

Public Opinion Surveys

Community Questionnaire Summary

A community survey entitled Thornbury Township (Chester County) Comprehensive Plan Update Community Questionnaire, prepared by Ray Ott & Associates Planning and Landscape Architecture, was mailed to all households in Thornbury Township in November, 2002. Of 1,100 households, 62 responded.

Each household was asked to rank from 1 to 5 the importance of several significant features of Thornbury Township. These features included public services, community features, recreational opportunities and environmental features. Responses related to public service features (police, road maintenance etc.) were not included in this report as they are not applicable to this park planning project.

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of several Township improvement needs. Some of the features that ranked highest were:

- Open space preservation
- More opportunities for walking/biking
- More public parks/recreation opportunities

Both parks in this master plan have the potential to provide opportunities for the preservation of open space, added pedestrian and bike paths, and passive or active recreation.

This study also reveals that the Township features most valued by residents are:

- Scenic natural/rural landscapes
- Seclusion/privacy
- Historical architecture/setting
- Convenient access to surrounding areas

Key Person Interviews

A list of key members of the community was generated by the Thornbury Township Park Master Plan Steering Committee. Those on the list were contacted and asked to participate in an interview regarding the development of both parks. Feedback received by the four community members who chose to participate in interviews is summarized below.

General comments regarding parks in Thornbury Township included a desire to create parks that can be used by all ages, particularly young adults; with unique themes that distinguish them from Goose Creek Park; and which provide a mix of passive and active recreation.

Respondents agreed that the historic Squire Cheyney Farmstead must be preserved and, if possible, restored and reused. Maintaining an appropriate setting for the historic structures was considered very important. Providing public access to the structures was considered desirable, although it was acknowledged that restoration would likely be costly. Opportunities presented by the prospect of developing this park included the preservation of open space, increased opportunities for walking, the provision of additional pavilions and gathering spaces, use of the site by Cheyney University, and recreational opportunities for those in the community desiring access to open space.

Proposed Activities and Facilities

Constraints included the high cost of restoration of structures and the potential negative impact of new development on the proposed park.

Many people were unfamiliar with Waln Run Park. Reasons given for why respondents had not visited included lack of visibility, a need to increase access, and the opinion that it is currently not conducive to walking. Potential constraints related to the development of Waln Run Park included issues with parking, security, vandalism, and access to the park. Waln Run Park was viewed as having the potential to be a useful open space link. Respondents mentioned the following as desired park improvements: enhanced access, walking paths, an open sun and rain shelter for visitors, the incorporation of the adjacent Hill property as part of the park, and public art such as a land/rock/earth sculpture to generate interest.

A complete report documenting responses received from participants in Key Person Interviews can be found in the appendix of this report.

Meetings

During the nine month master planning process, several meetings were held with the Thornbury Township Steering Committee, neighbors and the general public. Each Steering Committee Meeting and Public Meeting included presentations of new information for both Squire Cheyney and Waln Run Park projects. Neighborhood Meetings focused on the presentation of information about one park project in particular to residents immediately affected by its development.

The next section of this report outlines how meetings progressed: the information presented, feedback generated, and how feedback culminated in a design program for each park.

Squire Cheyney Park: Potential Uses

During meetings with community members, a list of potential uses for Squire Cheyney Park and the historic farmstead structures was generated. The list included the following suggestions:

Park Uses

- Bicycle/pedestrian trails
- Arboretum and/or plant walk
- Passive uses—pavilion, picnic area, benches, restrooms
- Play areas
- Continued agricultural uses
- Land Conservancy—conservation easement

Reuse of Historic Structures

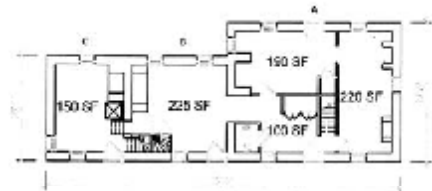
- Bed and breakfast
- Residential use (owned by Township)
- Sale of structures for residential use
- Township building

- Storage
- Community building
- Buildings enjoyed from a distance as part of the landscape

Adaptive Reuse of Squire Cheyney Farmstead Structures

Reuse of the Squire Cheyney Farmhouse

The house has a footprint of about 1,600 square feet and about 1,800 square feet of living space on two floors. The configuration of the first floor is shown in the exhibit to the right. The second floor is similar to rooms 1 through 4 of the first floor except the second floor long room is divided into two rooms.



The Rehabilitation Architects, Frens and Frens LLC, estimate that stabilization of the house and the rehabilitation of the interior for residential use is likely to cost in the range of \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 or \$320 to \$410/s.f.

Due to the small size of the rooms in the house and the lack of an elevator, the reuse would appear to be limited to residential use. Given the limitations on reuse imposed by the number and size of rooms, three reuses appear worthy of consideration.

Reuse as a Single Family Dwelling

In the physical analysis of the Squire Cheyney structures, Frens and Frens concluded the most appropriate reuse for the structure would be as a single family residence. The reuse as a residential structure could be as a rental property or as a for-sale property.

To gain insight into its use as a rental residence, several currently available sites in Chester and Delaware Counties are listed below.

STREET	COMMUNITY	STYLE	R/MO.	S.F.	R/S.F.
222 E. Gay St.	West Chester	TH 4 BR/1 ½ BA	\$2500	1736	\$17.28
21 Kingfisher Lane	Downingtown	2 4 BR/2 ½ BA	\$1900	1742	\$13.09
260 Flagstone	Chester Springs	2 2 BR/2 ½ BA	\$1800	1800	\$12.00
???	Marsh Creek Area	2 3 BR/2 ½ BA	\$1800		
34 Branford Way	Coatesville	TII 3 BR 2 BA	\$1375	1510	\$10.93
3 Stoneridge	Thornton	2 4 BR/2 BA	\$1750	2000	\$10.50
241 Fairview Rd.	Glenmore	2 3 BR 2 BA	\$1350	1581	\$10.25
???	Chesterbrook	TH end fin base	\$1750		
1023 Barclay	Chester Springs	2 4 BR/2 ½ BA	\$2900	3500	\$ 9.50
650 Leeward St.	Coatesville	2 4 BR/2 ½ BA	\$1800	2338	\$ 9.24
???	West Chester	vct 5 BR	\$1200		
???	Phoenixville	TH 3 BR 2 BA	\$ 995		

Profile of Rental Housing in Chester and Delaware Counties.

Proposed Activities and Facilities

A profile of rental homes suggests that available rental housing seems to be divided into three price ranges. Larger homes in strong neighborhoods appear to have rents that range from \$12/sf. to about \$17/sf. per year. Homes in more modest neighborhoods are renting at approximately \$10/sf. Homes in older neighborhoods tend to rent for slightly under \$10/sf. This profile suggests that the Squire Cheyney house could possibly rent for about \$1500 per month. It is noteworthy that one small home built in 1736 that had undergone extensive rehabilitation is renting for \$1728 per month.

Using a cap rate of .08, a rent rate of \$2,500/month would cover an investment of only about half of the estimated rehabilitation cost.

Reuse as a Single Family For Sale Dwelling

The Squire Cheyney house could be rehabilitated and put on the market for sale. To gain some insight into this potential reuse, the consultants have listed several currently for-sale homes in Chester and Delaware Counties.

STREET	COMMI.	STYLE/ACRES	AGE	BED/BATH	SALE \$.	\$/S.F.	\$/S.F.
Estates at Hillview	Hillview	2	New	2 BR/2 BA	\$325,000	1540	\$211.04
Chase + Bell Tavern	Downingtwn	TH			\$341,163	1643	\$207.65
1068 Glenside Road	Downingtwn	Hist-1	174	3 BR/1 ½ BA	\$289,900	1500	\$193.27
10 Blue Heron Lane	Downingtwn	Col.-.14	13	4 BR/2 ½ BA	\$359,000	2000	\$179.50
Greenbriar II	Thornbury	TH	New	3 BR/2 ½ BA	\$350,000	2032	\$172.24
109 Brinton Drive	E. Fallowfield	Col.-.31	1.7	3 BR/2 ½ BA	\$275,000	1850	\$148.65
Downing Forge	Downingtwn	2	New		\$261,150	1806	\$144.60
Mews at Bailey Stat.	Downingtwn	TH	New		\$259,900	1830	\$142.02
1504 Governor Ct.	West Chester	Col.-.75	10	4 BR/2 ½ BA	\$459,000	3600	\$127.50
Woods at Edges Mill	Downingtwn	2	New		\$302,000	2550	\$118.43
Red Oak Farm	Honey Brook	TH	New	3 BR/2 ½ BA	\$217,490	1848	\$117.69
6920 Ruskin	Upper Darby	Row-.25	43	3 BR/1 BA	\$ 59,900	1100	\$ 54.45

Profile of For Sale Homes in Chester and Delaware Counties.

The newer homes are being listed for \$117 to \$211 per square foot. One 174 year old historical – and completely remodeled home - is listed for \$193.27/sf. Some older homes are listed for under \$100/sf.

The \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 cost of rehabilitating the Squire Cheyney Farmhouse (and immediate property) would translate into about \$555/sf., well above the price of newly constructed high-end homes. It is noteworthy that the Greenbriar II community being built “next door” is selling at about \$172/sf. To bring it in line with the renovated 174 year old home would entail a write-down of about \$700,000. The question would be whether or not the property’s historic value would warrant a grant of this magnitude. Under this scenario, the Township would still have the task of maintaining the land area around the home site.

Reuse as a Bed and Breakfast

Bed and breakfasts dot the countryside in Chester County and the greater Brandywine Valley. These bed and breakfasts range from large and stately manor houses to large farmhouses to relatively small two to three room structures. They range in age from the early 1700's to the 20th century. Many have on-site gardens that guests can roam.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Built</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Garden</u>	<u>Typ,d</u>	<u>Rates</u>
Fairville Inn	Chadds Ford	1857	Country Inn		G 15	\$150 - \$250
Brandywine Valley	Glen Mills	1734	Manor House		G 12	\$160 - \$285
Duling-Kurtz House	Exton		Country Inn		13	\$ 93 - \$133
Hamanassett	Chester Heights	1856	English + C.H.		8	\$145 - \$345
Pennsbury Inn	Chadds Ford	1714	Rubblehouse		G 8	\$135 - \$210
Stottsville Inn	Pomeroy	1800's	Cuntry Inn		6	???
Whiteway Farm	Kennett Square	1700's	Farmhouse		G 6	\$135 - \$289
Faunbrook	West Chester				G 6	\$125 - \$195
Meadow Spring Farm	Kennett Square	1820's	Farmhouse		6	??
Brandywine Manor House	Honey Brook		Manor House		G 4	\$135 - \$254
Kennett House	Kennett Square	1910	Art/Craft		4	\$100 - \$240
Edges Mill Inn	Downingtown	1700's	Federal Farm		G 4	\$ 85 - \$100
Hedgerow Suites	Chadds Ford		Carriage House		3	\$165 - \$210
Bancroft Manor	Kennett Square	1909	Queen Ann		3	\$135 - \$155
Longfellow House	Swarthmore				3	???
Purcel Durell House	Swarthmore	1880	Victorian		3	???
The Great Valley House	Malvern	1700's	Stone Farmhse			???
Bed & Breakfast at Walnut Hill	Kennett Square	1840	Mill House		3	\$ 90 - \$130
1732 Folke Stone B & B	West Chester	1732	Manor		G 3	\$ 75 - \$125
Olde Stone Guesthouse	Atglen	1700's	House + S.H		G 3	\$ 65 - \$ 85
Snug Hollow Farm	West Chester	1790	Farmhouse		G 3	???
Morning Star B & B	Phoenixville	1800's	Farmhouse		2	???
The Cherished Pearl	Honey Brook				2	???

Profile of Bed and Breakfasts in Chester and Delaware Counties.

Virtually all – including all of those reviewed – have a family who are proprietors and provide breakfast (continental to full country breakfasts). Most of the larger bed and breakfasts have private baths. Some of the smaller ones may have some private and some shared baths.

Room rates of the 18 reviewed units ranged from \$65 to \$145 at the low-end and \$195 to \$345 at the high end. Those with the lowest rates tend to be older 18th century buildings – probably with smaller rooms and some shared baths. Specific location does not appear to have a major bearing on room rates. Most have easy access to the area's attractions.

Those with higher room rates often include two-room suites or separate buildings (e.g., carriage houses or spring houses) which provide a special degree of privacy.

The Squire Cheyney House certainly is well located to function as a bed and breakfast. Most of the bed and breakfasts in Chester County list their amenities to include Longwood Gardens and the many other attractions that bring visitors to the Brandywine Valley.

Some of those in the western sector of the county seek visitors to Lancaster County.

The major deterrent for the re-use of this house as a bed and breakfast are these factors all relating to size:

- The house is not large enough to provide adequate living space for a couple to live while serving as proprietors of the bed and breakfast.

Proposed Activities and Facilities

- The number of rooms would provide only about three rooms (leaving only two rooms for the proprietors).
- The size and configuration of rooms makes it difficult to provide space for private baths for each guest room, a dining room to seat perhaps 12 persons, and a guest parlor which most bed and breakfasts provide for guests.
- The cost to stabilize and fit out the building as a bed and breakfast would be exceedingly high in view of it likely having to come into the marketplace at a fairly modest room rate – even if it were possible to obtain a large write-down in the form of grants or low interest loans.
- To include all of the surrounding land area would add to the cost of the property with little value added for a bed and breakfast.
- It may be possible to sell a portion of the property to a proprietor (say 5 acres). Alternatively, it may be worth considering a long-term lease of the house and immediate land area. In this event, the solution for the Squire Cheyney property may be for the Township to maintain the larger land area – except the area near the house and barn.



The Cherished Pearl



1732 Folke Stone

Reuse as an Extended Stay Executive Suite

There is a small but growing market for residential facilities that are equipped to cater to individuals on short-term work assignments and individuals who are in the process of being transferred by their employer. Transferred employees frequently need time to find and acquire permanent residential facilities for themselves and their families. These stays may range from a few days to several months. Many “guests” prefer completely furnished apartments with full kitchen and laundry facilities rather than staying in a (more expensive) hotel or motel with a higher level of services.

<p>PLYMOUTH MEETING</p> <p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homestead Studio Suites, King of Prussia - \$89 - \$110 • Extended Stay America, Plymouth Meeting - \$100 - \$110 • Extended Stay America, Malvern <p>Mid-Priced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homestead Studio Sweets, Malvern - \$114 - \$125 <p>Upscale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staybridge Suites, Malvern - • Homewood Suites by Hilton, Great Valley • Homewood Suites by Hilton, Valley Forge \$79 - \$170 • Residence Inn by Marriott, Conshohocken • Residence Inn by Marriott, Valley Forge 	<p>Furnished Apartments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost Like Home, Phoenixville - \$75 - <p>Suite Hotels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springhill Suites by Marriott, Plymouth Meeting • Marriott Philadelphia West, Conshohocken • Doubletree Guest Suites, Plymouth Meeting - \$198 - \$290 • Hampton Inn and Suites, Valley Forge • Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites, King of Prussia • Wyndam Valley Forge Suites - \$149 - \$259
<p>WEST CHESTER - EXTON</p> <p>Extended Stay Hotels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residence Inn by Marriott, Exton • Extended Stay America, Exton 	<p>Suite Hotels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort Inn and Suites, Brandywine Valley - \$99-\$150 • Courtyard by Marriot, Devon - • Holiday Express Inn and Suites, Concordville • Microtel Inn and Suites, West Chester

Extended Stay Facilities in the Plymouth Meeting and West Chester areas.

There about 80 extended stay facilities in the Philadelphia Area. Most of these facilities are built like hotels. The extended stay units range from alternative use of selected rooms or suites, a dedicated portion of the total complement of rooms, or will be dedicated exclusively to extended stay units. These dedicated facilities have a higher level of amenities (e.g., full kitchen, available laundry, separate living and sleeping areas) than conventional hotels or motels.

Room rates will range from \$80 to \$200 per night with discounts depending on the length of stay.

The Philadelphia Business Journal lists the above 16 facilities as top in the Valley Forge / Plymouth Meeting Area. It lists only 6 facilities in the West Chester / Exton area (not rated).

Almost Like Home, Phoenixville

Almost Like Home, in Phoenixville, is the only one of the extended stay facilities in the two areas that is locally owned and managed. It is appropriate to take a closer look at this facility in view of this review of extended stay facilities in the Philadelphia area and its focus on the Squire Cheyney Farm.

Almost Like Home opened in a residential neighborhood in Phoenixville about ten years ago in a single large older residence. The operation has grown to now include two large older homes, two relatively new single homes, and one townhouse in Society Hill, Philadelphia (about 45 minutes away).

Its list of amenities as presented in their web site are listed below:

Amenities:

- Complete Kitchens
- Laundry facilities
- Bi-weekly housecleaning
- Private Baths
- Telephone with Voicemail
- Situated in Residential Neighborhood
- Smoke Free
- DSL Computer Hook-up
- Cable TV - HBO
- FAX and Copy Service Available
- Delightful Residential Hostess
- Victorian Furnishings
- All Utilities Included
- Air Conditioned

Rates for the Corporate Suites Studios and Apartments in Phoenixville are:

- Start at \$75 per night (The Phoenix, Phoenixville)
- Start at \$300 per week (The Phoenix, Phoenixville)
- \$1500/Mo. 3 month minimum (The Buttonwood, Phoenixville)
- \$1800/Mo. Month to Month (The Buttonwood, Phoenixville)

These extended stay units have full kitchens, laundry facilities, bi-weekly cleaning service and management does not provide food service (breakfast) or other close support to residents. This means that management need not live on premises. This is very important to the potential reuse of this house as an extended stay inn.

Proposed Activities and Facilities

One may observe that Almost Like Home manages facilities that are on premises, next door, and several minutes away from home base. Thus the entire Squire Cheyney Farmhouse could be devoted to guest accommodations.

The Squire Cheyney Farmhouse is located in a residential neighborhood directly across Cheyney Road from Cheyney University. The Farmhouse is also located about one mile from U. S. 202, and is within 6 miles to several business parks.

Cheyney University has an enrollment of 1,380 students (134 graduate and 1,246 undergraduate), and about 100 members of the faculty, distributed among eleven departments. The university is likely to have several persons, faculty, lecturers, and speakers whom may be invited to spend several days, weeks, or a semester on-campus. The Squire Cheyney Farmhouse would make a convenient place for some of them to stay in a family-type furnished apartment.

The 25 largest private employers in Chester County employ 700 to 5000 persons per firm. Ten, or 40% of these firms are located within six miles of the Squire Cheyney House. A number of these firms are likely to have persons coming to these facilities for extended work assignments or leasing temporary facilities until permanent residence can be found for those being transferred to the local facility.

Such transfer generated business from a group of "client" firms constitutes a significant share of Almost Like Home's total occupancy.

The location and size of the Squire Cheyney house appears well suited to its re-use as an extended stay facility with two apartments. Its use as an extended stay facility would appear to carry with it three conditions:

Character - Inasmuch as the architectural character of the house reflects the early 19th century, it would appear appropriate to decorate the house in a style typical of that period. A Victorian character would appear to be too stylized for its period.

Rent Rates

Due to the small rooms of the house and relatively plain fit out, the house should lease for a fairly modest rent.



*"The Buttonwood",
Phoenixville.*



*"Cypress" in Society Hill,
Philadelphia.*

A new 3-4 room, one bedroom home of 2,000 sf. rents for \$750 to \$1,000 per month (average). In view of the high cost to rehabilitate this run down structure, the re-work of the house will require a large write-down to bring the costs in line.

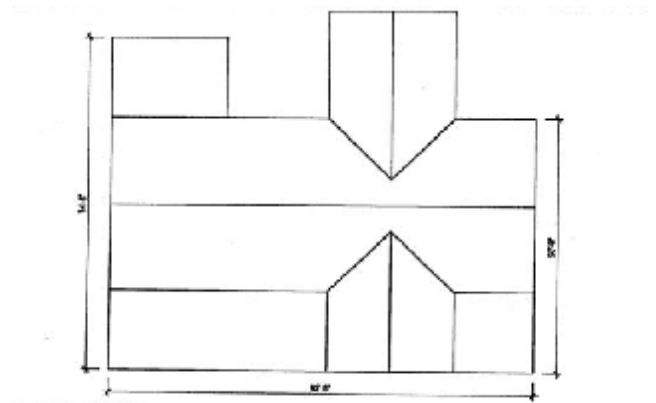
Use as a Show House

Its use as an extended stay facility would allow it to be used as a “Show House” (museum) on some regular basis, such as one month per year, by simply arranging to have no rental guests during the show period. At least one local area bed and breakfast operates in this way.

Reuse of the Squire Cheyney Barn

The barn is located about 75 feet to the east of the house. It is approximately 92 feet by 57 feet, or about 5,000 square feet.

The Frens and Frens analysis indicated that the barn could serve as a maintenance building, office, public restrooms, and seasonal recreation space for the planned park. The threshing floor could be used for seasonal public space for parties, square dances, summer park programs and other large group activities, and for storage.



Squire Cheyney Barn Roof Plan

The Township has indicated that it has no need for additional active recreation space or storage space. In looking for reuses for the two major buildings independently, one must look closely at the compatibility of the potential uses of the two facilities.

Community Art Center

The barn could be used as a community art center. The 15 to 20 community art centers in Southeastern Pennsylvania have typically been started by small groups of persons with an interest in their community and students. The following are a few examples.

Allen's Lane Art Center (ALAC)

ALAC is located in the Mount Airy community of Philadelphia in a former carriage house on 7 acres of land in Fairmount Park. The art center has several class rooms, a dance room, a professionally equipped theatre, an art gallery, and a kitchen.

ALAC was founded in 1953 by an interracial group of Mt. Airy residents who were concerned about the dangers of increasing community tension. “Living Together

Proposed Activities and Facilities

Through the Arts”, a program of The Ford Foundation and the Henry Home & School Association, originally sponsored ALAC. Its founders saw creative activities as an effective way for channeling the energy of youth in a constructive way.

This type of use also is quite compatible with residential uses of the Squire Cheyney House. The programming of the art center would be largely daytime with classes running only to about 4:00 p.m. – therefore there would be no evening noises or parking incursion.

If there is interest in re-using the barn as an art center, the Consultants can prepare a preliminary cost-benefit analysis to determine what level of support may be required by Thornbury Township. Most of the art centers reviewed meet their budgets through memberships, charges for classroom supplies, contributions, sponsors – and some support by the Townships, typically through the parks and recreation department.

Abington Art Center

Abington Art Center originated as the Old York Road Art Guild. The guild was founded by a group of visionary women who believed in the “benefit of cultural enrichment for individual and community life to be derived from creative artistic expression.” In 1969, an area book and print collector, Lessing J. Rosenwald and his wife Edith, donated their elegant estate, Alverthorpe Manor to the Township of Abington as a cultural and recreational gathering place for the community. Since then, the Art Center has continued to grow, establishing a nationally recognized Sculpture Garden in 1990.

Main Line Art Center (MLAC)

MLAC was founded in 1937 by a group of local artists who wanted to pursue their art interests and teach their students. A decade later the MLAC purchased its present home in Haverford. Locally known as “the White House”, this charming three story Federal style building, was built as a residence in the mid-1800's as part of the Kelly estate. Since its founding, the art center has flourished growing from a small arts organization into a thriving cultural resource.



A \$2,000,000 renovation and expansion of the art center was completed in 1999. The project has totally refurbished the existing building and increased space by almost 16 percent with a new gallery, studios, a student resource center, and registration center.

A current recipient of a Philadelphia Cultural Leadership Program from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the art center also receives funding through the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Classes, workshops, exhibitions, lectures, trips and outreach programs reach over 7,000 students and enthusiastic art viewers each year.

Whitewash Community Art Center

Whitewash Community Art Center consists of a barn and an adjacent former farm residence. The house is used for classrooms and studios. The barn is used as a

gallery, a community center, and for events. The several acres that make up Cedar Grove Park also has a number of recreational facilities. The park and art center are owned by Whitewash Township and staffed by the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Squire Cheyney Barn would make a suitable location and structure for a community art center. Moreover, there appears to be no serious “competition” for this type of facility in southern Chester County. There appears to be no community art center within 10 miles of Thornbury.

A community art center could be launched with little added cost to the basic rehabilitation expense identified by the Frens and Frens report. The key factor would be to identify one or more persons who would be interested in spearheading the creation and development of the center.

Theatre

The 5200 square foot threshing floor of the barn could be outfitted and used for a little theatre. This re-use would depend on identifying a theatre group who would be willing to assume expense of fitting out the building for this use. This team of consultants has worked with theatre groups looking for space. The cost of rehabilitating the barn for this use would be an expensive undertaking but could be spread out over several years.

Executive Suites

Business centers, also known as executive suites or serviced offices, are growing in popularity to provide offices within neighborhoods, or opening a branch office in an unfamiliar area. Executive suites provide immediate office availability with professional staff to answer a firm’s telephone, and provide clerical services as needed. These fully furnished offices with access to well appointed conference rooms, attractive reception areas, and staff services provides lease and space flexibility for start-up companies, for opening new operating territories, and for upsizing and downsizing operations while avoiding long-term leases.

Necessary services such as photo-copying, telephone usage, IT and mail handling are available on an as-needed basis. Finally, the cost of hiring and managing secretarial and administrative support staff is avoided - while the benefits of immediate access to a team of business support specialists are fully realized.

There are several such facilities located in the Plymouth Meeting and King of Prussia areas. One business center is located in Perkasio, Pennsylvania in an old stone building. Business centers typically contain 60 or so offices that range from 120 to 240 sf. which compares with a conventional leased office of 750 sf.

A comparison of costs suggest that a 750 sf. conventional office would cost \$47,700 per year to maintain while a 180 executive suite would cost \$22,250 per year.

The barn has a 5,000 sf. footprint. The main and lower level could be outfitted to provide about 40 executive suites. A set of executive suites at this location in a residential neighborhood within easy access to U. S. 202 could be a profitable use for the barn. Moreover, this use for the barn would be compatible with the farmhouse operating as an extended stay facility. One drawback to office use is the high requirement for parking which could impact the character of the park.

Proposed Activities and Facilities

Township Building

The Squire Cheyney barn would be an appropriate location for a Township building. The barn could be converted into a new municipal building similar to the new Towamencin Township facility. Towamencin Township acquired a farm property then reconstructed the barn as the municipal building and leased the adjacent farmhouse to a private tenant. This same process could work for Thornbury Township.



Towamencin Municipal Center. The building to the left is the barn, the farmhouse is on the right.

Squire Cheyney Park: Proposed Activities and Facilities

Squire Cheyney Park Trail System

The Squire Cheyney Park master plan proposes an eight foot wide porous asphalt trail. This trail is integrated into a trail system proposed by Orleans Development Company that connects the new residential development and open space to the Squire Cheyney Park.

A loop trail is proposed within an open parcel on the northeast corner of Street Road and Cheyney Road, north of the Township owned park parcel. This trail would run near the perimeter of the lot while meadow or even crop use is maintained. The trail would link to the larger park parcel via a trail located within the right of way of Cheyney Road.

The trails proposed by this master plan are aligned so that areas of interest, such as the Springhouse, Cheyney Cemetery, seating areas, and Cheyney Run are accessible or visible from the trail.

Resurfaced Stone Entry Drive

The resurfacing of the existing entry drive with gravel is proposed to facilitate vehicular access to the park and parking lot. Retaining a surface that recalls the original drive is proposed in order to maintain a sense of the farmstead's rural character.

Parking Lot

A porous asphalt parking lot with twenty spaces is proposed along the entry drive. Stormwater runoff from this parking lot will be directed to an infiltration basin within the proposed meadow.

The proposed parking lot will be screened visually by an existing stand of vegetation to the west as well as with new plantings.

Squire Cheyney Farmhouse and Barn

There are several options available to the Township for proceeding with a plan of action for the Squire Cheyney farmhouse and barn.

One option is to have both structures stabilized and secured by Orleans so that they pose no threat to park users. Having the structures stabilized will buy time for the Township to make decisions as to what the ultimate use of the farmstead and barn will be. Funds may be raised over time for the restoration and reuse of one or both structures.

Another option is to disassemble one or both structures with the intent of rebuilding in the future, as funding becomes available. This reduces any potential liabilities associated with having unstable, vacant structures within a park setting.

A third option is the demolition of one or both structures. Although this option contradicts the Township's goals of preserving its historic structures, it may become practical if funding can not be raised for the restoration and/or reuse of the structures. One of the three options, or a combination of the three, must be selected and executed prior to occupation of adjacent new residences and prior to increased public use of the park.

Springhouse

Two scenarios were proposed to the Steering Committee for the reuse of the Squire Cheyney springhouse. One scenario suggests restoring the springhouse structure, intermittently allowing public access for events such as tours or educational purposes. This scenario may not be viable however; as the springhouse may potentially be subject to vandalism.

Another scenario suggests the removal of the roof, and creating an open ruin planted with wetland species that can be viewed by the public.

Plant Walk

In lieu of proposing a formal arboretum for Squire Cheyney Park, which may be costly to establish and maintain, portions of the trail are proposed to be lined with specimen trees and plantings. Each tree is identified with a sign providing interesting information about the plant. Plants used along the trail can be selected according to a theme involving historical, functional, environmental, or aesthetic significance.

Proposed Activities and Facilities

Adirondack Chair Seating Areas

In order to help create a distinct identity for Squire Cheyney Park, unique seating is proposed for park users. Adirondack chairs secured to 12'x12' decks will be located in areas of the park selected for their scenic beauty and views. Chairs will be oriented towards picturesque views that best capture the site's natural amenities and former rural agricultural identity.



The existing meadow.



A photo simulation depicting a seating area.

Continued Agricultural Use

One proposed activity that will clearly articulate to visitors the character of the Cheyney site's former landscape is its continued agricultural use. The visual impact of experiencing this park landscape periodically scattered with large hay bales would be breathtaking and distinctive. A majority of the project site has therefore been preserved as open fields with the potential for agricultural uses to persist. Hay, corn or soybean – or other crops would all be appropriate – and could change over time.

The open parcel located at the north east corner of Street Road and Cheyney Road is also a prime candidate for continued agricultural use. At several Steering Committee Meetings, it was suggested that a local farmer who grows pumpkins may be interested in leasing the field for agricultural use.

Managed Meadow

A meadow mix featuring native wildflowers and wetland plants will be seeded along the stream area. This meadow will help maintain and possibly improve the health of the site's wetlands area and provide seasonal color.

Streambank Stabilization

There are several areas of stream erosion that exist along the stream. These should be repaired with appropriate plants and stream bank stabilization techniques. The opportunity exists for environmental education associated with the stabilization of the streambank. Financial assistance from non profit organizations may also be available to fund this endeavor.

Tree Allee

An evenly spaced allee of Sycamore, Maple and Oak Trees is proposed along Cheyney Road and also along the park's entry drive. This allee will serve as an inviting landscape element which emphasizes the park's entrance and visually distinguishes the site along Cheyney Road.

Buffer Plantings

To help preserve a sense of the site's original agricultural character and to delineate between public and private property, vegetative buffer plantings are proposed along residential developments and along other "edges" of the park. These buffers will help to screen new homes from view, providing a sense of privacy for neighbors and minimizing the visual effects of these homes on the historic landscape. Buffers should be composed of native plants with evergreen and deciduous plantings and should contain both trees and shrubs.

Pavilion

A 30 foot by 36 foot pavilion is proposed to the north of the parking lot. This pavilion provides an open air sheltered space that will accommodate such uses as picnics and gatherings.

Kiosk

An informational kiosk is proposed to be located by the pavilion. Visitors will find general information about the park and upcoming events here.

Interpretive Signage

Interpretive signs will be located at key locations within the park. Information and stories related to the site's historical significance such as the Cheyney Cemetery and the Springhouse will be revealed on these signs. Suggested themes for these signs include:

- Squire Cheyney – the person
- History of area
- Site architecture
- Cheyney cemetery
- Local ecology

Waln Run Park: Potential Uses

In community meetings several potential uses for Waln Run Park were suggested. The list of uses included the following:

- Pedestrian/bicycle trails
- Environmental education uses
- Nature preserve
- Dog park

Proposed Activities and Facilities

- No development / no change
- Minimal development
- Sale of the parcel for residential use
- Corridor for wildlife, vegetation and people
- Uses which are not redundant to existing Goose Creek Park
- Purchase of Hill Property to create a larger park parcel

Proposed Activities and Facilities

Waln Run Park Trail System

The master plan proposes an approximately one-third mile porous asphalt loop trail. The proposed trail is to be 8 feet wide to allow simultaneous use by both pedestrians and bicyclists. The Waln Run trail runs adjacent to the park's entry garden, around the proposed lawn and meadow areas, and connects to the proposed Sage Hill Development trail at the northeast corner of the site on the Allen Tract. Benches will be located intermittently along the loop trail for visitor seating.

A six foot wide compacted soil or mulch path connects to the northern portion of the loop trail. This path is intended to have an informal character, winding through existing trees and allowing path users to walk along the stream. A woodchip surface is used at the point where this informal path extends into the site's wetlands boundary. The woodchip path continues past the site's eastern boundary onto the adjacent Hill Property along a 20 foot wide trail easement. This portion of the trail eventually leads visitors to the park's entry garden. Benches are also located in scenic areas along these paths.

Waln Run Park Entry Drive, Parking and Drop Off

An eighteen foot wide porous asphalt entry drive is proposed within the fifty foot wide portion of the property which extends from Echo Hill Road. A sign with the park's name will be located at this entrance. Park rules should also be posted.

The proposed drive will allow vehicular access to nine parallel parking spaces and a drop off area at the drive's terminus. Shade trees and buffer plantings are proposed along the entry drive, particularly along the residential property to the west of the drive. This buffer is intended to create a visual screen and a clear physical separation between the park and the adjoining residential property.

Entry Garden

A small garden featuring native ornamental shade trees, perennial flowering plants and grasses is located just beyond the drop off area. This proposed garden is intended to mark the park's entrance and serve as a colorful focal point as visitors approach the entrance. Passive seating is proposed in the garden under shade trees, providing an informal area for relaxing, picnicking, and enjoying views of the lawn and meadow. Litter receptacles are proposed in this location.

Multi-Use Lawn Area

A mown lawn area approximately one acre in size is proposed within the park, located next to the entry garden. The lawn area is intended for multiple uses such as informal gatherings or for informal play space to toss a ball or frisbee.

Meadow

Portions of the densely vegetated areas that currently exist on site are proposed to be cut back to expand the viewshed within the park and to remove invasive plant species. Approximately three acres are proposed to be seeded with a native wildflower meadow mix. Native trees will be planted, sparsely dotting the meadow area. A very informal pathway, three or four feet wide, is mown through the meadow offering visitors the experience of being immersed in wildflowers and grasses. Stormwater run-off from the entry drive and walkways is directed to infiltration areas in the meadow.

Prefabricated Pedestrian Bridge

Waln Run, located along the northern site boundary, presents an obstacle to trail users as they enter or exit at the northwest corner. Although the use of stepping stones was suggested on several occasions at community meetings, a prefabricated pedestrian bridge is the most practical solution to providing trail access onto the site and allows for use when the stream's water level is high. The installation of this small bridge will most likely require a PA DEP permit.

Split-Rail Fence

In order to clearly delineate park boundaries and to avoid unintentional trespass onto adjacent private property, a split rail fence is proposed along the park perimeter. The fence will be located along both sides of the entry drive, extending north along the eastern edge of the park boundary just past the pond, and follow the entire southern and western park boundaries.

Reforestation

A cleared area exists along the southern park boundary. Proposed reforestation of this area with native plants will provide additional wildlife habitat while creating an enhanced visual buffer for residents.

Design Considerations for Squire Cheyney and Waln Run Parks

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

All park facilities should be designed according to the most recent version of the ADA Accessibility Guidelines. The most up to date information can be found on the ADA web page: <http://www.ada.gov>

Proposed Activities and Facilities

Stormwater Best Management Practices

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's) are suggested for consideration in future development of both parks. Use of BMP's such as infiltration areas, porous surfaces and bioswales are controls that should be incorporated into each park's design. These BMP's can help manage stormwater runoff rates and improve the water quality of each site.

The Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual can be found at:

<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/watermgt/wc/subjects/stormwatermanagement>

Native Plant Materials

Native plants are recommended for use throughout each park. The use of native plants will reduce long term maintenance costs, provide additional wildlife habitat, and create an attractive landscape indicative of Thornbury Township's local ecology.