

**VERNON TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 22, 2021**

The Special Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was convened at 7:00 p.m. on November 22, 2021 via Zoom Webinar and in the Vernon Municipal Center, 21 Church Street, Vernon, New Jersey with Council President Harry Shortway presiding.

**STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided to the public and the press on January 6, 2021 and on September 23, 2021 and was posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-7.

**ROLL CALL**

Present were Council Members John Auberger, Toni Cilli, Michael Furrey, Andrew Pitsker and Council President Harry Shortway. Also present were Mayor Howard Burrell, Business Administrator Charles Voelker, Municipal Clerk Marcy Gianattasio and Township Attorney Josh Zielinski.

**SALUTE TO THE FLAG**

Council President Shortway led the assemblage in the salute to the flag.

Council President Shortway asked for a moment of silence for the victims of the incident that occurred during the Christmas parade in Wisconsin.

Council President Shortway asked for reflection to remember President John F. Kennedy who was assassinated 58 years ago.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** *(For Current Agenda Items Only, Limited to 3 minutes per person)*

Council President Shortway announced that according to the town code, please give us your name and where you live for the record and please address the Council as a whole.

Council President Shortway asked for a motion to open the meeting to Public Comments.

MOVED: John Auberger

SECOND: Andrew Pitsker

All members present voted in favor.

Michael Hainzl – [REDACTED] is a member of WWHO, thanked the Council for considering ordinance #21.37.

Jessica Paladini – Vernon Township, feels that it is a disgrace that the soil ordinance would be presented tonight when the Township violated Sussex County Soil Conservation laws in doing the bicycle pump track.

Dale Disney – [REDACTED] Vernon Township, thanked the Council for considering ordinance #21.37.

Peg Distasi – Vernon Township, is upset that the Council would present an ordinance that Vernon violated in the last month.

Shawn Mazur – Vernon Township, emailed comments saying: my initial comments tonight are relative to ordinance 21-38 Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. How ironic and rhetorical can you all be! This council, mayor and attorney have become experts in creating these heavy-handed ordinances that are written in uncommon terminology that are utterly detrimental to the future development of this township. This is another example of your “do as we say, not as we do” council shenanigans and clearly another cash grab for more trail money isn’t that what you after Mr. Shortway? More trails to nowhere. Just recently you all have been caught grading the overpriced and polluted bike pump track site using DPW workers on overtime and on rented equipment ... with guess what? “No permits at all” Wow! Just a huge oversight! So now you all resort to using this new ordinance as a retaliation tactic on whistle blowers like myself and the many others you will hear from this evening! This ordinance must be tabled until the new council members are sworn in. I hereby make a motion for a vote of no confidence in Harry Shortway and Mike Furrey and call for their immediate resignations.

Steven Amato – [REDACTED], Vernon Township, thanked the Council for considering ordinance #21-37.

Seeing no other members of the public wishing to speak, Council President Shortway asked for a motion to close the meeting for Public Comments.

MOTION: Andrew Pitsker  
 SECOND: John Auberger  
 All members present were in favor.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution #21-265:** Transfer Resolution – Balance Transfers

Council President Shortway asked for a motion to approve Resolution #21-265.

MOVED: Michael Furrey  
 SECOND: Toni Cilli

A roll call vote was taken:  
 AYES: Cilli, Furrey, Pitsker, Shortway  
 NAYES: Auberger  
 ABSTAIN:  
 ABSENT:

Motion carried to approve resolution #21-265.

**RESOLUTION #21-265**

**TRANSFER RESOLUTION- BALANCE TRANSFERS**

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Vernon Municipal Budget requires certain modifications to cover potential expenses that may occur in excess of the original budget;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Council of the Township of Vernon that the following Transfer of Appropriations (2021 Municipal Budget) in accordance with N.J.S.A 40A-58/59 are hereby approved.

<b>ACCOUNT</b>	<b>TRANSFER OUT</b>	<b>TRANSFER IN</b>
<b>FROM CURRENT FUND:</b>		
FLEET MAINTENANCE - O/E	30,000.00	
<b>TO: CURRENT FUND</b>		
ADMINISTRATION – O/E		10,000.00
TECHNOLOGY– O/E		15,000.00
RECREATION – S&W		2,000.00
MAINTENANCE OF PARKS – O/E		3,000.00
<b>TOTAL TRANSFERS</b>	<b>30,000.00</b>	<b>30,000.00</b>

**Resolution #21-266:** Resolution Authorizing Release of Bonds to RDR Associates, LLC

Council President Shortway asked for a motion to approve Resolution #21-266.

MOVED: John Auberger  
 SECOND: Toni Cilli

A roll call vote was taken:  
 AYES: Auberger, Cilli, Furrey, Pitsker, Shortway  
 NAYES:

ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:

Motion carried to approve resolution #21-266.

### **Resolution #21-266**

#### **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING RELEASE OF BONDS TO RDR ASSOCIATES, LLC**

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, the Township of Vernon (“Township”) entered a developer’s agreement with RDR Associates, LLC (“RDR”). This agreement was established when RDR purchased the remaining buildable lots in the Whispering Woods development; and

**WHEREAS**, under the terms of the agreement, RDR took ownership of repairs that were needed to Upper Plateau Drive, Murphy Court and Detention Basin #3 (“Project”); and

**WHEREAS**, RDR was also required to post a performance bond and other bonds which are being held in escrow by the Township; and

**WHEREAS**, all improvements have been inspected and approved by the Township Engineer and a recommendation has been made to release the performance bond and all other bonds to RDR which are being held in escrow in connection with the 2017 developer’s agreement.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the Township of Vernon authorizes the release of the performance bond and all other bonds being held in escrow to RDR Associates, LLC in connection with the parties’ 2017 developer’s agreement.

#### **INTRODUCTION/1<sup>ST</sup> READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES**

**Ordinance #21-37:** An Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, and State of New Jersey, Accepting Dedication of Upper Plateau Drive & Murphy Court

Council President Shortway read by title Ordinance #21-37

Council President Shortway asked for a motion to introduce Ordinance #21-37

MOVED: Michael Furrey  
SECOND: John Auberger

A roll call vote was taken:  
AYES: Auberger, Cilli, Furrey, Pitsker, Shortway  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:

Motion passed to introduce Ordinance #21-37

**Ordinance #21-38:** An Ordinance of the Township of Vernon, County of Sussex, State of New Jersey, Amending Chapter 478 of the Municipal Code Entitled “Soil Erosion and Sediment Control”

Council President Shortway read by title Ordinance #21-38

Council President Shortway asked for a motion to introduce Ordinance #21-38

Council Member Cilli asked who made this ordinance and asked what the purpose is.

Township Administrator Voelker explained that the purpose of this ordinance is to allow some flexibility if people are coming for single family dwellings that need soil, the Township Engineer will be able to

approve a certain amount, which normally people would have to go to the Soil Conservation District and this would take longer.

Township Engineer Cory Stoner explained that an ordinance that dated back to 2003, ordinance #03-33, that transferred jurisdiction for soil erosion and sediment control for the construction of single-family dwellings units (unless the unit was part of a proposed subdivision, site plan, conditional use, zoning variance, planned development or construction permit application involving two or more such single-family dwellings) from the Upper Delaware Soil Conservation District to the Township Engineer.

The review of single-family dwelling units has been performed under the Lot Development Plan application that is not in conformance with current standards and procedures promulgated by the State Soil Conservation Committee. The Upper Delaware Soil Conservation District has requested that an ordinance be adopted to provide design standards and procedures for soil erosion & sediment control permits for the construction of single-family dwelling units that will be in compliance with State Soil Conservation Committee recommendations.

Council Member Furrey asked why the 2003 ordinance was not provided for comparison.

Mr. Stoner explained it was easier to just do a whole new ordinance.

Council Member Pitsker asked if this will make it easier for the homeowner.

Mr. Stoner said yes because the soil conservation permit and the lot development plan can be reviewed together.

MOVED: Michael Furrey

SECOND: Toni Cilli

A roll call vote was taken:

AYES: Auberger, Cilli, Furrey, Pitsker, Shortway

NAYES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Motion passed to introduce Ordinance #21-38

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS (*Limited to 3 Minutes On Any Topic*)**

Council President Shortway asked for a motion to open the meeting for Public Comments.

MOTION: John Auberger

SECOND: Andrew Pitsker

All members were in favor.

Steve Dunlop – Vernon Township, remarked that the Mayor said trails were not a priority. Mr. Dunlop is not anti-pump track he is simply against a project we cannot afford. He wishes the Council would slow down and let the incoming Council make some important decisions.

Jason Ziglar – Wantage, thanked the Council for the pump track design and going forward with it. He feels that this will be an economic value to Vernon and people will use the businesses in Vernon and it will create more jobs. He feels that the pump track will be a huge success.

Connor Sukel – Sparta, owns Gears and Grinds in Sparta and he feels that the pump track will be a great economic value. He uses the Port Jervis pump track often and spends money at local business there. He feels there is no downside to the pump track being built in Vernon.

Patrick Rizzuto – Vernon Township, commented that the project has been approved and is underway so why the big push. He asked if the pump track is becoming the shiny option that the incoming Council is supposed to look at while something else is going on.

Martin Siligman – Middletown, NY, supports the pump track as a rider.

Carole Hampole – Readington, NJ, spoke about the pump track in Flemington, NJ saying it is a huge benefit for their community. She is in support of the pump track.

Peg Distasi – Vernon Township, explained that she is not opposed to the pump track, she is opposed to the method that was used to obtain it. She feels that people from outside should pay to use the pump track. Ms. Distasi is also opposed to the location because we have family friendly parks where the pump track could have gone. She requested that the location be tested for lead because she feels that an adjacent property has a high lead content.

Jackie Standaert – Vernon Township, is in support of the pump track and the location. She believes the pump track will be an asset to the town and will help bring in businesses. She sees no reason to not continue with the pump track project.

Sean Clarkin – Vernon Township, is disappointed that the businesses speaking about the pump track are not local businesses. He feels that it is difficult to find out from the Vernon Township website when the meetings are and he does not understand how all of these people found out about this meeting. Mr. Clarkin does not understand why the location of the pump track cannot be moved to a more common location that more people agree with. He is not in favor of spending any more money for a walking trail.

Gene Arnold – Vernon Township, is in favor of the pump track. He feels that this will bring in local business and will give families a safe place to ride bikes.

Jay Huggins – West Milford, President of the West Milford Family Pump Track that is a seasonal pump track because it is not paved it closes in the winter. He is in support of the paved pump track and says there is nothing better than to see kids outside riding bikes.

Walter Marsico – Vernon Township, commented on ordinance #21-38 soil erosion and sediment control is a retaliatory attack on whistleblowers that caught the town using DPW workers on overtime with rented equipment to start excavation of the pump track with no soil or DEP permits. Mr. Marsico feels that this is ironic how this comes out when the town gets caught red handed. He asked how it is okay to launch full scale attack on him and do whatever the town wants. He said the town will be accountable for their lawlessness. Mr. Marsico said the ordinance must be tabled till the new Council starts and the town should be guided accordingly and do not take any action until the new year. He made a motion of no confidence in Harry Shortway and told the Mayor he should resign immediately.

Diane Thompson – Vernon Township, her family owns H&H Auto Plaza. She thanked the Council for thinking outside the box and she is excited for the future of Vernon. Mr. Thompson just opened a new business in Vernon and feels that if nothing is done, there will be no change.

Jessi Paladini – Vernon Township, feels that Jackie Standaert is wrong and made erroneous statements. She explained that we are not against the pump track, we are against it at this site for specific reason. We want the pump track in one of the Vernon parks. She feels that the pump track is going to be placed on a 40-year dump and illegal land fill. Ms. Paladini said Mike Furrey lied to the public when he said nothing could be built on the Baldwin property because the DEP said there were bobcats. Ms. Paladini said Pat Rizzuto asked how many pump tracks Spohn Ranch built and Mike Furrey answered hundreds but when she called Spohn Ranch she was told they have built only one. Ms. Paladini asked that Harry Shortway and Mike Furrey resign because a lack of confidence, transparency and truth.

Dan Kraus – Vernon Township, he is in total support of the pump track and the location of the pump track. He is in support of enhancing the ways people of all ages can connect face to face and not behind a phone or a computer. He feels that Vernon Township is in a strong position to make both meaningful and measurable changes for current and future residents. Let's work hard together and make the proposed town center a reality and boost economic growth. This a call of action against the toxic nonsense that we continue to see on Facebook that does not represent this township.

Ann Larson – feels that the town has been overtaxed for years and has had wasteful spending. She feels that the track should be built on a property the town already owns and not have to build a road to it and add infrastructure, it will be a far less expensive experiment. Ms. Larson said perhaps we can fund raise or have business sponsor sections of it. Ms. Larson asked if it was such a gold mine why didn't West Milford go for the expense of paving their track.

Beverly – Vernon, declined to give her last name, asked why everyone was wearing masks and moving around papers. She had a vote of no confidence with Mr. Shortway.

Shawn Mazur – Vernon Township, asked if a traffic study has been done because it is not easy to pull out onto Route 94 from the site. He also asked if we are looking at eminent domain, does Diane know that you are going to be taking over part of her parking lot and that there are going to be hundreds of people coming to the pump track and parking in her parking lot. Mr. Mazur feels that the town is trying to build this pump track without any studies and without the proper permits.

Adam Paladini – Vernon Township, he feels that a lot of people who spoke up tonight are disconnected to what a pump track can do to a community. He goes to the pump track in Port Jervis often and he has not brought any business to the businesses there. He says there are not see hundreds of people at the Port Jervis pump track when he goes. He feels that this will not bring business to Vernon and it is suspect that out of towners are calling in to support the pump track that has any kind of material dumped on it.

Dave Krestzschmar I can think of no more ridiculous place for the pump track than the one you are shoving down the public's throat. It's obvious that it is just to stroke your over inflated ego Mr. Shortway and your minions just follow your lead. It is a no brained to build the track where there is already existing infrastructure. To continue with your self-serving plan is ludicrous and beyond ignorant.

Hi my name is Steven Schaefer I'm 29 and live in Warwick. I believe the pump track would be a huge asset to Vernon. It would generate revenue for businesses in town, and draw people in for neighboring towns. Also, it would get a lot of use from bikers visiting mountain creek. Port Jervis installed a beautifully designed pump track and it is filled with kids and adults almost daily.

My name is Matthew Catania, and I live in lake Panorama, and I am 18 years old. Cycling has always been a strong hobby of mine ever since I was young. There are so many aspects of cycling that have helped me throughout my life. I have learned so much, whether it be working on them or just learning the skill better. There are so many different categories of cycling, having Mountain Creek in my backyard has a great influence on how I perceive biking. There are many different types of biking and they all help me in the same way. I have been going to the pump track in Port Jervis for many years and it's often inconvenient to make the drive there, and I don't always get the opportunity to ride the pump track. The pump track teaches very valuable bike control and helps overall in the way I ride. The biking community is very big and welcoming, they are all so motivational and having many riders together helps boost confidence in other riders. This is making the sport even bigger, hearing that Vernon is getting a pump track has everyone so eager to get riding again. Having a pump track in Vernon will help the biking community and will give the local riders a safer place to ride. This will give younger riders a better chance and a better experience when learning more about cycling. And will help all other riders as well. Cycling has also been an important part of my life and has given me so many good and positive memories. I hope to see the progress of the pump track continue and I hope this helps show the benefits of having a Pump track in Vernon.

Ashely Limone, 28 years old, Westport, CT, let me begin by saying that I am not a Vernon resident. 3 years ago, I was drawn in by Mountain Creek Bike Park, and since then have often come to call Vernon my home. Although I am not a resident, I have spent many weeks living in Vernon, frequenting the bike park and being a patron at numerous local businesses. Through this involvement I have spent a large sum of money at each The Daily Bean, ACME, Wings Asian Bistro, and Tracks Deli respectively. In a small town like Vernon, THESE DOLLARS MATTER, and have all been made possible by the attraction to a large resort hosting action sport! Yes, I have seen how the town changes come winter weekends, the endless traffic that arises even during the October farm-festival season. While it is often unwelcomed in this small-town daily life, this explosion of "tourists" is extremely important to the town's overall wellbeing and wealth. This is why it is of the utmost importance to continue to invest in opportunities to bring people into town, which can easily be done with the completion of the Municipal Bicycle Pump Track. Getting into action sports later in life, it has been very easy to see the positive influence these sports would have been on my younger self. Pump tracks are, most importantly, a great way for younger riders to start, getting kids outdoors, moving, and away from screen for a bit. Creating places like this for children and adults to practice skills and improve their overall health will only increase how great this small town really is, and will thus help those who love this place invest to make it better. Please continue to consider and make an investment in the youth who love this town by completing the pump track and allowing a place for greatness to begin right at the backdoors of many who need it most.

Melissa Hardin, 21 Shawondasee Road, Highland Lakes, I am unable to attend tonight's town meeting but would like to voice that I am in favor of continuation of the construction of the pump bike track.

Of course, information is going around like wildfire, that there's a possibility it might be voted down at tonight's meeting or a future meeting. I just wanted to show my support for continuation of the project. Kimberly Olson 43 years old 17-year-old son, 469 Pulis Ave, Franklin Lakes, as we all know, kids and adults on bicycles has become very popular. Adding a town pump track would be great in my opinion. Giving local kids a place to play as well as those traveling from other towns would just enhance the outdoor positive environment that I think of when referring to Vernon. We have been going to Mountain Creek for well over 40 years, and now my son and his friends do too! We are always in the area and always stop at all the local shops and eateries too. So many would benefit from adding a pump track. kids being outside, parents spending money in town and future generations to come.

Barbara Kostenko, I am not in favor of putting the bicycle pump track on Black Creek Drive. I would prefer to see it at Veterans Park or at Maple Grange Park. Those parks already have parking and restrooms for visitors. I don't feel we should be spending our tax dollars on creating a park on land that used to be a landfill and will need a lot of work to remediate when we already have two nice parks in town that could accommodate the pump track.

Joe Nalio, I'm writing to you today in regard to the proposed pump track in Vernon, NJ. As I understand, it seems that this project may be in jeopardy of completion and I wanted to share a recent experience that I had this past weekend. By way of introduction, I live in Ocean Township, NJ, I'm 48 years old, and travel to Mountain Creek on a weekly basis throughout the year to ride the existing bike park. Now that the mountain is closed for mountain biking, I traveled this past weekend to Port Jervis, NY to ride the pump track that was built a few years back. Not only was I blown away by the track itself, but the crowd that gathered throughout the day to enjoy a day of riding. Riders of all ages, from what looked like 5-year-olds all the way to people my age and beyond, and smiles all around. Everyone was respectful of each other, taking turns, cheering each other on, talking with each other, and enjoying the day outside. Afterwards my friends and I stopped in town and had something to eat and everyone said the same thing, "We'll be back next weekend". As I left the facility the first thing I thought was, "How do I get one of these built in my town?". Until that happens, I'll gladly drive the 2 hours each way to ride that pump track again and if your project comes to completion, even better as it's 1.5 hours each way. Whatever may be the roadblock in your decision to bring this project to the finish line, I'd re-evaluate those concerns as something like this is such a positive addition to any community and will only add to what your town currently offers to the Tri State area.

I am Chris Chiaverini and I live in West Milford township, NJ. As a customer of Mountain Creek bike park, I am there most weekends. I would like to support a pump track for Vernon as it is a low-cost park which provides great ROI for the community. It will provide a great influence for kids in the region providing them with a positive hobby encouraging fitness and comradery. It also supports local businesses as people within the surrounding areas will be encouraged to visit (especially during the bike off-seasons - early spring and late fall).

John Danko, we need that pump track!! They are great for all ages and skill levels and it's near biking already so wouldn't be a waste of money if you made it anything like the plans look

Jayme Lynch, I am sending this email to show my support for the construction of the new pump track in town. My name is Jayme Lynch and I live in Denville. I am an avid mountain biker and often ride my bike at Mountain Creek. It is my belief that his pump track would be a positive and constructive addition for both the cycling community, and the town. As well providing a safe place for kids to recreate and learn a new sport, pump tracks are also great for riders of all skill levels and draw people from all over to come and ride their bikes. Thank you for your time,

Dana Fody, I was told this email address is where to send information a why Vernon needs a pump track. I am a local nurse and nurse practitioner. I know I personally would use the pump track and was very excited that it was going to be built. I use maple grange park almost every day of the year and I feel so lucky to have a beautiful park to walk 5 minutes from my home. I often recommend my patients get moving as well and suggest the park. I was looking forward to the pump track as another opportunity for the resident of this community to do more activities. Residents including children need outlets more than ever. I see depression at an all-time high and inactivity in all ages. More children are just sitting at home on computers and phones leading to obesity, depression, and social skill deficiencies. Having more outdoor space and recreation areas can only benefit this town. I hope this idea of a pump track does not fade away. I thank you for listening to my viewpoint on this.

Maria and Peter Loukeris (Glenwood), as owners of Discovery Years on Maple Grange Rd, we support the pump track. Our own children are grown but “our” other children would benefit from an additional challenging and healthy LOCAL activity.

Ron Barbagallo, I am 59 years old and reside in Newton. I have become aware of plans to build a pump track near Mountain Creek. I think this is a fantastic idea! I would love to support it in any way I can – I’d even help dig! Pump tracks are great for skaters and bike riders of all ages and abilities. I have ridden a couple myself and would totally love to have one nearby. I recently had some surgery and am unable to continue with the downhill mountain biking I’ve enjoyed at Mountain Creek. So, I would LOVE to be able to ride my bike safely off the streets at a pump track.

I am Kingston Warr, 13 years old, and I live in Westfield, New Jersey. Although this track wouldn't very close to me, it would be a great spot for me and other young riders to ride at and progress our skills when we can't necessarily ride trails. It will help younger people enjoy the wonderful experience of riding a bike.

My name is Tyler, I’m 28 years old and am just sending an email to bring awareness to the pump track being built in Vernon. It would be a great addition to the town!

Arnold Riley, I write this email in support of the community pump track currently under construction in our town. As a 51-year-old, twenty-one-year resident of Vernon, this project is, in my opinion, one of the best township projects undertaken by any administration since I have lived in this town. As a tax paying resident, I’m grateful to see the township finally making serious steps towards taking full advantage of Vernon’s potential to become a successful, outdoor activity driven economy. Many towns across the northeast have found financial prosperity by tapping into the money brought to them by cyclists, hikers, skiers, hunters, fishermen, equestrians, and all those who enjoy an outdoor lifestyle. With a relatively small investment in infrastructure, and amenities, such as this pump track, a much bigger return can be gained from the money spent at our local businesses by those coming to enjoy what we can offer them. Surely, in the long term, any possible, and no doubt marginal, tax increases to help fund this project, will be offset by future increases in revenue by tourism dollars, and the increased attractiveness of Vernon as a place to start a new business, which in turn would stimulate new job creation as well. This boosts the overall economy of the township, benefiting even those who choose not to use the facility themselves. It also keeps the Vernon residents, like myself, who currently travel to other towns, and even other states to ride, spending our money here, rather than elsewhere. Even more important to me personally, as a father, I am thrilled that I will be able to enjoy sharing time with my thirteen-year-old daughter riding together at the pump track in our own hometown, rather than driving up to an hour away to find a facility comparable to what is currently under construction right here. Being on the autism spectrum, and suffering from social anxiety as well, getting her outdoors, staying active, and learning to navigate social situations has been instrumental in her development, and riding together with her at the various pump tracks in the area has definitely been greatly beneficial. The atmosphere is always friendly and supportive at every pump track we have been to. It’s hard not to be when everyone is having such a good time, and I’m sure it will be the same here in Vernon. In closing, I have confidence that you, the esteemed council members of Vernon township, will continue this awesome project, and see it through to completion, for the financial health of it’s businesses, and the physical, and mental health of its citizens. Thank you for taking the time to consider my opinion, and for your service to our town.

My name is James Dexter, I am 26 years old and I reside in Vernon, NJ. I have lived and worked here since 2015 at Mountain Creek Bike Park. Mountain Biking is my main pillar in life. This pump track would be beneficial to me for many reasons. It would add diversity to the trails in Vernon. As a mountain biker, I would thoroughly enjoy being able to even ride to a pump track right in town, would be a dream come true for me. My girlfriend would also benefit from the multi-use path that is proposed around the pump track for walking and we could enjoy our days off together, and also help develop her skills on the pump track as a rider. Pump tracks are also great for kids, they learn great skills there, and it also hopefully breeds the next generation of local mountain bikers. It is an amazing sport with high school cycling teams and races for kids to go participate in. It is a great sport and I cannot recommend it enough.

I Paul LaBarbera, [REDACTED] I live in Upstate NY and I used to be a resident of the Town of Vernon and I am in favor of building the paved pump track. I frequent Mountain Creek Resort. When I visit, I’m buying gas, food, lodging etc. to add to the local economy. Pump tracks are popping up all over as a few are going up in the Berkshires of Massachusetts and another near the city of Hudson NY. Surely Vernon doesn’t want to see those dollars going elsewhere. As people will travel for these pump tracks as they do

for mountain creeks bike park. Many more will be visiting Vernon as they do for the bike park with a pump track.

Amanda, 36-year-old, I am not from the area first and foremost. But I would like you to know that building the paved pump track would be a fantastic idea! I feel it would benefit the local economy and destinations I would travel to! Myself and all ages would be able to enjoy it! I'm new the biking world. I love so much already! So please, I hope you take my words into consideration to build this paved pump track. Build it for me, my friends, your community-for all of us!

My name is Eric Barker, I'm 41 years old, and live in Randolph NJ. I wanted to write in with a message of support for the Vernon pump track. I frequent the High Bridge and West Milford pump tracks, which are both great places for families and people of all ages to enjoy the outdoors in a fun and safe environment. I visit Vernon often throughout the year and believe that the community would benefit greatly from the opening of a pump track. I hope that you will support it.

My name is Ben Battista, I am 22 years old, from Pequannock New Jersey. As an avid mountain biker and bicycle enthusiast, I feel that a paved pump track in Vernon would be only beneficial for the town and the individuals in and around Vernon Township. Mountain biking and cycling has brought me some of my closest friends, my best memories, and has become my biggest stress and anxiety relief. I truly have a passion for the sport and a love for the healthy environment that the sport encourages. Not only has the Port Jervis pump track brought people and business to the town, it has built a community. A pump track is a place for adults and children alike to learn and progress in their bicycle skills. In my experience, pump tracks always house a healthy and safe environment and the riders who attend them are all friendly and genuinely happy to be riding their bicycles. Cycling is a healthy and effective way to get children outside and exercising, and a pump track offers enjoyment for both beginners and expert level riders. In conjunction with the trails at Mountain Creek, a pump track would be a huge benefit for the town. I hope that you can consider my message and consider the many benefits of a pump track in Vernon. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns and have a great day.

Dr. Carly Chiarella PT, DPT, I am writing to you in regards to the new pump track that is being built in Vernon. As a healthcare provider and local to the area, I would like to express my **support** of the completion of the track. The importance of having a space, for children and adults alike, to explore new methods of fitness is boundless. Biking is a sport that anyone can get into; it does not require a team or an innate level of athleticism. Because of the aforementioned facts, this allows children who are neurodivergent (those on the spectrum for instance) and/or not typically developing (children with cerebral palsy, etc.) to participate in something other than ball sports that will increase their self-confidence, improve their quality of life, and allow them to have something that does not directly rely on having social skills. Now, to build off of that, there have been multiple studies regarding the correlation of increased physical activity and improvements in scholastic performance. One particular study I'd like to cite comes from the book *Spark* written by Dr. John Ratey, MD. Dr. Ratey had visited the district of Naperville, IL whose gym teachers implemented a new physical education standard that allowed students to participate in cardiovascular fitness before school started in the morning. At the end of the semester, the children that participated in this study showed a 17% improvement in reading and comprehension compared to their peers who only showed a 10% improvement. The benefits extend beyond grades though; the students also reported improved overall mood and a desire to continue with exercise beyond graduation. Imagine the transformation of the collective student body in Sussex County! As for the adults, biking is incredibly beneficial to adults of all ages. I am consistently seeing older patients who stated that they couldn't exercise anymore because of arthritic changes, but have been able to become active again once I suggest biking. Biking significantly reduces the shearing forces at the knees because it halves your body weight; allowing you to participate in cardiovascular activity, which improves overall health and mental wellbeing. Personally, biking has changed my life and I will speak from an area of vulnerability. As someone who suffers from severe ADHD, anxiety, and depression, biking gives me an outlet to center myself when I feel things are getting stressful. It has allowed me to not only manage my mental health, but stay physically fit. When I go through a depressive episode it is very difficult to motivate myself to go to the gym, however, I will never hesitate to pick up my bike. This can be a huge determining factor of how long my episode will last. As long as I can pick up my bike and exercise, I can recharge and find my center again. I truly hope that this letter has shown how beneficial it would be to have a pump track in Vernon. I believe that it can benefit so many people and unite the community like never before. If you have any questions or would like to speak further on the matter, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Marni Joy (49), Short Hills, NJ, we were so excited this summer to hear that Vernon unanimously approved Pump Track proposed by Major Burrell and championed by so many local residents. Our family lives in Short Hills NJ and we are regulars up at Mountain Creek. We have been bike park season pass holders for a couple of years now because our family are riding enthusiasts. Over the years, we have made

so many wonderful friends in Vernon and picture this new Pump Track diversifying our pleasures up there and extending the riding season to "any time there isn't snow". It will be great to have another cool riding venue. In my family, I have 3 riders: Tyler (16), Jack (14) and Victoria (12). They are competitive downhill racers but also excellent freestyle. Please continue with the town support of this amazing installation so that we can come up as a family to enjoy your town and our local friends there. We would have been at Vernon today outside on this track!

My name is Adam Hubbard, I live in Wantage twp. I am 48 years old and have worked with the Outdoor club of Port Jervis and the city of Port Jervis in the creation of their paved pump track. Since the creation of our pump track (2018) the city has had two bike shop business open up. One shop employs 3 full time employees the other has one full time. The pump track brings riders from all over as well as providing the local youth with great recreation. Please consider the very real economic impact that a recreation amenity such as the one you have near to completion can have to the community as it has had to Port Jervis Ny. If you have any questions on my information or opinion, please feel free to contact me and I will connect you with city of Port Jervis representatives.

Scott Stoveken, Summit, NJ, I cannot attend the ZOOM meeting tomorrow to discuss the pump track in Vernon, but I wanted to say that I hope that the project continues. I am a 47-year-old life-long bicyclist. While I bicycle on roads and trails, the times I enjoy bicycling the most are when I am biking with my wife and 2 boys (13 and 8 years old). We have been biking on a variety of trails and pump tracks throughout the North East. It is very rewarding to see my sons improve and develop new skills while riding pump tracks. It is also great to see the community that develops around pump tracks with a wide variety of encouragement from young and old riders. I think that a pump track in Vernon will really benefit your town.

My name is Chris Facas, age 52 and I currently reside in Hillsborough, NJ. I grew up in Hardyston and my father still resides in Hamburg. I graduated in the class of 1987 from Wallkill Valley. My teenage son and I cannot wait for the pump track to be completed. He does not partake in mainstream school sports and has a strong passion for downhill mountain biking and BMX pump tracks. This has been a great bonding experience for us over the last 12 years since we can both participate in it together. We are both looking forward to spending countless hours at the new pump track honing our skills in a positive environment.

Hello, my name is Morgan Freifelder. I am 16 years old. I was really excited about the new pump track that was to be finished soon. With the news of it possibly being canceled completely, I became confused on why anyone would want to stop this major opportunity. I have been an outdoor enthusiast and a big cyclist for my entire life. The addition of a pump track minutes from my house was a huge deal for me since the closest pump track is about 45 minutes away. The pump track would add a great increase in small business sales since restaurants and other local businesses are seconds away from it. This pump track could get kids outside and active with a place to have fun. I loved growing up in Vernon with the cycling community and all of the outdoor resources. I would really love to see this pump track get completed and I hope that the town council will continue this new opportunity.

Mason Freifelder, to the Vernon Town Council, my name is Mason Freifelder, I live in Glenwood, and I am 18 years old. Hearing that there will be a pump track installed into our community made me so incredibly happy and excited. Cycling is my true passion and has changed my life in very positive ways. Ever since I was young, cycling has played a very important role in my life, it gave me a way to exercise, make friendships, and have a great time. The cycling community as a whole is such a great family and everyone involved is loving, encouraging and friendly. I ride at Mountain Creek in the summer, and even work in their bike shop, and I work as a ski racing coach in the winter. Finding out that there might be a stop to the construction of the already started pump track is truly heart wrenching. This track will give so many people the opportunity to discover a new sport that is so enjoyable. It will also allow people to meet and bond with others. This will give smaller businesses more traffic, and bring new people to the area. The closest paved pump track is about 45 minutes away in Port Jervis, New York, and hearing that this is the new standard, and the Vernon track would be a step higher, was awesome! Whenever I make the trip to Port Jervis with friends and family, we purchase things like food, or any other amenities we may need in the area. This is how local businesses would see more activity. I struggle to see why anyone would be opposed to investing in the projects that enhance the lives of everyone, especially the youth. I would absolutely love to see the progress on the new track continue and I hope I make a clear stand on why the pump track is an excellent idea for the community of Vernon.

Michael Fody 41 years old, from Vernon NJ, I am a lifelong resident of Vernon Twp. I am composing this email in regards to the pump track to be built in Vernon New Jersey, spring of 2022. I think the benefits are great for all, the outdoor sports community, children of the town, and also small business by bring bringing more tourism from nearby areas. I wish this would have been around when I was younger. After seeing the positive impact that Maple Grange Park has had, I think the benefits have. We as a nation need to get outside and exercise. The children need more outdoor activities. We cannot let our kids sit around staring at their phones. I have heard nearby towns having great success with thier pump tracks, one is building a new one 3 times the size. If the town can "re-turf" multiple fields that were in perfect shape, it should have the means to finish this project in which it has already started.

Joe Tadrick – Vernon Township, he feels that all the people who are speaking for the pump track from out of town are not paying for it. He said there is a big liability if someone gets hurt from out of town.

My name is Josh McLeod. I have to start off by saying that biking saved my life. I am a veteran. I served in the US Army from 2013-2016. I was active duty and was deployed once to Afghanistan. Upon the end of my term of service I decided to get out and pursue my career as a professional mountain biker, as well as a professional trail builder. I ended up taking a job here at Mountain Creek Bike Park as a trail builder/machine operator. I have to say that most residents don't realize how much revenue is brought to this town spring/summer/fall due to mountain biking. People travel from all over the country to race/ride here. For example, I moved here because of this as well as the opportunity to make a living off of what I love, and what keeps me sane. This pump track will only encourage tourists and locals to stay longer and continue to spend money at our local businesses. I grew up originally in Bucks County, PA. We had no free skateparks or pump tracks. I was forced to ride BMX at schools and businesses and was often kicked out. Nowadays it's different. Kids can just go play video games if there's no outdoor activities available. Not all kids crave your local soccer or baseball fields. A vast majority of us have always craved a little bit more of an adrenaline rush. I drive around highland lakes and always see kids in the parking lot of the highland lakes country club parking lot riding BMX. Let's give these kids a place to ride. Let's encourage our next generation to develop an outdoor hobby. This is our future. This could change their lives. I've made a living out of mountain biking since my return from the military. When it comes down to it, if I didn't have mountain biking, I probably wouldn't be alive. It has given me a purpose in life. This is all I personally have. Let's understand that everyone has a different escape. Extreme sports have always unfortunately been put on the back burner. I visit towns out west and see they have pump tracks/skateparks/dirt jumps in LITERALLY every town. Why can't the east coast match this? Wake up. Why do you think so many outdoor seekers have moved to Colorado for example? This is where you will create revenue and future lives. The time is now, this is the future, let's set the example for the east coast.

My name is Lindsay Struss. I live in Oakland NJ. My 5-year-old daughter and my 45-year-old husband both are avid BMX riders and love pump tracks. We travel to NY and PA to ride. A Pump Track in Vernon would be amazing. The families we meet while doing what they love brings a sense of community to the sport. I saw where the location of the track is and it is super convenient to get to and an added bonus is all the restaurants that are local to it. All of which will be beneficial town and businesses. Please allow this amenity for my family and local community members. I am positive that people will travel far to enjoy this.

Dre Mori, Boonton, NJ I am writing in support of the bicycle pump track that is slated to be built in Vernon, NJ. Not only is cycling an excellent way to keep kids (and adults) active and out of trouble, it will also bring people from neighboring towns like me there to ride and be a patron of local businesses.

Kathi Krause a 63 yr. old resident of Vernon, I think it's great that the township is putting in the new pump track. This is something that can be used by folks of all ages and promotes health. It provides opportunities to allow the kids to have a safe place to ride their bikes. It doesn't require a special bike; participants can use whatever bike they have - fun for kids of all ages. As a mountain bike coach, I have seen that pump tracks are great additions to a towns recreational opportunity and it is inclusive for all ages and genders. People that use the pump track utilize local stores and eateries. And its building health and fun for everyone. I have conducted lessons for kids at the pump track in West Milford and these classes are always full and there are always families with mom, dad and kids using the track as well as helping to maintain the track. The same can happen here. This is a boon to our community and will be a great be part of Vernon's 4 season community.

Dennis Dalelio, Highland Lakes, I appreciate that our town is creating the pump track. We need more for our kids. Please see this project trough.

Dyami Jasdanwala, age 26, as a resident of Parsippany NJ and an avid mountain biker, I would like to voice my support for the new paved pump track in Vernon NJ. This would be a great addition to the biking scene in NJ and would attract people of all ages from all over the state and surrounding areas. Pump tracks allow bikers to develop skills that will be used on more technical trails and offroad. They are also a great place to socialize with other bikers and meet people who are interested in your sport. For kids, it is a great way to practice biking in a contained area so parents can watch and encourage safety. A paved pump track is a great addition to Vernon NJ. I am excited to see this project and enjoy the outdoors in Vernon NJ.

Tanner (32), can't wait for the pump track in Vernon to be completed. I live in Parsippany and it would be a closer drive than Port Jervis. These tracks are a safe way to have fun and get exercise.

My name is Jason Chilenski, a 32-year-old Vernon Resident and VTHS Alumni, class of 2007. I am writing in regards to the Vernon pump track and how important this is for me and the community. Bikes, the community and the camaraderie surrounding this industry saved my life. I went from a depressed, unhealthy and borderline obese individual to a happy, healthy and somewhat physically fit person with a passion for life, for growing the sport and empowering others to do the same. I wished that when I was growing up, Vernon would have had a skatepark. Yes, we had mountain creek, but that shut down fairly early. But being a young kid, no car, no license, my parents wouldn't be able to always commit their day to drive me to Sparta or Hackettstown skatepark to be able to enjoy time with my friends. Kids now a days need something more than ever to get them out of the house, to get exercise and enrichment other than video games or traditional sports. This community has helped so many people, and I hope that we can continue to grow the sport, the community and enhance the lives of future generations to come. I hope you see this Message, and the town can continue to move forward with the building plans of the pump track in this amazing town.

My name is Jason Messineo. I am 32 years old and live in Vernon. I am an avid mountain biker at mountain creek and recently saw that Vernon was finally building a paved pump track in town. In my opinion this is an amazing idea due to the fact that when mountain creek is closed for the winter or summer seasons there is nothing to do in this town. Completing this project will not only give kids and bikers alike something to do but it will also bring in people from other areas to the town and bring more money into this town. you have restaurants around the area that would benefit from the increase of tourists that this pump track could bring in. so please finish this project and give us a reason to stay in this town instead of venturing out to enjoy other areas.

Ming Kung, Bridgewater Township, I reside in Bridgewater, and as a Mt Creek season pass holder, regularly visit Vernon for winter sports fun. I have been introducing my 6- and 4-year-old kids to mountain biking, and have traveled locally to find trails and activities that would help them build their skills. A pump track in Vernon, particularly a paved one, would be unique in our region and certainly would attract us to make the ~1hr drive!

I am Donald Vinales from Stockholm I'm 36yrs old and have a Son Who is 6 and a daughter who is 3. We spend a lot time in Vernon particularly Mountain Creek snowboarding and skiing as a family and we have close friends that's live in crystal springs. We also have a passion for bikes and dirt bikes and we often venture out to the pump track in Port Jervis New York. My family was so happy when we heard that a pump track was coming to Vernon. On behalf of the Vinales family, Thank you!

My name is Zane Bard and I am an avid mountain biker and racer from Chambersburg, PA. You may be wondering, why does this guy care about a pump track in Vernon, NJ? Well, I make the trip up to mountain creek about 6-10 weekends a year to ride the best bike park on the east coast already, and have some of my closest friends up there now. There have been a few days that I've left Creek early to go to Port Jervis to ride their paved pump track. The few times I have been there, the place has been thriving with kids and adults and everyone in between having a blast. We also have a pump track in my hometown that I help maintain and run for the community and it is a fantastic asset to the community. Kids and adults of all ages, shapes, sizes, colors, backgrounds, etc. come out to ride it and enjoy that sense of freedom riding a bicycle can bring. Pump tracks are fantastic for exercise as well as teaching the base skills you need to be able to improve on your bike no matter what skill level you are at. Having a pump track in Vernon would not only benefit the local community of riders in the Vernon and surrounding areas, but it would also benefit folks like me coming to town for a weekend. Being able to add pump track laps to a downhill weekend would be amazing!

My name is Jeff Anderson. I'm a homeowner in Vernon, a life-long cyclist, and I'm writing to voice my support for our pump track. There's been a lot of tantrums thrown by a select few vocal residents recently

and I wanted to make sure that they aren't the only voices heard. As a kid, and like many other kids, biking was my escape from drugs and alcohol that were prevalent at home. I didn't play school sports, but the bicycle helped me build physical fitness and coordination just as well. Now as an adult, I've worked as a full-time trail builder and mountain biking coach for the past decade and I've seen firsthand the positive effects that biking has had on individuals and communities both locally and across the country. Please follow through with this project to completion and give our kids the opportunity to explore life through biking!

My name is Mike Kulp I live in Vernon 14 years now. I feel the pump track helps kids meet more kids and parents to become friends. Unlike team sports you come and go as you please. Gets kids out side away from gaming. Also helps kids that may struggle making friends belong so they don't go down bad paths in life. Thank you

My name is Chanin (Shannon) Robilotti, I am 37 and I live in (Monmouth County) Manalapan central jersey. My girlfriend had introduced me to pump track even got me a dirt jumper for my birthday I have to travel out of state and leave my bike at her place so I could go to the small local pump tracks by her every chance I got. The days I was off I'd get there first thing in the morning and wouldn't leave till 2pm talk about a work out and the folks you meet there no one judges you for what you're wearing or that kind of bike, scooter or skateboard. Everyone talks to one another while waiting their tune a lot of the adults would let the little kids go ahead of them and to watch them on their little push bikes (they help little kids learn balance and control) they never went on the internet little track all the big track fearless and laughing. What happened to that kind of feeling that kind of life kids/adults getting out we have seen more people have gotten bikes allot more kids have BMX/dirt jumpers now a days with nowhere to go but the streets? The sidewalk? Why not have a place they could learn more from bunny hops to learning how to pump to use that focuses and hand, eye coronation? The stereo types your thinking would be around a pump track is far from the Truth you have mountain Creek right there.... You have the thrill seekers that enjoy the downhill feeling not everyone is into that in the beginning they need to start somewhere let alone people will travel I lost count how many times I would be talking to the parents saying they wish someone was closer to them because how much their kids enjoy going to the pump track kids need stimulation kids need to be social and less social media! Listen I work a lot in vet med a lot more for the last two years mentally it's burn me out a lot doing pump tracks and basic XC and other outdoor hobbies have helped me not feel so burn out at work and less stressed this would help adults, parents, kids who wanted to get into this but couldn't or adults who use to do BMX ECT. Please think this threw and don't throw this out. I wish I could be at this meeting but I'll be at work till 8pm and it's never slow.

My name is Frank Marino, age 38, and I live in Ossining NY. I am writing in support of the pump track that is scheduled for construction in the spring. My family and I frequent Vernon Twp quite often as we are snow boarders (season pass holders x3 at Mtn Creek) and mountain bikers. Having the pump track would be an excellent complement to the sporting nature of your town and additionally, it's a very low risk activity compared to the previously mentioned sports which the town has thrived on for many years. We would find this addition yet another reason to travel to your town to spend time and frequent the local business. It's also an excellent activity for youths to hone biking skills and put their energy towards something positive and rewarding. Just south of Ossining here, we have built a similar park for honing biking skills which was just recently completed. It was mostly volunteer driven and will continue to be maintained by volunteers and local sponsors. Cyclists are known to devote their time and energy into the maintenance of these types of facilities as they are not commonly found and highly appreciated once established. Hoping to see this park completed so we can visit during the spring, summer, and fall.

Hi my names Robert Hawkins I'm 42 yrs. old live in wantage and my one work in Vernon part time. My kids are 8 yrs. and 9 yrs. old. since day 1 of the port Jervis pump track, we have been regulars there. it brings so many good people together, the biking community is a strong community everyone sticks together. It would be an awesome benefit to have one in Vernon and not to mention more business for all the local shops. Thank you and hope to see you out on the track soon.

My name is David Freifelder and I have been a Vernon resident with my wife since 1998. We have 3 children ages, 16,18 and 20. My wife and I moved to Vernon for the major reason of the school systems and the amazing outdoor activities the town provides. We have all be avid cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts for many years, and have traveled far and wide to enjoy riding our bicycles. When we heard Vernon was proposing and moving forward with a paved pump track, my family was overjoyed to say the least. Now to hear that there is a motion to possibly stop the progress of the track being built is heart -wrenching. A track like this is an amazing outlet for all ages. Not every child participates in the same local sports that a park like Maple Grange provides. The track would make Vernon stand out among the rest of the

monotony of towns throughout the state. Again, we moved to Vernon because we knew this town has the vision for the Outdoors. When Maple Grange Park was introduced to Vernon, there was indeed some apprehension. However, it has been an absolute blessing for our local community. It is true that a pump track will not immediately create this same feeling the community has for Maple Grange, however it will increase the "value" people have for Vernon, a town that cherishes the outdoors and strives to include all its residents. I appreciate your time, and hope the town council will indeed continue moving forward with this amazing new chapter of Vernon's Pride!

Matt Panuska, Warwick, NY, I just read online about a proposed pump track to be built in Vernon and wanted to throw my support behind this project. As a resident of nearby Warwick, I would absolutely take advantage of this attraction, and I'm certain others from both in and outside of your town would as well. My teenage son and I are avid mountain bikers, and we've visited the paved pump track up in Port Jervis on several occasions when also visiting the nearby Watershed Trails, as well as the dirt pump track in West Milford whenever we ride at Jungle Habitat. I'm sure there are plenty of Mountain Creek Bike Park visitors who would also make a stop at this pump track. I hope this becomes a reality, so local kids (both actual kids, and big kids like me!) can have a new place to go and ride.

Roger, Stella and Jack Foco, I've been living, teaching, and raising a family in Vernon for over 20 years. As a cyclist and outdoorsman, my family and I have always enjoyed getting outside in our beautiful town. My son is so excited by the prospect of having a pump track in our town. He has been mountain biking in the area since he was five and now is in high school. (And an outstanding student) This is an active community with kids that deserve to move around and there are many residents/kids that would benefit from this type of recreation. **We, the Foco Family, fully support the completion of the Vernon pump track**, and find it would be a fine addition to the wonderful town parks. It's nice to be able to partake in an activity that can relieve stress and is available mostly year-round. We have seen the progress of the track and look forward towards its completion.

John Kohler, Hampton/Bethlehem Township, just caught the news of the in-progress development of the paved pump track being built in your township. I just want to tell you how excited I am about this news! I live in Bethlehem Township, NJ just a few miles west of Clinton, NJ. I'm 50 years old and a former BMX kid and current mountain biker. Pump tracks are excellent for riders of all ages and can provide a great workout! My two daughters and I make regular weekend trips to Camp Olympic and Rivers Edge in PA as well as our own Flow Trail close by in Highbridge. Thank you so much for moving forward with this project. I look forward to visiting your new park in the spring.

Dennis Espinosa, 56, Vernon, Thanks for adding this great facility to our town, these places offer not only a fun place for kids to burn off energy and stay healthy, but being a growing sector in youth sports it will also bring in added revenue to local businesses from people who don't have a track in their towns, win for all involved, keep the pedal to the metal and get er done!

Julie Knapp, hello we are a family of five from Sparta. We hope you take serious consideration of putting a pump track in Vernon. Our youngest currently travels over an hour to use a BMX track. Thank you.

Mike DelVecchio, I'm writing in reference to the proposed pump track in Vernon. I can speak for myself and several other families. Pump tracks are great for the community in several ways. The economic impact alone is helpful to any surrounding businesses. I am the manager of a nationwide BMX race team. My family and a lot of race families travel all over to visit pump tracks all year round. It's a great outlet for kids and adults alike. My family alone has just recently visited the West Milford pump track, the Port Jervis pump track, the Emmaus PA pump track. Along with those visits, come a visit to a deli, a pizza place, a shopping center a gas station etc. We have met so many people through the bicycling community. A new track would be a welcome addition to the NNJ area. Please keep this project going! Too many kids sit in front of TVs and other gadgets in today's world.

My name is Anthony Corcella. I reside in Fredon, NJ. I am 40 years old, with kids 6 and 8. I hear your town is building a paved pump track. I simply cannot express my support for this enough. My kids LOVE going to pump tracks. These bicycle infrastructure projects provide safe, outdoor spaces for our kids to recreate. These locations encourage our kids to exercise and be outside. The health benefits are profound. Having pump tracks locally provide affordable places to provide entertainment for our kids that isn't just more "screen time". We currently frequent the pump tracks in Port Jervis, West Milford, and High Bridge. We also drive to Mountain Creek to enjoy our bikes, but that can get very expensive. We try to combine trips to the pump track with a visit to a local restaurant or other shop as we know these facilities cost money to produce and maintain. Please stay the course, finish the project and give our kids another healthy, outdoor place to play.

Seeing no other members of the public wishing to speak, Council President Shortway asked for a motion to close the meeting for Public Comments.

MOTION: Andrew Pitsker

SECOND: John Auberger

All members were in favor.

## **MAYOR COMMENTS**

On an annual basis, those New Jersey municipalities that have a Mayor's Wellness Campaign report to The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute on their annual initiatives related to the health and wellness of their communities.

As of this date, a total of 418 New Jersey municipalities have Mayor's Wellness Campaigns.

Under the leadership of former Mayor Shortway and our Municipal Director of Recreation & Community Affairs, Ms. Michelle Downtain, Vernon started its Mayor's Wellness Campaign in 2016.

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute awards three levels of Mayor's Wellness Campaign achievements - -

1. The initial award level is that of a HEALTHY TOWN THAT'S UP AND COMING;
2. The midlevel award is that of a HEALTHY TOWN TO WATCH; and ...
3. The highest award level is that of a HEALTHY TOWN.

So far, Vernon Township has earned the midlevel award of a HEALTHY TOWN TO WATCH.

In August of this year, I was informed by the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute that they had reviewed Vernon Township's submission of our Mayor's Wellness Campaign initiatives for 2020, and had judged these initiatives to be outstanding.

And, as a result of their judgement of the high quality of Vernon's 2020 Mayor's Wellness Campaign initiatives, they had selected Vernon to be one of just three out of 418 municipalities to present, to share, and to discuss their 2020 initiatives at the recent November 16-18 Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference.

I was honored to represent and to be Vernon Township's presenter.

The focus of my presentation was on the way in which the Vernon community pulled together as a civic family to address the COVID-19 caused food insecurity problem that developed as a result of:

1. Businesses having closed and many Vernon residents losing their jobs/sources of income with which to purchase food; and ...
2. COVID-19 restrictions forcing us to close our Senior Center, which served as a key and primary source of food for many of our senior citizens.

The Mayor's Wellness Campaign, working with and through the VERNON CARES organization, put together a free food network which provided free meals, seven days per week, that ensured that no one in our community went hungry.

This was truly a total community effort, with notable leadership efforts by:

1. Mr. Kevin Mitchell and Mr. Scott Jahnke, owners and operators of The Tracks Deli, which served as the center for the food preparation operation;
2. Ms. Linda Smigen, the creator and facilitator of the VERNON CARES organization, and its over 100 volunteers who delivered meals to local residents, specifically seniors and first responders, and helped to restock local food pantries; and ...

3. Ms. Michelle Downtain, the Director of the Vernon Mayor's Wellness Campaign.

Misters Mitchell and Jahnke, and Ms. Smigen were honored by Congressman Josh Gotthramer as 5th Congressional District Hometown Heroes for their leadership in this outstanding Mayor's Wellness Campaign effort.

I am always encouraged by the fact, that in spite of the constant negative drumbeat of criticism that repeatedly comes from the same small group of angry and unhappy individuals, who see "bad things" and "bad people" in every event - -

In spite of this, I am always encouraged and uplifted by the fact that the great majority of us realize, that we are very fortunate to be residents of a town that's a great place to live and to raise a family!

It was with pleasure and pride that I shared the goodness of Vernon Township with the rest of the state, at this year's Annual New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference.

As I listened to this outpouring of support for the Municipal Bicycle Pump Track that is now in the process of being built, I am not at all surprised at this response from those who represent the views of the overwhelming majority of our community.

I call them the "silent majority" because:

1. They don't spend the vast portion of their time searching for things to be critical about, to be mad about, to be upset about, and to be mean spirited about.
2. They understand that the Municipal Bicycle Pump Track is one of the forward thinking and creative amenities that's planned to make Vernon an even more enjoyable and recreational healthy town in which to live; and ...
3. They understand that the Municipal Bicycle Pump Track is one of the forward thinking and creative amenities that will serve as an investment in our Town Center area, that will serve as a magnet to attract a host of individuals to our Town Center area, which enterprising business owners will view as potential new customers; and, that these potentially new customers will be a motivation to these enterprising business owners to develop new businesses in our Town Center.

Last week I had a long-time resident and business owner to visit me in my office, where he expressed concern that, based on things he had read on a specific Facebook page, that I would be bullied or intimidated into stopping the forward progress on the Municipal Bicycle Pump Track.

I assured him that any current or future bullying and/or intimidation tactics would not cause me to sway from doing what I believed was best for our town.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly give that same assurance to the overwhelming majority of residents who have trusted me to play a leadership role in our town.

I am accustomed to dealing with bullies.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Vice President Auberger explained that he is a lifelong resident of Vernon and as far back as he can remember, where the pump track is going, has always been a hayfield. Every farm had a dump somewhere on their property back then.

Vice President Auberger wishes everyone a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Pitsker said regarding the Pump Track, I am very disappointed in the social media groups who misinform and misrepresent the facts of this project.

Fact 1- The Pump Track is budgeted for \$170K, not 1 million. Please reference the various projects that were presented back on June 10<sup>th</sup> where the details of the various projects, track, trails, Baldwin Property and road were discussed.

Fact 2 - The Pump Track is being largely funded by Open Space Funds

Fact 3 – The environmental investigations and compliances have been satisfied and continual being updated and resolved as necessary. In fact, in hand, I have a copy a letter from the NJDEP dated April 13, 2021 from David Ongaro stating the level of work done to investigate the complaints and the work done by the town to comply with every request. Yes, there was solid waste, and yes it was cleaned up, Test pits were dug

Fact 4, Soil retention fencing was up on a site walk I did with others on October 30<sup>th</sup>. And I have video of it. The fencing was doing its job, because it had been raining the previous days prior to that visit and you could see the silt captured. The project did get started prior to the actual permit and that was wrong! How it will be handled is up to our Town Engineer to handle. That I am sorry for as a representative for the town.

Regarding location, this was discussed on multiple occasions at multiple meetings over the years. In my opinion and as I have stated before, this is by far a better location than other sites discussed.

We have also benefited in fixing environmental issues here left over the last 40 years by others, so in fact, this government has been socially responsible in bringing solutions for a safe community. Not sweeping them under the rug.

To the supporters who commented here today, thank you for your input and support. By the way, it was not Harry Shortway who started the Letter Writing campaign on Facebook. That was predicated by an email by another advocate in the Bicycle Pump Track community. Again, another tidbit of misinformation and hateful post.

To the people against this project, I look forward to your opinions, with workable solutions, not accusations of misinformation and misrepresentation of facts.

I know I have taken a concerted effort in addressing the areas, walked them, and help to find solutions to resolve them.

This past Saturday, I attended the Holiday Market at Mountain Creek at Cobblestone Village and I have to say it was a great turnout. I have not seen that many vendors in one location in Vernon in a while and it was a nice change up to the Farmers Market at Town Center. Thank you, Mountain Creek, and to the Volunteers from all the committees who worked together to make this happen.

Council Member Pitsker wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Cilli was surprised about all of the people who spoke about the pump track tonight. We all agree that it will be a benefit for the town. Council Member Cilli said that the environmental study has been done and there is nothing where the pump track is going. Council Member Cilli said Mike Furrey was told by a Spohn Ranch employee that they built hundreds of pump tracks and she would like to know about the insurance also.

Council Member Furrey explained that we did not make up what people came here to say tonight. He admires the Mayor and the Council for having a vision and seeing it through because it takes a lot to stand up to the criticism. If anyone else has a vision or a plan, Council Member Furrey would like to hear it. He feels that there is no price tag put on the sense of community the pump track will bring and he hopes the trail will do the same.

Council Member Furrey wished everyone a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

## **COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS**

Council President Shortway commented saying that outside LLCs are investing in Vernon, this is clearly evident in the results of last week's property auction. Projected revenue from the sales of township property not needed for public use is approximately \$1,200,000. Herald Square was bought from \$600,000 dollars, four years ago we had no bidders even at \$100,000. Investors are interested in Legends. Outside investors see our value and it is time the distractors realize this and continue to move our community forward. The citizens of the Township of Vernon passed a referendum on November 6, 2018 allowing expenditures from the Open Space Trust Fund for public pathway development. The dully elected government body approved a bike and walking trail system and a bicycle pump track to promote the development of a community that offers free hiking, biking and performing arts programs. Those who oppose the town center park that will incorporate the pump track and an ADA complainant pathway in lieu of sidewalks to connect the PAL, Municipal Building, proposed amphitheater and businesses are no different than the canceled cultural movement. The opposition created their own reality disregarding studies, analyticals and facts to serve their personal agenda and not the greater good. They are propelled by hate and weaponized fear in their attempt to deceive the public.

Council President Shortway said there are no hazardous waste where the bike pump track is being built. Any questionable piles of waste that included concrete, asphalt or grit is being removed or has been removed. We discovered an old farm dump that is more than seventy years old, most products had lead in them back then. This will be remediated by the people who are selling us the property. There are no delineated wetlands within the regulatory distances established by the NJ DEP. We did get the soil permit and the Upper Delaware Soil Conservation did not fine us and we are working with them.

Council President Shortway explained that public entities are protected by state statutes. Liabilities for injuries on public properties is determined by the NJ Tort Claims Act, Chapter 59. In *Vincitore vs N.J. Sports & Exposition Authority*, 169 N.J. 119, 125 (2001), the Supreme Court discussed this criteria. A plaintiff has to establish the existence of a dangerous condition. It must be reasonably foreseeable the condition creates a risk of injury the public owner must have created a condition or knew it existed and was unreasonable in failing to address it. Section 2A:42A-8.1 - Liability of owners of certain premises which allow public access. Plaintiff must show willful or malicious failure to guard, or to warn against, a dangerous condition, use, structure or activity, injury caused by acts of negligence, injury caused by acts of gross negligence. Council President Shortway said anyone can sue for anything such as Ms. Paladini who sued the town for a seat on the Land Use Board which cost the town \$30,000. Statutes are in place. We are taking all the necessary steps to make this a safe environment.

Council President Shortway explained that The Flats used to be a swamp and people dumped their garbage there. You would not be able to build an asphalt track there. Experts say you are better off with asphalt and not dirt. This might cost more but it is easier to maintain and can be used all year long. Council President Shortway said volunteers are great but he did not want anyone to build the track that was not licensed, a licensed engineer or certifications. Our engineer is an expert who goes over the plans and oversees the project and overall design.

Council President Shortway cannot find one study saying that this pump track is a bad idea. This trail is in lieu of sidewalks going behind businesses. We have done the survey and the research. Let's keep Vernon moving forward on all of these issues.

Happy Thanksgiving to all

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of business to be conducted on the agenda, a motion for adjournment was made by Council Member Auberger, seconded by Council Member Pitsker with all members voting in favor.

The Meeting of the Township Council of the Township of Vernon was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marcy Gianattasio, RMC, CMR  
Municipal Clerk

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Patrick Rizzuto,  
Council President

Minutes approved: January 24, 2022