



---

## MEETING NOTES

---

Project: **Allentown Comprehensive  
Recreation, Open Space, &  
Parks Plan (CROSP)**

Project  
No.: **SC# 22028.00**

Location: **Microsoft Teams (Virtual)**

Meeting  
Date/  
Time: **December 9, 2024  
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

Re: **Committee Meeting #2**

Issue  
Date: **March 17, 2025**

---

### ATTENDEES:

#### **Simone Collins (SC):**

William Collins (WC), *RLA, Principal*

Pankaj Jobanputra (PJ), *AICP*

Toby Levin (TL), *RLA, ASLA, Project LA*

#### **Certified Parks & Recreation Professionals**

Derek Dureka (DD), *CPRP*

Kathleen Muller (KM), *CPRP*

#### **Attendees:**

#### ***City of Allentown Parks & Recreation Department (PRD)***

Mandy Tolino (MT), *Director of Parks and Recreation*

Lucinda Wright (LW), *Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation*

Bryne Heffner-Bair (BHB), *Program Coordinator*

Priscilla Reyes (PR), *Special Events Manager*

Chris Hendricks (CH), *Recreation Manager*

Michelle McGinniss (MM), *Parks Maintenance Supervisor*

**Other Attendees:**

Laura Ballek-Cole, *Manager of Civic Innovation, City of Allentown*

Becki Kiss, *City of Allentown Board of Recreation*

John Leonard III, *Sargeant, City of Allentown Police*

Tiffany Serra, *Trails & Conservation Associate, D&L National Heritage Corridor*

Joe Michener, *Assistant Executive Director, Center for Independent Living*

Christian Martinez, *Environmental Planner, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission*

Janet Roth, *Chief Executive Officer, Trexler Trust*

Ana Tiburcio, *Board of Directors, Allentown School District*

Liz Rosencrans, *Director of Trails & Conservation, D&L National Heritage Corridor*

Carmen Bell, *Senior Director, Healthy Aging, United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley*

Kyle Edwards, *Owner, A True L.O.V.E. Story/Inkwell.*

Simon Moore, *Board Chair, Parknership*

Christina DiPierro, *Program Coordinator, Valley Youth House*

Jose Rivera, *Community Engagement Coordinator, United Way of Great Lehigh Valley*

**NOTES:**

- 1. Simone Collins Landscape Architecture (SC) gave a presentation** that reviewed analysis performed thus far, including preliminary public survey results, community and NRPA benchmarking, natural and historic resource analysis, and staff interviews. The presentation also included discussion of the draft mission statement, goals, and objectives for the project, as well as next steps in the project.
- 2. SC then asked for feedback on and additional ideas for the preliminary Key Person Interview (KPI) list.** Recommendations included the following:
  - a. Allentown Recreation Board
  - b. Lehigh Valley Active Life
  - c. Allentown School District
  - d. St. Luke's University Health Network
  - e. D&L National Historic Corridor
  - f. Allentown Arts Commission
  - g. Boys & Girls Club of Allentown

- h. Community Bike Works
- i. City of Allentown Environmental Advisory Committee
- j. Lehigh Valley Road Runners
- k. Inkwell.
- l. The Baum School of Art
- m. Allentown Art Museum
- n. Allentown Symphony Association
- o. Coalition for Appropriate Transportation
- p. Muhlenberg College
- q. Cedar Crest College
- r. Wildlands Conservancy
- s. Lehigh Gap Nature Center
- t. Ripple Church
- u. The Link Trail Network
- v. Little Lehigh Watershed Stewards
- w. A-YOUTH

**3. SC then opened the meeting to comments and discussion.**

**4. A participant asked about what efforts to increase the number of responses to the Spanish-language public survey.**

- a. MT asked Committee members to share the survey link as widely as possible and asked for suggestions of where to reach Spanish-speaking members of the community.
- b. A participant suggested reaching out to faith-based institutions that deliver messages in Spanish to share the survey. The participant specifically mentioned Casa Guadalupe on 2<sup>nd</sup> St.
- c. Another participant suggested La Mega radio station and recommended reaching out to Victor Martinez, who hosts talk shows on the station.
- d. Another participant suggested attending meetings that the Spanish-speaking population attends, such as Cohesion meetings and CHATT (City Hall at the Table).
- e. Another participant suggested Spanish-language newspapers such as La Razon.

- f. Other suggestions included Promise Neighborhoods, the Ortiz Ark Foundation, Hispanic American Organization, and state legislator newsletters.
  - g. WC added that it will be helpful to know from the committee who they speak with for outreach.
- 5. A participant asked how the passion for local parks seen at the first public meeting would coalesce into a cohesive, prioritized list of improvements in the plan.**
- a. KM responded that it will be important to find areas where groups that are passionate about an activity or a location can be brought together. For example, a disc golf group might be willing to participate in park clean up in a location they would like to play; that starts the conversation about how to work together.
  - b. KM and DD also mentioned that pilot programs in several parks are a good way to demonstrate that change is occurring.
  - c. DD continued, noting that focusing the community's energy into specific areas will take staff time to coordinate and that transparent communication will be important.
- 6. A participant noted that communicating to the public that this is their park system will be important to the success of the planning process.** Comparing the park system to that in other cities makes it clear that Allentown has an incredible park system and people should know about that and know that the whole system is being cared for.
- 7. A participant noted that the public feels like their comments are not being heard and that plans have been made before consulting with the community.**
- a. The participant noted that the community has been invited to contribute to the planning process at places like Stevens Park and Valania Park, but that grassroots organizations are the place to connect with the community.
  - b. KM responded that the City and the consultant team want to hear from people and encouraged all participants to get the word out on the public survey. If there are messages out there that the team is not receiving, the committee is welcome to share those messages with the team in any way online or offline.
- 8. WC noted that the Valania Park planning process represents a great model that could be applied to the three parks that will be master planned as part of this park planning process. The consultant team would like to meet with people from the community who were involved in this process to better understand what led to its success.**

- a. LW asked for additional information about these conversations.
- b. WC stated that the consultant team would like to meet with staff to start planning how to proceed.

**9. A participant asked if the presentation will be available to committee members after the meeting.**

- a. BHB stated that the presentation will be available to download from the MyRec page and will be shared via email.

This report represents the Professional's summation of the proceedings and is not a transcript. Unless written notice of any correction or clarification is received by the Professional within ten days of issue, the report shall be considered factually correct and shall become part of the official project record.

Sincerely,  
SIMONE COLLINS, INC.  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



Toby Levin, RLA