

Rail-To-Trail Study Leaves

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needs to be addressed, according to Zimmerman.

Zimmerman noted the purpose of the trail system is to provide a "safe means for kids to ride bike and walk to school or people to jog," he said. He noted the purpose of the study was to obtain input and "at least study" the idea. In the end, it's possible, Zimmerman noted, "we can actually make it a better situation and still allow the trail to exist."

One committee member implored the landowners to keep an open mind as to the feasibility of the trail system. But issues remain that have left some landowners recalcitrant: the possibilities of vandalism, crop damage, personal injury lawsuits, illegal activities, and other concerns.

Zimmerman told the farm landowners that "your ideas are reflected in the study" and urged them to "make up your mind after looking at the big picture and decide whether it's viable or not."

But Gerald Pfautz, landowner bordering the proposed trail, said that farm owners should not be "babysitting" kids for people who live in the borough and township who want the trails. "We're supposed to babysit everybody in the town and let them come out to our property?" he asked.

Another landowner indicated that moving equipment over the trails will cause major concerns and he would have to try to adapt if the trail was installed.

Zimmerman noted that there are 400-500 development-approved homes that would be adjacent to the trail.

But those who have experience in building rails-to-trail systems in other parts of the county and state suggested that the farm owners take a tour of the Lancaster Junction Trail in Penn Township to see how a successful trail works. One committee member noted that people who use the trails can police the trails themselves and act as deterrents to any criminal activity. Other trails, including the Lancaster Junction Trail, have worked successfully bordering farmland for years.

Another landowner pointed out the trail stops at Newport Road and could potentially be prone to "massive amounts of lawsuits" because of major traffic on a roadway.

A committee member responded that other landowners for other projects had doubts,

fears, and concerns. But she used the Linear Park example of how the people living around the park and using it can police it and don't abuse it.

Robert C. Wenger, landowner, noted that the study "obligates no one," he said. "After the study, then we just talk. We're just talking — it's not costing anybody anything."

Bob Komman, planning committee member, noted that 99.9 percent of the people who use the trail will use it right and not abuse

it. He noted that he has worked on many trail systems.

Komman urged the landowners to keep an open mind for the benefits of "thousands of people throughout the year."

"If we decide it won't work, it won't work," he told them. "If we say it will work, it will."

The recreation advisory committee will meet again to discuss the study and answer questions on Tuesday, May 26 at 7 p.m. at the Warwick Township office.



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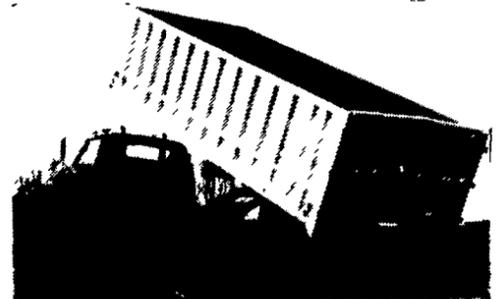


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