitats
  - 7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?
  - 8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?
  - 9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?
  - 10) Any additional comments or concerns?
    - Tree ID - signage – maybe get the kids involved
    - Elements to encourage wildlife

Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
November 17, 2016

Name: Lynnette Saeger

Title: Director

Organization: Southern Lehigh Public Library

Interview Time: 2:30

Interviewer: JSG

1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?

Library Director

- Becoming a community center means the library has become more recreational
  - Recreation, education, and informational
  - Also offer fitness classes – good synergy with the park
  - They are an extension of the park
- 2012 – Five Year Plan
  - Designated the library as a community center
  - Are successfully meeting their goal of becoming a Community Center
- When the library was first located in the park, the Township had a separate community center planned, but it was shelved, and the library decided to offer programming and services for the Township.
- Library is a “Family Place” library –
  - designation from national agency
  - Programs for children birth-5 years old
- Library Offerings:
  - Summer programs for the kids
  - Rent meeting rooms to outside agencies
  - Many activities that are educational and recreational
  - 5K as a fundraiser
  - Yoga and cycling classes
  - Hope to offer more fitness classes in future
  - Partnered with EAC to host programs
    - Master Gardner programs

2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?

- Talked to family members and her board:
- Things that are missing in the community:
  - Hiking trails and walking paths that connect to both sides of the park
  - Accessible (and inclusive) places for recreation
    - For senior and people with special needs
    - Sensory gardens
    - Accessible playgrounds
  - Maybe renovate the cabin for educational programming

- Community garden space
  - People had asked about it for the library space a few years ago
  - Flint Hill Farm is the closest one in the area
  - Lot if interest in area for organic gardening
- Lots of benches and seating
- A small pavilion (not as big as the rental ones in the park, now)
  - With tables that can be moved around
  - Furniture that could be rearranged for different uses
- Parking that is absolutely dedicated to parking
  - Not parking in combo with basketball courts
- Disc golf
  - Competitive teams in the area
- Outdoor fitness stations for Seniors
- Shuffleboard
- Can use the park for story time and other activities
  - Call it Park Patrol
  - They do a story walk during National Education Week
  - Combine recreation, education, information

- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
  - It's going to increase traffic in the area
  - Copperhead Grille is very busy and parking is a major concern – they park everywhere
    - Safety is an issue, being so close to the Copperhead
- 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?
  - It seems a little clutter and disorganized because everything is just coming up haphazardly because it was a nursery
  - Doesn't want tree preservation to preclude doing other things with the park
- 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
  - As much of the natural habitat as possible
  - The cabin – if at all able to be renovated/preserved
    - Use it for nature center
    - Or for displays
- 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
- 7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?
- 8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?
- 9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?

10) Any additional comments or concerns?

- As soon as the park is “safe” to use, the library can start using it
  - Fill in holes
  - Would like parking and access trails ASAP
- Had a chat about funding and potential sources for funding
- This may be a ten-year plan
- Talked about advertising the public visioning meeting at the library
- Also talked about maybe having the visioning meeting at the library
- Suggested we also target homeschooling associations for the meeting
- Suggested that a lot of pet owners and cyclers that use the trail – might be good to advertise with them
- Suggested signs along the SRT

Upper Saucon Benckini/Haring Tract Master Site Development Plan  
Key Person Interviews  
December 22, 2016

Name: Phil Spaeth

Title: Supervisor

Organization: Upper Saucon Township

Interview Time: 2:00 pm

Interviewer: Judy Stern Goldstein

- 1) What is your role regarding Parks, Recreation and preservation within the Upper Saucon Township Community?
  - As Supervisor, has overall responsibility for setting policy, staffing, producing budgets
  - Liaison to Park and Recreation and EAC
  
- 2) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Benckini property?
  - Could be used for passive recreation to observe wildlife and nature
  - Walking paths
  - Present history for educational purposes
    - Structures
  - Potential for winter activities for residents
    - Bob Folford mentioned that it might be a good idea to create a natural skating pond
    - Cross country skiing
  - Primarily an area for passive recreation
    - Lots of opportunities for active recreation in other areas
  
- 3) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Benckini property?
  - Want to try to integrate it with the surrounding areas
    - i. DeSales University
    - ii. High school and middle school
  - Need to be aware of safety
  - Parking
    - i. Parking lot at adjacent Community Park – possibly utilize and expand for use by users at Benckini – keep parking off of Preston Ln.
  - Copperhead Grille
    - i. lots of traffic and congestion
    - ii. would like to see some sort of buffer between park and the restaurant
      1. keep parking on the other side – in Community Park
  - Be careful to not overdo the improvements
    - i. Not too much impervious
    - ii. Keep it passive
    - iii. Don't turn it into a big picnic area (already in Community Park)
    - iv. Maintain the natural areas

- v. Have restrooms in Community Park – is that sufficient for Benckini Tract, too?
  - 1. Would be preferred to putting more in Benckini

- 4) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see changed?
  - Right now, it's beyond being natural – it's messy
  - Existing structures might be beyond saving
    - i. May be able to save a wall or a cornerstone
  - Clean up the trees
    - i. Need to determine what to save and/or more
  - Wants to limit concrete and paving of pathways
    - i. Surfacing
    - ii. Width
- 5) What aspects of the Benckini property would you like to see preserved?
  - Keep the stream as clean and nice as we can
  - Save as much of the trees and vegetation as possible
  - Not too concerned with saving the full structure, but possibly save a portion of it
    - i. Include benches
    - ii. Include educational opportunities
- 6) What opportunities for passive recreation, education, and sustainable management do you envision for the Haring property?
  - On BOS when Twp. purchased property
    - i. Originally purchased as 9-hole golf course as expansion for Tumblebrook
    - ii. Golf industry went downhill – Twp. lost Center Valley and will be losing Locust Valley
  - Feels Twp. should concentrate on Benckini
  - Not as many ideas
  - A beautiful site
    - i. Beautiful scenery and sights
    - ii. A place for people to go and observe the beauty
      - 1. Hiking
    - iii. Similar thoughts to Benckini for passive
  - Possibly consider a driving range – just a thought
    - i. Would complement Tumblebrook
- 7) What concerns do you have about the implementation of passive recreation and sustainable management on the Haring property?
  - None really
  - On the outskirts of the Twp.
  - Not centrally located and not as accessible as other parks
- 8) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see changed?
  - Existing structures would need to be looked at to see if they can serve any purpose in the future

- 9) What aspects of the Haring property would you like to see preserved?
- Preserve as much of the plants, wildlife, and historic aspects as possible
- 10) Any additional comments or concerns?
- As a Board member, concerned with cost
    - i. Will need to prioritize
    - ii. Feels we need to focus more on Benckini, first
      1. Get some results that the public can use ASAP
  - Will need to get communications out to the residents, once improvements are made
    - i. Need to think about the right way to get info out
    - ii. Not just social media
    - iii. Highlight info in a newsletter
      1. Note the new opportunities for residents as they become available
  - Need to be aware of potential for vandalism and inappropriate behavior in the park
  - We need to be really good at going after opportunities for grants
    - i. JSG mentioned potential for a RACP Grant – will send info to T. Beil
  - Suggests setting the projects up in phases as we do the plans