

Tatlock Community Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 6, 2024 @ Summit Community Center at 7:00pm

Staff:

Mark Ozoroski

David Guida

Council:

Kevin Smallwood

Bob Pawlowski

DCP Advisory:

Sharon Clark

Public:

Al Dickey

Carlos Hernandez

Marjorie Callahan

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Michelle Kalmanson

Henry Bassman

Patty Butler

Victoria Marano

Jenny Bednarczyk

Yong Hai Chen

Google Doc Submissions (4/19-5/6)

The 2016 Summit Master Plan Revision/Reexamination report (<https://www.cityofsummit.org/556/master-plan-re-examination>) confirmed that the following objective (from the 2006 Master Plan) was still valid: “Continue to consider use of artificial turf as a means of maximizing limited playing field space taking into consideration the impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Shared use of field space should be encouraged.” I’m interested in what DCP has done over the years to try to fulfill this objective. In particular, beyond taking comments from residents in the neighborhood, how does DCP evaluate “impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods”? Is this done in any quantifiable or systematic way (e.g., through some measure of the impacts (sound level reading; measure of light falling onto adjacent properties; analysis of the number of homes impacted and potential property value diminution; etc.). Have any light or noise readings been done (by DCP or other City department) been performed at the homes on Aubrey and Weaver Streets (in particular) to assess the noise and light impacts on those properties from the existing lighting and sports activities (particularly

pickle ball at Tatlock)? Finally, what has the DCP done to fulfill the objective of encouraging the “shared use of field space”? Specifically, I would like to know what shared use options have been evaluated or otherwise considered as a potential alternative to installing lights at Tatlock as a means of expanding field availability? If this hasn’t been done, why not and/or is such an assessment being considered?

Lighting and EIS Studies are being completed. See below for list for other properties. We address all neighborhood concerns as we receive them. Signs are in all parks with departmental contact information.

The Tatlock Field Proposed Lighting Project presentation (<https://tatlocklightspresentation.my.canva.site/presentation>) lists out 26 possible solutions that were evaluated. Can you please provide documentation on why they were shot down in favor of lights?

Lights always on at Upper High School: Lights are on Monday through Friday until 9:30pm

Turf and Light Lower HS: It is being turfed. The BOE decided not to install lights.

Light Upper Tatlock: This is what we are exploring.

Light Investors Field: This is what we are exploring.

Turf Middle School Fields: This is a BOE facility and not included in their Bond Project

Small Size Grass Field at Wilson: Neighborhood Concerns – Council at the time chose not to pursue.

Field Complex at Glenside: The County will not move K9 Building

Sports Complex at Transfer Station: Two studies have been done in the last 20 years that have said it cannot be done for environmental reasons.

Small Sports Complex at Red Cross Site: That property was purchased by another entity.

Small Soccer or T-Ball Field at Washington: As a part of the compromise with the turf, the City agreed with Washington and neighborhood to never schedule this area.

Small Soccer Field at Lincoln Hubbard: The site is not big enough.

Additional T-Ball Field At Franklin: There is not enough space at the site.

Light Softball/Baseball Field at Memorial: The DCP will not advocate for lighting a non-turfed field.

Add T-ball or Soccer Field at Lower Long Field: The Tiny Forest was added to this space.

Create Field at Cow Pasture: Too wet and the site is used for discus, javelin and shot put.

Rubberize Track: Rubberizing the Memorial Track would only alleviate Track and Field issues, and it is only 1/5 mile, not 1/4 mile.

Add Field at Tatlock Between tennis and field house: Area is not big enough.

Add a track at Lower high School Field: This was not included in the BOE Bond Project

Create a Field or Complex at Briant Park: County wants to retain this area as a passive recreation area.

Lease space at Oratory, Oak Knoll, etc: This is being revisited.

Create Field on the Celgene Property: Discussions did not happen due to sell from Celgene to Kenvue.

Create Fields around SFAC: There is the gun range and wet springs that make this not feasible.

Add a Field to the Rooftop of Parking Garage: There have been no new buildings or parking garages to do this on.

Use the K9 Space at Glenside: County does not want to move K9.

Create field in front of the High School: There is no space.

Reconfigure Upper High School Field: This was not included in the BOE Bond Project.

Make Baseball fields more dynamic: This has been done at Jefferson and Long Field.

I'm especially interested to see cost estimates, problems with implementation, and specifics on conversation that happened (date, notes, etc) in cases that required outreach (Celgene, Oratory, K9 Space).

See above.

I live three blocks from the field. I have always enjoyed hearing the sounds of Friday night lights. We knew it was a fun night, and that it was not to reoccur. However, the proposal of lights and increased use of the fields is the opposite of what we were promised when we bought our home. This will greatly affect my family by the intrusion of loud announcements, unsafe roads and the inability to get in and out of my driveway and through my neighborhood during field events. The pictures submitted point to some of the safety concerns, but do not cover the intrusion of sounds and traffic. The proposal will greatly alter my experience living in my home. Why should granting children access to fields alter my family's life in Summit? I am hoping that other solutions can be found to give the children sports time without adding negative impact to our Tatlock community..

We are currently exploring this project as a possibility; no decisions have been made. We are also looking into noise and traffic safety as a part of the Environmental Impact Statement and the Traffic Study that will be presented in the fall.

Can you please provide an update as to how lighting Tatlock with 70 foot lights does not violate the existing lighting ordinance? Last response was that city attorneys would be asked. What did they say? Why does the ordinance apply everywhere but in the Washington community?

1. We do have ordinances limiting the height of light poles to not more than 15 feet.
2. We also have ordinances that limit the light color to 3500 kelvin and the limit of light that can spill over a property line which is zero footcandles
3. We have an ordinance provision that requires lights in parking lots and sports facilities to be turned off when there is no function going on.
4. **However, the City of Summit is not required (nor is any other municipality to meet the requirements of its own ordinances.**

During the LAX game earlier this week, I was coming home on Butler with my toddler from daycare. As we approached our home, there were a lot of vehicles parked on both sides of Butler and made it very challenging to get back to our home. The vehicle in front of mine was looking for a parking spot and stopped in front of me so I could not move until they moved. We were stopped for 5 minutes behind this vehicle and no one was there to direct the vehicle to move. We just want to get to our homes without having unknown and unexpected delays when we are 5 houses away eating into our evenings with our families. As we are currently in discussion regarding DCP's plan to increase the use of Tatlock, shouldn't there be GOOD management of the current use of Tatlock? Shouldn't DCP be demonstrating how on top of Tatlock they are, that they can not only handle current use of Tatlock but also the significant additional use of Tatlock that they are planning, and making sure there is traffic direction at

every current event? If even at this time Tatlock cannot be appropriately managed in a manner that does not significantly impinge the neighbors' movement on their street - their ability to get home - their ability to get emergency services if needed - to have a quiet dinner at home with their family member - to get their toddlers to bed at an appropriate bedtime - how will they suddenly be able to do so once lights are added?

The DCP manages the scheduling and the maintenance of the field. Traffic concerns have been reported to the Summit Police Department and should continue to be directed to the SPD for enforcement. There is also a traffic student being completed to be presented in the fall.

We were told that it would cost upwards of 10M to turf Memorial Field because it would first need to be graded. Why is the field at Memorial flat enough for sports usage, but not for turfing? I understand that there is a significant slope downward to the field at Memorial from the street, but that slope appears visually similar to the slope going from the Anderson Field House down to Lower Tatlock where kids go sledding and which did not need to be graded in order for lower Tatlock to be turfed. Could you please further explain why Memorial Field needs to be graded to turfed when lower Tatlock did not? And can you please confirm the actual cost?

If you are at the end of the soccer field by the retaining wall, the drop off to home place is 12 feet. This is a 12 foot drop ON the actual field, not between the fields to the roadway.

What you are mentioning at Tatlock is between different fields. We do not have firm quotes, this was verbal from engineers.

While not related to lighting Tatlock, another aspect of Tatlock field: LAX wall. What measures have been taken to ensure residents will not hear the balls hitting the LAX wall from inside their homes across the street? I understand that one of the meetings with Tatlock residents had to be paused to ask kids using the community center as a LAX wall to stop because it was so noisy and disruptive. How is the LAX wall planned at Tatlock Field designed to make sure that it is not noisy and disruptive to those living around Tatlock?

This will be revisited when the project goes to the Planning Board for the courtesy review. Keep in mind that no one lives in the wall – we were directly on the other side of the wall being hit by the balls during the meeting.

Where are we on the business case demonstrating that there is a need for increased sports facilities to serve the Summit community? We understand that before the need was demonstrated, DCP first did a light impact study and a RFP for lighting Tatlock. Can we understand this to mean that DCP's plan was to install lights at Tatlock REGARDLESS of whether there is a demonstrable need for them? This is a very confusing timeline and the claims that DCP has made that they are still deciding IF lights will go in, not when and under what limitations, do not make sense with this cadence of events. DCP has also suggested that the new girls powderpuff team has significantly increased their desire to add lights, stating that the

team is currently practicing in New Providence and "that's just not right." I recently heard that this powderpuff team is for BOTH Summit and New Providence girls - is that correct? Why is it not acceptable for the team to practice in New Providence? And setting aside that the team is joint or even if my information is not correct and it is not joint, don't some folks in Summit live closer to NP than to Tatlock? In fact, why can't all Summit rec teams who desire more practice time simply use fields in NP or other nearby towns just like this powderpuff team? Why is this not a good solution if these fields are equally close to their homes - or even closer to their homes than Tatlock is?

Business case to be presented in the fall.

There is no pre-determined decision, we are completing studies to determine whether Council would like to move ahead with the project.

Procedurally, the DCP works with:

- 1. Field Restoration Committee**
- 2. DCP Advisory Board**

There committees have all been supportive of the proposed project. Now, it moves to Council for a decision to be made on behalf of the entire town. While Council is considering, the DCP will continue to execute the completion under the direction of Council on necessary studies.

The HS Team is just girls.

The Youth Program is Summit and New Providence.

When there is a joint league, yes, other towns will allow for utilization of their fields. If it is a Summit only league, other towns are not likely to allow our use.

Long term, the girls flag football will be a Summit Only league.

Private school fields in Summit regularly stand empty on weekends and weekday evenings. Meanwhile, private school sports use the Tatlock track regularly. Where are we on renting the private school fields, leveraging their usage of the Tatlock track to push this conversation forward? Why is there a discussion of \$1.6M lighting Tatlock and disrupting the only remaining peaceful times of nearby residents who are already frustrated with the existing NOISE, TRAFFIC, and LITTER of the never ending, uncontrolled, and under-monitored use of Tatlock in the daytime - before exploring the daytime usage of existing field space at the private schools?

An update on this will be provided in the fall with the Field Use Study. There are ongoing discussion with the private schools.

Could you please explain how a subcommittee formed in 2018 for the purpose of installing stadium lighting in Summit be unaware until April 2024 of the Summit ordinance that limits the height of lighting to 15 feet? It should not have been surprising that Summit has ordinances that limit aspects of lighting - we have rules about "dark sky compliance" and the use of gas leaf blowers. A Google search of "Summit New Jersey ordinance lighting" pulls this ordinance as the very first result. It is frustrating to continue to wait for a response on questions around this ordinance and how the proposed lighting can comply with the ordinance. Should not responses to those questions have been a part of due diligence prior to obtaining funding and spending tax

dollars for any lighting study, etc.? Before saying, "let's explore the spillage such lights might create," should not someone have said, "let's explore if we can legally install 70+ foot lights under current laws and ordinances"? And furthermore, before exploring the spillage of lights, shouldn't a business case demonstrating that there is a need for lights have been first created? Why dedicate taxpayer money to explore spillage of lights before there is even a business case to demonstrate their need?

This is all being worked on and answers will be available in the fall.

What is the Board of Ed position for lights with the high school programs and athletic director being part of the school district?

The BOE does not have jurisdiction over the City of Summit Fields. All of the sports organizations who use the fields are in favor of the project.

Question: Please provide the number of young people enrolled in private club sports by sport, Community Programs groups that use fields and any other group that uses Summit fields. Adding to my previous question, please provide the months each team uses Summit fields. I am XXX The system signed me in by my google name. Send replies to XXX.

This is being evaluated as a part of the Field Use Study to be presented in the Fall.

Playground \$\$

Make sure the traffic study is done during Douglas' hours

Are there other fields being considered?

Not currently. Because it is turfed. The upper high school is turfed with lights and the lower field is being turfed. These are Board of Education properties and these decisions are made by them. The viability of Tatlock was the best because there is turf.

To turf Memorial would cost millions of dollars. Lighting a non turfed field wouldn't help with several weather cancellations.

The AD said HS sports don't necessarily need lights. Youth sports are 90% parent coached. They must get home to coach later in the evening. When there is inclement weather practices will be moved to turf fields.

There is also Glenside Field which is County owned. Over the last 10+ years, the City has scheduled this field. When there is no Summit team on there, outside teams do come on to use. We have been notified by the county that we may lose scheduling. We are responsible for repairs and that comes out of the funds collected by men's leagues using the field.

If it costs money to turf an additional field (memorial) wouldn't it make more sense to turf?

The 12 foot issue is from the base of the retaining wall to home base. We also can't light the center of the field.

Has Memorial Been proposed?

It was discussed at these meetings. Based on turfing, etc. this is the best estimate.

Resident: I have serious concerns about additional turf. Have there been resident concerns? There have been no conversations with the neighbors.

Resident: When the field was turfed, I had kids in second grade. All of the workers had masks on, but all of the kids were in classrooms with the windows open. Concern with the turf. How are concerns being weighed? This is a group of residents against the rest of the town. They drop kids off, go home, and then come back to pick their kids up only to go home to their neighborhood that is quiet and with no turf and light.

Response: The turf is already there, we aren't going to take the turf away. The purpose of moving from turf to grass has to do with increased usage and maintenance costs.

Resident: It was purely increased usage.

Mark Ozoroski showed the varsity Lacrosse Fields showed picture of the practice field. Nothing was allowed to be played on the game field because of previous coach. Part of the fight on upper Tatlock was that the grassy picnic area was being taken away. There is the grassy area between upper Tatlock and the school that cannot be used.

There was a proposal to put a wall by the field to prevent kids from doing donuts. The wall was fought and that is when bollards were put in.

David: Playground process is mirroring Mabie's funding sources. It will be a several year project. That will involved fundraising.

Resident: I was involved in the fundraising for the Tatlock playground through the PTO.

David: Some residents are opposed to the PTO fundraising, while others think the PTO should assist.

What playgrounds are owned by BOE?

David: Lincoln, Jefferson and Franklin are school owned. BOE managed. We do the rest of them and would be happy to get funds from other sources.

Could SEF Funding be used?

We hope that we may be able to collaborate with the BOE and the SEF if they are open to it.

Are you asking for funding from Union County?

Yes. We will be in August when the grant comes out. We did apply for LRIG.

When the BOE decided to turf the lower HS, did they have community meetings?

KS: No – they didn't. I understand environmental concerns. I wrote a letter to the BOE questioning trees being taken down between HS and Weaver Apts.

How was this allowed?

KS: The BOE seemed to do all of this work themselves without feedback.

With the traffic study – you are looking at the HS grad and the fall sports. It won't include any spring sports. Football is more highly attended than lacrosse. We believe this would be most accurate.

David: This will be included. The traffic study will also include the Smythe Development, Ivy and going all the way to 24.

Resident: Could the City promote parking somewhere else and use the shuttle?

Resident: Would you take a shuttle?

Resident: I am a resident in the minority. We need to consider what is feasible.

Resident: I have been to professional sporting events.

Resident: There is a difference between professional sporting and local.

DG: We have already started discussing the Summit Relays for next year. This year the major issue was that all busses were released at once. We have also asked busses to no longer park on Butler to use the Washington.

Is soccer parent coached?

MO: Rec soccer is coached by parents. SSC is coached by trainers.

Lacrosse is a private club, but it is Summit youth only.

A: We do not know when Union County is taking over the field, most likely next six months.

Is it true that rubber pellets are carcinogens?

A: There are articles that end up on either side.

There were no parking signs that popped up on intersections for Hilltopper Day.

Bob Pawlowski – I coached the LAX for the last two years. Resigned off the board a month ago.

Resident: Would you recuse yourself?

David – This question is with the attorney and best to have them answer it.

KS: Tatlock fields are being played on by all sports. It is not to discuss voting – it is listening to concerns.

Resident: It is a concern because it is who would be voting on it.

KS: I have a son on the team.

Resident: Is the BOE involved?

KS: This is for the summit Youth sports.

Resident: Summit Football doesn't need the lights, but the youth sports do?

KS: The last time that portable lights were used by sports leagues was when kids got sick from the diesel fuel and the heat can melt the tracks.

Resident; When I was going through college I worked at a carnival. Diesel generators were running from 8am until after midnight because no one got sick. When I was in the army in Vietnam, we used generators 24 hours. What happened there was a failure of the person who installed the generator and the lights.

Great that a sports study is being done to see if there is a real need. I feel like I do need some convincing. Sports are great, my son did play lacrosse. I haven't seen any hard data that it is needed. Will there be any community members involved in this committee?

KS: The DCP Advisory Board will be involved in this project.

Resident: Will there be other community members involved in the sports study?

Sharon: As a Board, we do not take a position one way or another. We want to act on behalf of the community.

Resident: There was a list of 26 options that was used by Mark Ozoroski. Was there discussion on why they were viable or not.

See Above under responses

Resident: Lighting should be way down at the bottom of possible solutions. I can hear the announcer from five blocks away. Lights should be low on the list because of the negative impact. There are creative solutions that we can look at – which are longer term.

At Oak Knoll when they outgrew their field, they got money and then they bought a field in Chatham with the stipulation there would be not light. Can Summit find a different solution like that? We also go to Nantucket. There is 2% goes to The Land Bank when there is enough money

in the fund, they use funds for open space acquisition or recreation improvements. There is a bigger picture to look at if sports are growing?

Resident: How about renting from the private schools.

MO: This will be looked at hopefully before the end of the year.

Do they pay taxes to the City?

No

Bob: I did speak with Hal Dillon, president of the LAX club, he did reach out to Oratory and Kent Place and schools did not get back to him.

KS: We do work with Oak Knoll and we do use their fields sometimes on the weekends. The three private schools use our track – they don't pay taxes and they are 501c3's – they should either pay or let them use our fields. I wouldn't anticipate Kent Place allowing us to use their fields.

Resident: I don't think the issue is funding. The sports families will come up with it. I had a conversation with my college age kid who was a LAX player. Initially said lights would be great. But then questioned him on if there was an impact on their home values. I hope you see online the comments that everyone is posted. There was another resident who commented "just move" – the neighborhood feels dumped on. How do you weigh the residents of the area versus all of the sports families living in other areas? The people sitting around this table should have more say than the sports families because they will have to deal with it 24/7.

KS: We are in the same place as we have been.

Resident: because it was a long-term dream.

KS: We are having these meetings to hear the resident concerns. We are going to do the studies. A comprehensive traffic study, an environmental student, see if this is necessary because on a Master Field Schedule. This will all be looked at to decide. I don't know if anyone has ever met with a neighborhood five times to have these conversations. The hard part for me is that I need to listen to both sides. I am not doing this for political reasons. I am doing this because I care. If this goes to Council, I will be the one bringing it – so I need to make sure that there is a compelling case for need. It is weighing the impact of the people's lives to live there versus those who would benefit from the sports. I am very willing to listen to everything and put it on the table. When we listen to everything, then there will be decisions.

Resident: I am hearing there is less than full cooperation between Summit and the BOE. The BOE automatically gets the early times. This is a single community. This needs to be looked at more universally. It is a big problem – a negotiation problem.

MO:

Upper HS: Youth Programs get on Upper HS at 7pm.

What about Lincoln/Franklin/Jefferson?

Baseball uses until dark.

Fields are heavily used.

Is there a good relationship between the City and BOE?

Yes, when it comes to field scheduling, we work together very well.

With the study, we will be looking at all of the specific details.

DG: 400' was mentioned is the definitive area to be notified.

Will sports studies include the sports that want to play year round?

It will apply to use from 2019 through today.

Playing out of season should be the responsibility of the player, when they don't play in season. Summit Soccer Club plays year round. Now all of the other teams are looking to start following the model to play all year.

Resident: Shouldn't other leagues also hire trainers opposed to parent coaches? Now that LAX is using Tatlock is the reason why they aren't using Glenside.

Bob – Graduation classes have ballooned in Summit. There used to be one team for 4/5/6. Now there can be two teams per grade.

Soccer is an all year sport. But other teams also want to play all year.

MO: The leagues all want it. Nationally, everyone is playing multiple seasons.

Bob – LAX has two tournaments. I don't believe that there are daily practices.

MO: When I first started there was one fall baseball team. Now, it is a full league from mid-august through Halloween.

Resident: We have already shouldered our burden when it was turf. Where is the end? New Providence started with their lights until 9pm. Now, they are on every night until 10pm. This what we are opening ourselves up to.

KS: My daughter is playing flag football. She plays in New Providence. The field absolutely shuts off at 9pm.

Resident: So, it is not the high school. We are talking about the out lights that will be full blown practice lights. The coordination between Washington and the DCP. We could not park when there was a concert at the school because there were sports going on at both levels. We do our share. With the LAX wall, no one was talked to about it. Mark had to go out there and tell them to stop.

MO: It is totally different.

Resident: We don't know what is going to happen with the wall, it is just one more thing. People drive through and it is loud.

KS: There is electricity going to the gazebo. It will not light the wall area.

Resident: When this wall was being put in, I was invited to a zoning meeting because someone was violating building a new deck. Some note should have gone out about the Lacrosse Wall. It seems like this was just snuck through. I feel like the lights are going to happen and I do not want to go down without a fight. If you asked anyone who was a sports parent if they wanted it in their front yard, they wouldn't want it. It is not fair to put bones on this neighborhood.

Resident: I have asked for a resident to be put on the subcommittee.

DG: There have been no meetings with the subcommittee while these community meetings have been ongoing.

KS: I promised to meet with the neighborhood to meet to hear and listen to all of the concerns. I know that these are serious concerns. I promised to listen and that is what I am doing. I have no skin in the game, my son will never see these in his career. I have heard the concerns and we are going to take all of this and we are going to continue doing all of this in the fall when the studies are done.

Resident: What is going to be done now that you have concerns?

KS: When we put the studies together and have the master schedule to show if there is a need we will reconvene with the lighting subcommittee. There will be more meetings then to discuss. I have never had a meeting with the boosters. They asked me to come in April, now I will meet with them in May. I do have to represent everyone. They asked me to come. I am not hiding anything. All of the Tatlock residents are allowed to come.

Resident: Have the plans for the Anderson Field House been done?

Resident: I spoke with someone, and they said they would send me the plans when they have it. They could not tell me.

Resident: The field house should not be another intrusion.

KS: An agreement was done to have the BOE take over the Anderson Field House.

MO: This is a City building. The DCP has been responsible for the upkeep of the building. The DCP does not use it. This is legally in the process to being transferred to become a BOE property. This is not an officially signed agreement.

Resident: It was an agreement that the BOE had with the City that there would never be lights – this wasn't written.

This was never an agreement.

Resident: It was mentioned that if this project was done there could be a lawsuit if someone is hit. If it is privately funded, would anyone who funds the project also be liable?

This is not known, would be a question for an attorney.

David: The show lights are being taken out. We met with Musco.