

Tatlock Community Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 11, 2024 @ City Hall Whitman Room at 10:30 AM

Staff:

Mark Ozoroski

David Guida

Council:

Kevin Smallwood

DCP Advisory Board:

Jenny Winters

Public:

Barbara Fevelo

Donald Hoad

Mary Dickey

Lisa Campbell

Lenora Fonseca

Tammie Huckfeldt

Mimi Zukoff

Scott Gordon

Karen Gluck

Jocelyn Modesto

Jessica Gruber

Jordan Daub

Katy Isakovich

Google Doc Submissions (4/4-4/11):

Thank you for holding these meetings. I love Tatlock and I love the neighborhood. I just do not want to see one sacrificed for the other.

Thank you. We are committed to hearing all concerns.

I just left an SEF meeting at the middle school where a board of Ed meeting was also happening and strongly suggest better cooperation, transparency, and partnership in working with these field issues in town. three things:

1. How can DCP say there is no waitlist if the platform provided to sign up for these meetings has a checked box and message that says "on waiting list" and people have the option to call. After X sent me David's response about the waitlist, I went to check for myself. There has to be some sort of record or list in the civic Rec platform especially if you have the

capability to move people around and removed people as I asked when I could no longer make next Thurs.

2. Per Mark's 2/5 email, the 2/7 meeting was informal and no record of it. We had no information about what was the proposal and said how can you have concerns about something you don't know about?? As a key stakeholder in this, I expect the same consideration and have a right to attend a public meeting on record about this matter so that 20 years from now I can report to the young families that will move into our neighborhood what we did "back in the day" like mine did when Washington was turfed and not Franklin to advocate in opposition for this OR further arm my family with information if and when we renovate this house, move and how to keep fighting you on this.
3. Who and how are meeting notes being tracked and recorded from these small group meetings? Thank you.

1. There was no wait list for the first meeting. attached shows how waitlists appear. When it was said there was no wait list it meant no one was on it, which you can see it true.
You just added yourself to the waitlist for meeting 2 at 9:56 tonight.
I would be happy to provide you with a full tutorial if you want to come by the office to see how we can transfer people.
2. Any neighbor who would like to attend is invited at this point. We do want these meetings to stay small. However, due to concerns surrounding our ask to limit attendance to one meeting, we will allow anyone to attend. We encourage you to continue attending meetings to offer feedback. However, we are not looking for a "fight" no decisions have been made. We are looking for productive conversations surrounding concerns.
3. Notes for the first meeting were vetted by a DCP board member and a neighbor who is opposed to the project after being recorded by David Guida.
For meetings going forward, minutes will be typed live and projected on the screen just as they are now.

My name is X, we live with my family on X. I want to express my concerns regarding the lighting project in regards with traffic and the parking situation. As you may know, this is a really low traffic and quiet street most of the year and it's one of the reasons we moved to this area. Our 9-year son and neighbors walk to school together every morning safely, play together during the weekend. All these things change when events happen at Tatlock where traffic increases dramatically, people violate temporary or permanent parking rules and the street becomes a hazard to our kids. It still not clear to me what the plan is for the utilization of the field once lights are installed (will it be more, less), what the parking situation will be and if rules will be enforced by police like they should be. We love sports in Summit but any changes made need to be agreed and negotiated with us that live this street 24/7 365 days a year.

We are completing a traffic and parking study to address these concerns. There will be a meeting in the fall with these results for additional feedback.

There is not decision on how the lights will be utilized as far as allowable hours.

If the plan goes through I feel that the lights should only be lit for actual sporting events and not EVERY night which would cause unnecessary light pollution for residents around the area. If we use the tennis court lights (just next to where these lights would be) they are only on when needed and someone, should they want to use them, has to turn the light on to use the courts. Why would the city use an alternate method or logic for lighting a field just feet away? Are there studies on the expected use outside of sporting events that show there is a large demand for a field lit until 10 PM every night ? The proposal to leave the lights on every night until 10 PM seems wasteful and unnecessary. I do support the lights being installed and used for team sports (both boys and girls). Thank you

A study is currently being conducted on current and project usage levels. No decisions have been made on when the lights will be on.

The lights will likely be controlled remotely with capabilities to be turned on and off using a phone application.

Are you familiar with a “visual impact test?” I follow the Delaware Water Gap on Facebook and just read this: “On Wednesday, April 10th, the NPS will conduct a visual impact test for a proposed radio tower from 10 am until about 4 pm. Crews will fly an orange balloon 185 feet in the air to simulate the height of the proposed tower and assess the impact on scenic viewsheds in the area.” This is needed at Tatlock. As I mentioned the other night, having 8 of the 9 tallest structures in Summit in this small area will permanently mar the neighborhood. This test would be an opportunity to get a better feel for what lights would physically look like. Thank you, X
We did not hear of this until now. We will research this test.

This is a bad use of public money especially in the face of Summit’s many needs. Where are your priorities??? Neighbors of Tatlock are facing a decline in their property values and increasing urbanization of the neighborhood. Today’s chaos at the big track meet foreshadows what’s ahead for us.

Thank you for the comment. It has not been decided if this project will be included in the Capital Budget, thus using taxpayer money.

X Questions: (1) if this gets approved, what budget does this come out of and what are the other line items in that budget that the town would have to give up to fund the lights?

(2) is there a plan, if this is approved, so control when the lights are turned on? For example the tennis courts have lights on a timer, so if no one is at the field, there’s no reason to bother the neighbors or waste taxpayer money for electricity. (3) what are the specific traffic studies and cost for additional policing tied to the lights?

1. If the City allocates money toward this project, it would likely come out of the Capital Budget. Likely bond notes would be issued and it would be added to the City's annual debt schedule.
2. No decisions have been made surrounding light hours. DCP staff will be able to control the lights going on and off remotely if no practices are being held.
3. Traffic Studies are being completed and will be presented in the fall. Traffic studies will be completed in the Spring during busy lacrosse games AND during the fall at the time of a football game.

Is the construction of a baseball complex (Field of Dreams) being considered at the Transfer Station?

If not, why?

How tall and how many footcandles are the proposed field lights? How tall and how many footcandles are the current tennis court lights at Tatlock?

What will the cumulative effect of two lighted fields, a lighted parking lot, lighted paths and lighted tennis courts be?

How bright will light from the new field house be?

Will there be large windows and exterior lights? How long will the field house lights need to remain on after the field lights turn off?

Have you researched the negative health impacts (breast cancer and mental disorders) that ALAN (Artificial Light at Night) will have on both sports players and nearby residents of the fields?

How can the city justify \$1.6 million dollars for lights when our taxes just increased?

No. There were environmental concerns that were raised through the Environmental Impact Assessment that would not allow. An EIS is being completed here as well.

We will be requesting specs from the BOE on the Anderson Field House. When we receive these, we will be able to create a site map that will overlay all lighting and show overall impact.

We will be conferring with the local health officials regarding health concerns. More to come on this proves.

This project has not been decided on and is not in the Capital Budget for 2024.

Councilman Pawlowski is on the Summit Lacrosse Board, which supports the installation of permanent stadium lighting at Tatlock. This is a conflict of interest. Shouldn't he excuse himself from all discussions and listening sessions regarding lights at Tatlock and the vote should the plan go to council for approval?

This comment will be referred to the City Attorney for input.

I live at X. I am a member of the Tatlock neighborhood, and I do not support the proposed plan to light Tatlock field. Though I live a full 5 blocks away from Tatlock, I am able to hear the announcer at games at Tatlock, the roar of the crowds, and occasionally, "Pomp & Circumstance" during graduation season. I don't mind these intrusions to the peace of my home – it is part of living in the most densely populated state in the country, and part of living close to one another in a town like Summit. What I do mind is that lighting is proposed for a field that is in a thickly settled, residential area. Lighting will change this neighborhood – and not for the better. I have heard proponents of the lighting of Tatlock Field asking the residents in this neighborhood to listen, to be open to compromise, and to consider all the benefits of lighting when Tatlock area residents have already compromised on the installation of the turf and the expansion of the use of this sports complex for decades. One person even insinuated that lighting the field will keep kids from using drugs. Please. When you cut through the nonsense, it comes down to this: some Summit residents want lights, but a majority of those who actually live in the neighborhood do not want the lights. Those who will have to live with the lights day in and day out should have a greater say in the matter than those who will merely enjoy the benefits on game day or practice day, but who will go home to quiet, unlighted neighborhoods. For anyone who is advocating for the use of permanent lights on Tatlock field, a fair question is: would you want 80 foot light poles in your front yard or backyard? If the answer to that question is yes, then I would ask those residents to advocate for the fields in their neighborhoods be turfed and lighted. Further, I would ask anyone in favor of lighting this field: -Would you want your child's bedroom to look out onto 80 foot poles? -Would you want to hear the noise of sports practices when you are wanting to relax in your yard into the evening? -Would you want the additional parking troubles, traffic, safety issues, and trash in your neighborhood when practices and games are extended into the evening hours? If the answers to these questions are yes, then by all means, I encourage those community members to advocate to have the fields at their local elementary schools and at their local parks turfed and lighted. But if the answer is no – and I believe that for most people, the answer is no – then it is time to find a different solution to solve the field space issue. It is time for other neighborhoods to share the burden of having the additional noise, traffic and trash when their fields are used by a large segment of our population. It is unfair to expect this neighborhood to absorb all of the problems that come with lighting a field and extending the use of that field into the late evening hours. Finally, when an issue starts with residents putting lawn signs up, it is time to step back and consider looking at solving problems that don't pit residents against one another. Find another way to solve this problem – please. Respectfully, X

Thank you for the submission and feedback. No decisions have been made. It is important for us to hear all feedback from the neighbors. We will not move onto larger community engagement until we have discussed every possible item with the neighbors. We are intentionally not including larger community members in any of our small group meetings that we are holding because we do not want to pit neighbors against one another. We recognize when it is not in your backyard, it is easier to support – hence their exclusion in this part of the Community Engagement Plan. We are committed to remaining in phase two of the community engagement plan until the neighbors of the park have been fully engaged.

Resident: Members with Council are on Boosters and Sports Teams. Attorney should look at who needs to recuse themselves when the votes happen.

Neighbors feel like members on Council have deep associations with Boosters and the sports leagues. Hard for them to be a part of the vote. Some may need to recuse. If this comes to a vote, those involved (Past President, Current, etc..) should recuse them.

KS: Only one on sports boards is Bob Pawlowski;

Res: Mayor Fagan was President Boosters and LAX Club

KS: Mayor doesn't get a vote

Res: Tiebreaker

KS: The studies are being done by independent contractors.

DG: We will reach out to the City Attorney.

Resident: Remember conversation about the turf being installed. There was an agreement about lights not being put in when the turf was installed. You said the lights weren't going to be put in at that point. You also said it was never put in writing, that is why we don't trust the city. If we can't trust the City, we can't trust any decisions being made now.

KS: Lights were in Budget 22 for 23; same as this year in the 23 Budget for 24. The lights didn't come out of the budget until it was presented. In March, I requested that it come out of the budget. I am trying to be as open and transparent as any Council person. If this was a foregone conclusion I wouldn't trust these meeting.

Res: If it gets turned down now, what about 5 years from now?

Resident: We do feel like it is a forgone conclusion. It feels like it is being planned.

Resident: I understand concern. We were told no lights. Regardless of lights, so this doesn't happen again, what can we put down (should lights go up) – we need to have a document written down.

MO: Wherever we end up with this, the restrictions will all be written down in an ordinance.

Res: To the point about something being written in an ordinance. We need to know that ordinances can be changed as well. While I like an ordinance, they can still change. We don't want to need to live watching CC meetings to listen for changes.

Resident: All sports organizations are for lights, why? While they are neat, it is not needed. I have heard we need more fields. I saw all the other ideas posted in the presentation. Can we give a place like Kent Place or Oratory a fee to use their fields? The critical hours for play is during the day. As I recall as a soccer parent, the issue is getting coaches. Fields are never filled to capacity due to coach issues. We can say times are being used. But there are likely not all being used. The point of doing a use case, that is a priority. There is no truth that exists. I don't see a problem going to NP for Girls Flag Football. The town I grew up in didn't have a community pool. We had to go two towns over, and it wasn't an issue. We also said there is an expansion because sports want to play two seasons. Playing the second season is terrible. We left because of playing two seasons. It is nice to offer, but there is also a time to say no. During the "in season" there should be precedent. At some point capacity will be reached. Pickleball is the number one growing sport in the season – where are the additional pickleball courts we are building. When you put lights up there are additional costs for traffic, etc. for the events.

Res: All it takes to change an ordinance is majority vote by Council. Currently isn't there an ordinance about height of lights?

KS: not that I am aware of.

Res: If we do lights at Tatlock, what stops lights at other schools? Memorial? We won't event put lights on Tatlock. I want to also speak to other lot term neighbors; the promise was that there would never be any lights – not only at that point.

The capacity issue – its commentary that it is not OK for NP flag football practices... Let's look at Daycares. There is not enough daycare in Summit. I must drive to Livingston.

The relays were unreasonable. It was scary. Busses were unloading on Butler where they weren't supposed to – and in the middle of the road.

What happens if someone has a heart attack?

People couldn't get out of their driveways.

We are talking about increasing this – we are not handling it well. Let's handle it well before you ask to increase occurrences.

KS: as parent do not want practices going until 10pm. I agree, especially with kids going to school at 7:45am.

Resident: Why is practicing at night better than going to NP?

KS: We have four high schools using our track, the private schools do not have a track and they do not pay us anything. It is too late in the spring to renegotiate for this year. Beginning this fall, the situation needs to be changed. They will either need to begin to pay. The wear and tear is enough.

Our middle school doesn't even practice at Tatlock. Schools will either need to pay us or let us use their fields that aren't always used.

Spoke with Adam Fern – scheduling doesn't compete, but wear and tear is an issue. Three schools that don't pay taxes and have large parcels of land – they need to pay.

With the Relays, in past years, this is run by the BOE once a year. Approval should be gotten from the Property Use Committee through the City Clerk's office. This brings departments together so police can make a distinction of how many officers are needed.

I was upset with BOE not having permission to take trees down by Weaver.

In terms of the busses, there was a staggering of pick-ups. This year, every event ended at the same time, so all the busses left at the same time. I have spoken to Lt. Daly to do a postmortem to address these issues for next year.

Resident: They were also parking on the roots on the grass by Tatlock at the Relays – for LAX games, not the Relays.

Resident: I would like to recall a BSW call – “don't change the character of our town, we don't want to be urban, Montclair, Morristown, etc.”

Bright lights, crowds, pedestrians, cars, busses – all say urban. They should never go in. They will do what they want with the lights. The Tatlock neighborhood will need to do it. When do the budget, it is also maintaining and paying for the electricity, traffic, trash pickup. It is larger than the purchase of the equipment.

Resident: Can you please ticket and tow cars that are parked illegally on Butler and Canoe Brook? Fire hydrants and driveways are blocked. The cars should have been towed. I am in charge of Martin's Brook Clean up. That is going to be 100x worse.

Resident: I take care of my 93-year-old mother and had to call the police at 9:30am because my driveway was blocked. It was chaotic, it was unsafe.

KS: This is why a traffic study will be done. The two biggest draws are the LAX and Football. We are doing two studies during both seasons.

Resident: When are the studies being done? There are so many variables. Practices v. Games v. Tournaments are all very different. Will this be looked at? Understanding the tests of the study will be important. I know you can't cover everything. People can recognize different variables and make suggestions based on the different variables.

Resident: Will the Master Schedule be done before the traffic study is done?

DG: Traffic needs to be addressed before the lights are put in. They are independent. Traffic studies will be done at many times.

Resident: Not true. There was a Halloween event and we almost hit someone because it's dark and you create a different situation. This is a field of dreams approach – build it and they will come. If this was being looked at for 10 years, why was no other work done in those 10 years? You are looking at future use, not current use.

DG: We are looking at the use going back to 2019.

Resident: There is no business case. The subcommittee that has been working without a business case.

DG: The studies are going to be done and couldn't be done without the baseline plane that there would be 6 – 80' light towers. We will go back and then meet with these groups once the studies are done.

Resident: Are residents going to be included.
Yes.

Resident: Will studies be posted online?
Yes.

Resident: What is going to be done as part of EIS? Does it include Wetlands?
Yes. Will get full list.

Resident: I live on Bedford, and I am concerned because I can hear the pickleball on a Saturday. We are now talking about the extra lights, lacrosse wall (that neighbors didn't know about). I am concerned for people who spent \$2M on houses and the sounds, lights and people coming to use the amenities. It is in addition to all the safety issues. It is a quality-of-life concern.

Resident: The closest thing we have is Friday night Lights. I hear all the noise, and I think the Friday Night Lights Game is the best time to test this.

MO: Part of the issue is that High School will not get the portable lights for Friday Night Lights.

Resident: why can't we get them?

MO: It is not ideal because the lights are not tall enough.

KS: Also the temporary lights use diesel and it would damage the track. At the last Friday Night Lights they were on the field, but the fumes impacted players. So, because of these concerns it was stopped so we can't do as test during Friday Night Lights.

Resident: The loudspeaker is also an environmental issue and echoes off the walls. I would like a neighborhood vote on when the study should be completed. The sounds are deafening.

KS: Speakers point toward residents. I am going to ask EIS folks if moving the speakers will have a different impact if directed differently.

Resident: Can you dispel that the types of lights that we are trying to purchase has the capability to include different colors and music?

MO: It is an option in the plan, but we didn't even think about it. Based on the committee, it is not going to be included.

Resident: Is it still in the proposal?

MO: Yes, but we are not planning to have it included.

DG: I think it is fair to ask Musco to remove this?

Resident: What can we do, say or show to prove that they would not be installed. I don't know what else to do?

Resident: I feel like the price tag is very high. It isn't good for the City as a whole, especially when it will negatively impact the residents. Cost, safety, health, and environment.

Resident: There is a possibility of a class action lawsuit about our property values. At what point we will do this, I do not know. But I know we are looking at it. Is that where else this needs to go?

KS: This is still building the plan. The DCP got a request from FUF Board and DCP Advisory Board. DCP did due diligence in developing plan.

Now the due diligence is shifted to looking at the other side to see if there is a feasibility to even bring it to Council.

A lot of the time, the lighting companies will want to give you everything they can sell. What we have now is probably all of the bells and whistles.

Right now, I am trying to understand you (the neighbors).

After the studies are done, we will continue these meetings in the fall.

If I felt like this was a foregone conclusion, there is a lot of time spent on lights that aren't even in the budget. We want to meet with the neighbors to hear the side of the neighbors. I feel like these meetings allow us to see the other side of the plan.

Resident: Question about the traffic study – can we include a similar area that does have lights? I get that every area is different but everything should be explored – especially evenings.

Resident: I worry about opening this up as an option. For a comparable field, there were not houses for miles.

KS: The purpose of the lights shown was to make the comparison between the old and new technologies. Just like private schools should work with us better, our own BOE needs to work with us better.

Resident: BOE also never turns them off.

Resident: Shouldn't looking at the current private fields be the first step?

KS: We will have those before the fall.

MO: I had conversations 10 years ago and the answer was no. We are committed to meeting with Athletic Directors to seeing what can be done.

Resident: There were boys from Seton Hall Prep using our track.

KS: was this organized?

Resident: Yes, there were trainers. Perfect case of build it and they will come. Even regular noises like cars locking, whistles, etc. is a disturbance. SSC doesn't use whistles at Memorial.

Resident: Even marching band practice is during nap time. Now it's disrupting nap time but also bedtime.

Resident: Is there a schedule available?

DG: We are looking ahead to get a Master Grid input into Civic Rec. The sports will be inputting everything. This may take until the fall.

Resident: Do people pushing for this live in the neighborhood.

Resident: May be outliers.

Resident: This is our neighborhood. You are asking us to give up why we live there and move there for people who do not live there. We are not treating our Summit people with respect of dignity. I don't want my kids out playing sports after 7pm.

Resident: For many years, I was supportive of lights because I thought it would be for the community. I thought if they light the field we can use the field at night with very strong cut offs. I didn't think the intent was private use. If it is general use, would there be more support – rather than club use?

Resident: It would be a broken promise. It would be a matter of time until the promise is over. Council members change.

Resident: No one would find a benefit to lights.

Resident: Can talk privately. Grew up in predominantly walking community. I would walk at night and would fall into potholes. To me lighting pathways makes more sense than lighting a field. Lighting the field would not be for residential use.

DG: Traffic will include the Ivy, entry points and look at the new Smythe Development.