

KEY PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Squire Cheyney Park Master Plan

SC# 06013.10

The Squire Cheyney Park master plan seeks to preserve open space around the historic Cheyney Farmstead, to integrate recreational uses with the potential for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the existing farmhouse and barn. It will be important to maintain an appropriate setting for the historic structures while providing for the needs of potential park users.

The Thornbury Township Master Plan Steering Committee has identified you as a key person in the community and requested that we contact you for an interview. We have attached to this email an early conceptual plan in PDF format for your review.

Adobe Acrobat is required to view this PDF. If you require information on downloading Adobe Acrobat, please visit:

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Are you familiar with the Squire Cheyney site?

If yes: What is your overall impression of the site?
What opportunities or constraints do you see with future park development of this site?
Do you think public access to the historic farmstead structures should be maintained?
If so, in what capacity (if any) do you think the historic structures on this site could be reused?

If no: What would make you want to visit Squire Cheyney Park?
Do you think the historic Cheyney Farmstead structures should be preserved?

KEY PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Waln Run Park Master Plan

SC# 06013.10

Waln Run Park is located north of Echo Hill Road and West of Westtown Road. It is a unique neighborhood amenity, consisting of twelve acres of preserved open space within an existing residential development. Improvements to the park are intended to achieve several goals:

- Increase visibility within the site through the judicious removal of dense invasive plant materials and the planting of meadow and lawn areas
- Promote wildlife use by planting native species
- Enhance vegetative buffer areas between the park and nearby residences for added privacy for residents
- Provide better access to the site through new planned trail connections and opportunities for a few visitor parking spaces

The Thornbury Township Master Plan Steering Committee has identified you as a key person in the community and requested that we contact you for an interview. We have attached to this email an early conceptual plan in PDF format for your review.

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Have you visited Waln Run Park?

If yes: What is your overall impression of the park?
Are there any additions or changes that could improve the existing park?
What are some of the issues associated with improving the park facilities?
What are some of the opportunities associated with improving park facilities?

If no: What are some reasons you have not visited?
What would make you want to visit?

SQUIRE CHEYNEY PARK AND WALN RUN PARK MASTER PLAN

Key Person Interview Response Summary

SC# 06013.1

Are you familiar with the Squire Cheyney site?

Half of respondents said yes, half said they were not very familiar with the site.

What is your overall impression of the site?

- **Beautiful**
- **Very important setting for historic structures**
- **An asset that should be shared with the community**

What opportunities or constraints do you see with future park development of this site?

Opportunities:

- **Preservation of a historic setting**
- **Reuse of the structures as a farmstead or residence**
- **Added walking trails, passive recreation**

Constraints:

- **Impact of new residential development by Orleans**

Do you think the historic Cheyney Farmstead structures should be preserved?

- **The Township must ensure that what happens to the conservation parcel in the future meets the Township goal to preserve the structures where possible**
- **Farmstead structures should be preserved**
- **Adaptive reuse of the historic structures is favorable, if possible**

Do you think public access to the historic farmstead structures should be maintained?

- **The farmstead should be or will likely be reused as a private structure**
- **The community would benefit from public access to the historic structures**

If so, in what capacity (if any) do you think the historic structures on this site could be reused?

- **Not suitable for public use or Township offices**
- **The most appropriate use for the historic farmhouse would be as a residence with a long term lease.**

- **Cost to rehabilitate barn seems prohibitive due to structural issues and poor replacement of the east wall**

If not familiar with the site, what would make you want to visit Squire Cheyney Park?

- **A park theme that is different from existing local parks**
- **The provision of recreation for young adults**

Squire Cheyney Park—General Comments:

- **Ball fields are not needed on this site.**
- **The farmhouse and barn should be rehabilitated. The Township should maintain ownership of the structures and offer the farmhouse for use as a residence with an inexpensive lease. This would keep the properties in Township control—once the Township relinquishes ownership, the fate of the structures becomes uncertain and anything can happen to them.**
- **Cheyney University may benefit from the development of this park**
- **Westtown School students unlikely to use the park for recreational or educational purposes, as the school has access to sufficient open space and recreational facilities on site**

Have you visited Waln Run Park?

Half of respondents said yes, half said they have never visited the site.

If you have:

What is your overall impression of the park?

- **Useful open space link, important due to stream valley**
- **Not conducive to park use—surrounded by residential lots**

Are there any additions or changes that could improve the existing park?

- **Access**
- **Paths for Walking**

What are some of the issues associated with providing park improvements/facilities?

- **Security**
- **Vandalism**
- **Thornbury Township doesn't need additional parks, there are existing open space and recreational opportunities nearby**
- **Trails will not get much use**
- **Park maintenance will be costly, and the Township does not maintain existing trails**

What opportunities does the site present for park improvements/facilities?

- **Some type of open sun and rain shelter for users/picnickers**

If you have not:

What are some reasons you have not visited?

- **Not conducive to walking**
- **Not visible**
- **Access is limited**

What would make you want to visit?

- **A walking path**
- **Incorporation of the adjacent Hill Property to provide added accessible open space**
- **An attractive earth, rock or land form sculpture on either or both parks would generate interest—like the turtle and cedar tree ring in Goose Creek Park**
- **A distinct park theme**
- **The provision of recreation for young adults**

Waln Run Park—General Comments:

- **The original intent behind the acquisition of the Waln Run parcel was the most appropriate: to put an easement on it and sell it as one residential lot**
- **Most homes in Thornbury Township are on 2 acre lots, meeting open space and recreational needs of a majority of residents**
- **The Township has acres of open space on parcels that it hasn't yet activated—maybe another parcel would be better suited for park development**



December 14, 2006

Mr. Ron Miller
P.O. Box 78
Westtown, PA 19395

Re: Squire Cheyney Park Master Plan
SC project # 06013.10

As per our Park and Recreation Committee Meeting discussion of December 6, 2006, this memorandum memorializes that discussion and suggests some options to be considered by the Township as it finalizes its negotiations with Orleans Development Company as a part of the final approval of the adjacent single family housing development. We agreed that these options should be suggested to the Board of Supervisors ASAP.

Based on Frens and Frens preliminary evaluation of the Squire Cheyney Farmstead House and Barn, it is evident that the costs to first stabilize and then renovate either of the structures is substantial. The farmstead is an important piece of the fabric in the cultural heritage of the area and there seems to be consensus that all reasonable efforts should be made to preserve and reuse at least the residence.

In regard to adaptive reuse, neither structure lends itself well to adaptive reuse for income producing activities.

The house, given its design for residential habitation, is best suited for continued use as a residence. To attempt to modify the structure for other uses would compromise the integrity of the house with little overall benefit. Additionally, "public" use of the house would negate use of the second floor without the addition of an elevator or lift – which would again compromise the structure.

The barn, being much larger than the house, and in much poorer condition, would require an even larger budget to make usable. Given this reality, it is difficult to justify these costs in a small township such as Thornbury. Even in a much large municipality, the renovation and reuse of this structure would be a major endeavor.

Given these facts, the Park and Recreation Committee discussed that the Township should consider the following options toward preserving the historic Squire Cheyney farmstead.

Option 1: Thornbury Township accepts dedication of the land and structures from Orleans. Several acres of land around the farmstead are placed in a conservation easement so that the cost of the “land” is separated from the cost of the “buildings” (thus reducing the purchase price of the residence). A buyer purchases the building(s). Linked to that purchase agreement are terms by which the buyer agrees to: 1. renovate and live in (or rent) the house; 2. Abide by architectural controls for renovation and any additions, garage, etc.; 3. Other conditions as needed.

Under this scenario, the Township will gain some amount of revenue from the purchase of the house and the Township is relieved from the cost of renovation. Disposition of the barn would need to be determined. Thornbury Township or Orleans may need to demolish the barn for the sale to proceed – this is to be determined. A new buyer may wish to use salvaged stone from the barn for construction of house addition or garage, barn, etc.

Option 2: Thornbury Township accepts dedication of the land. Orleans retains ownership of the structures and it is up to Orleans to market and sell the structures with several acres of land – again – with conditions to preserve the historic integrity of the structure(s).

The Township is relieved from having to market and sell the property and will not realize any income from the sale.

One of the concerns with either of these options is the costs to buy the structure(s) and then renovate the structure(s) on a farmstead that is part of a new suburban development – Will this farmstead be attractive enough for a buyer to want to purchase this property and invest in its renovation? We suggest that marketing the sale of this farmstead will be very critical. The options of the Township marketing the sale through a local realtor vs. Orleans marketing the sale through their marketing of the development should be fully considered. Perhaps both options could be pursued to maximize the potential to find an interested buyer.

Subsequent to the last committee meeting, we have conferred with our sub-consultant E. L. Crow Inc. Mr. Crow has agreed to restructure some of his effort to examine similar sales of historic properties that have been / are being saved in concert with new residential developments so that we can better understand the challenges of marketing a property of this type with associated rehabilitation costs.

Please advise if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Simone Collins
Landscape Architecture



Peter M. Simone, RLA, FASLA
President

Cc: SC team



DRAFT

December 19, 2006

Mr. Ron Miller
P.O. Box 78
Westtown, PA 19395

Re: Squire Cheyney Park Master Plan
SC project # 06013.10

Based upon the December 14, 2006 Simone Collins letter, which reviewed potential Squire Cheyney farmstead options to be considered by the Township, it has been suggested that a third option be considered by the Board of Supervisors.

Option 3: Thornbury Township accepts dedication of the land and structures from Orleans under the condition that Orleans provides any necessary work to protect the existing structures from the elements, including shoring up any structural deficiencies. This work would be completed by Orleans' private contractors while they are at the site constructing the new residential subdivision. The Township would thereby avoid paying prevailing wage rates for this work that would be required if the Township were to bid this work as a public job.

Under this scenario, the farmhouse and barn are preserved with the potential for public access/use determined in the future by the Township Board of Supervisors. With the existing structures in a secure, stabilized condition, the Township will have time to identify potential funding sources and raise funds for the future adaptive reuse of the historic structures.

Please advise if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Simone Collins
Landscape Architecture

David T. Stauffer, RLA, ASLA
Project Manager

Cc: SC team
Mahlon Rossiter, Township Manager



Squire Cheyney Park and Waln Run Park Master Plan
SC#: 006013.1

REFERENCE MATERIALS BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *Thornbury Township Comprehensive Plan*, 2004.
2. *Open Space, Recreation, and Environmental Resources Plan*, 1996.
3. *Subdivision and Land Development Chapters 115 and 116 from the Code of Thornbury Township*, 2003.
4. *Zoning Chapter 155 from the Code of the Township of Thornbury*, 1997.
5. *Time –Saver Standards for Landscape Architecture*, Charles W. Harris and Nicholas T. Dines, 1988.
6. *Squire Cheyney, Patriot of Thornbury*, J. Christopher Lang, 2004.