

Worcester Township
Open Space Utilization and Acquisition Analysis

**Project
Proposal**



Sean Halbom, MPA
Township Manager



CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	1
Summary.....	2
Property/Open Space Inventor	3-4
SWOT Analysis.....	5-6
Methodology and Timeline.....	7
Conclusion.....	8

This project proposal was requested by the Board of Supervisors to task the Planning Commission with researching the following:

- Evaluation of current uses of the Township's open space (Need, underutilization, etc.)
- Potential uses for Open Space and Real Property currently owned by the Township.
- Recommendations for open space that will be purchased in the future (what type of real property is most beneficial to the community at-large?).

To facilitate these discussions, staff recommend the use of SWOT analysis. Described later in this document. A timeline for providing these recommendations is also included below.

Evaluation of Current Uses: Would focus on the Park and Open Spaces currently owned by the Township that have a decided use, be it passive or active. This would include locations like Heebner Park, Mt. Kirk Park, Sunnybrook Park, and Nike Park. Likewise, trail spaces, and preserved open space would be included in this section. These areas would examine if additional, similar uses are in demand, or perhaps, underutilized.

Potential Uses for Open Space: Would focus on recently acquired open space, or other open spaces owned by the Township that do not have a decided use. Most notably, 3335 Fisher Road, a 40-acre farm which was purchased by the Township but has no decided use at this time.

Recommending Potential Uses: Once the evaluations above are complete, the PC should have some gauge as to the level of need for active use space versus passive use space, which is helpful when deciding how to prioritize the purchase of real property. The PC may also have specific recommendations (ex. more Soccer Fields are in demand, etc.)

Property Inventory

3224 Germantown Pike	Dyka Property	Open Space, Cell Tower	10 acres
West Adair Drive	Adair Pump	Pump Station (Sanitary)	0.03 acres
400 E Mount Kirk Avenue	Berwick	Berwick Treatment Plant (Sanitary)	1.36 acres
232 E Mount Kirk Avenue	Mount Kirk Park	Public Park, Rest Rooms	7.61 acres
1031 Valley Forge Road	Community Hall	Community Hall (Meeting, Rentals)	1.96 acres
1031 Valley Forge Road	Heyser Field	Public Riding Ring, Swings	3.82 acres
Heritage Drive	Heritage Pump	Pump Station (Sanitary)	0.21 acres
Hollow Rd, Green Hill Rd	Zacharias Trail	Walking Trail, Open Space	47.34 acres
Green Hill Rd - Evansburg	Zacharias Trial	Walking Trial	0 acres
Fawn Road	Fawn Pump	Pump Station (Sanitary)	0.03 acres
Meadow Lane	Meadow Lane	(3) Building Lots	14.8 acres
1622 Hollow Road	Lenhart	Rental Property, Walking Trial	14 acres
1721 Valley Forge Road	Heebner Park	Park, Admin, PW, WVFD, Rest Rooms	88.59 acres
2960 Defford Road	Valley Green	Valley Green Treatment Plant (Sanitary)	1.33 acres
Defford Road/Hickory Hill	Defford Square	Walking Trail, Storm Water, Open Space	26.61 acres
2011 Valley Forge Road	Farmer's Union Hall	Historical Society	0.49 acres
2532 Long Meadow	Sunny Brook Park	Park, Rest Rooms	9 acres

Deep Meadow Lane	The Enclave	Dedicated Open Space	11.04 acres
1170 Trooper Road	Nike Park	Compost Facility, Walking Trail	9.2 acres
Bethel Road	Bethel Triangle	Grass Median	0.03 acres
Highview Drive	Highview	Grass ROW	0.15 acres
Kriebel Mill Road	Chadwick Strip	Grass ROW	0.07 acres
Glenview Drive	Glenview Strip	Grass ROW	0.07 acres
3335 Fisher Road	Fisher Farm	Open Space	40.5 acres
1098 N Grange Avenue	Moran Trial	Pedestrian/Equestrian Trial (Easement)	0 acres
			~274 acres

A SWOT Analysis is a commonly used tool for organizational decision making and project planning. Utilizing this technique can help in early stages of planning like this to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the organization, while opportunities and threats are external.

Strengths

By identify strengths – elements within the organization – that help it achieve its goals, this analysis can aid in the proper and timely allocation of resources required to achieve said goals.

Weaknesses

An inventory of organizational weaknesses is also a necessary assessment to determine what resources the organization lacks, or needs to improve upon, to aid in the accomplishment of goals.

SWOT ANALYSIS

	Helpful to achieving the objective	Harmful to achieving the objective
Internal origin (attributes of the organization)	S Strengths	W Weaknesses
External origin (attributes of the environment)	O Opportunities	T Threats

Opportunities

Opportunities can be defined as prospects or potential resources external to the organization that could aid in the accomplishment of set goals. A broad example of this would be grant funding from the state, or in-kind volunteer support from other organizations or the public.

Threats

Threats can be defined as external forces that work against the organization in its effort to accomplish set goals. These could be “headwinds” such as a poor economy, or more direct forces such as an opposition group or special interest group working toward conflicting goals.

Analysis

While the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats may appear obvious, listing and organizing these forces is a helpful early step in strategizing plans. In our case, where the plan is a moving target, this is especially important as we can realistically expect the landscape to change in a variety of ways throughout the discussion, be it through new property acquisition, or external factors beyond our control.

Findings

Prior to drawing conclusions, the analyses performed for Property Use, Property Acquisition, Passive Use Open Space (present and future), and Active Use Open Space (present and future), will be compared side-by-side. Through comparison, the advisory can identify priorities for goal setting to include in a final recommendation to the elected board.

Matters of Confidentiality

As Planning Commission members are likely aware, the future acquisition of public property is a privileged topic, that is subject to confidentiality to protect the Township’s interests in acquiring real property. Township staff will take direction from the elected Board and the

Township solicitor to ensure that future land acquisition plans remain confidential. To the extent that confidential information is authorized to be shared with advisory committee members for the purpose of this research, those advisory body members shall not disclose such confidential information to unauthorized parties and shall take all reasonable efforts to safeguard that information.

Staying Focused: The “Idea Parking Lot”

Understanding this analysis is a first-step, the Planning Commission will be asked to stay focused on the three identified areas above. However, it is anticipated that the commission members will discuss several interesting possibilities which merit further discussion. To avoid getting held up by such discussions, the “idea parking lot” will be used to keep an inventory of topics that may apply to more specific future conversations.

Methodology

This analysis process could proceed several ways; exclusively during public meetings of the Planning Commission, in a sub-quorum sized body of PC members and Township staff, or some combination of both. The later may allow for the best use of the SWOT analysis tool by a smaller group that can summarize those findings for a more concise public discussion during PC meetings.

Timeline

The Board of Supervisors would like these analyses completed by the new year, 2024. Once the findings are available, and recommended goals have been submitted, the Board of Supervisors will review to determine the next steps. Township staff are currently awaiting the reply of a grant application for a feasibility study of the Fisher Road property. If awarded, that study would include input from the Planning Commission sometime in 2024 and would benefit from these findings and recommendations.

Conclusion

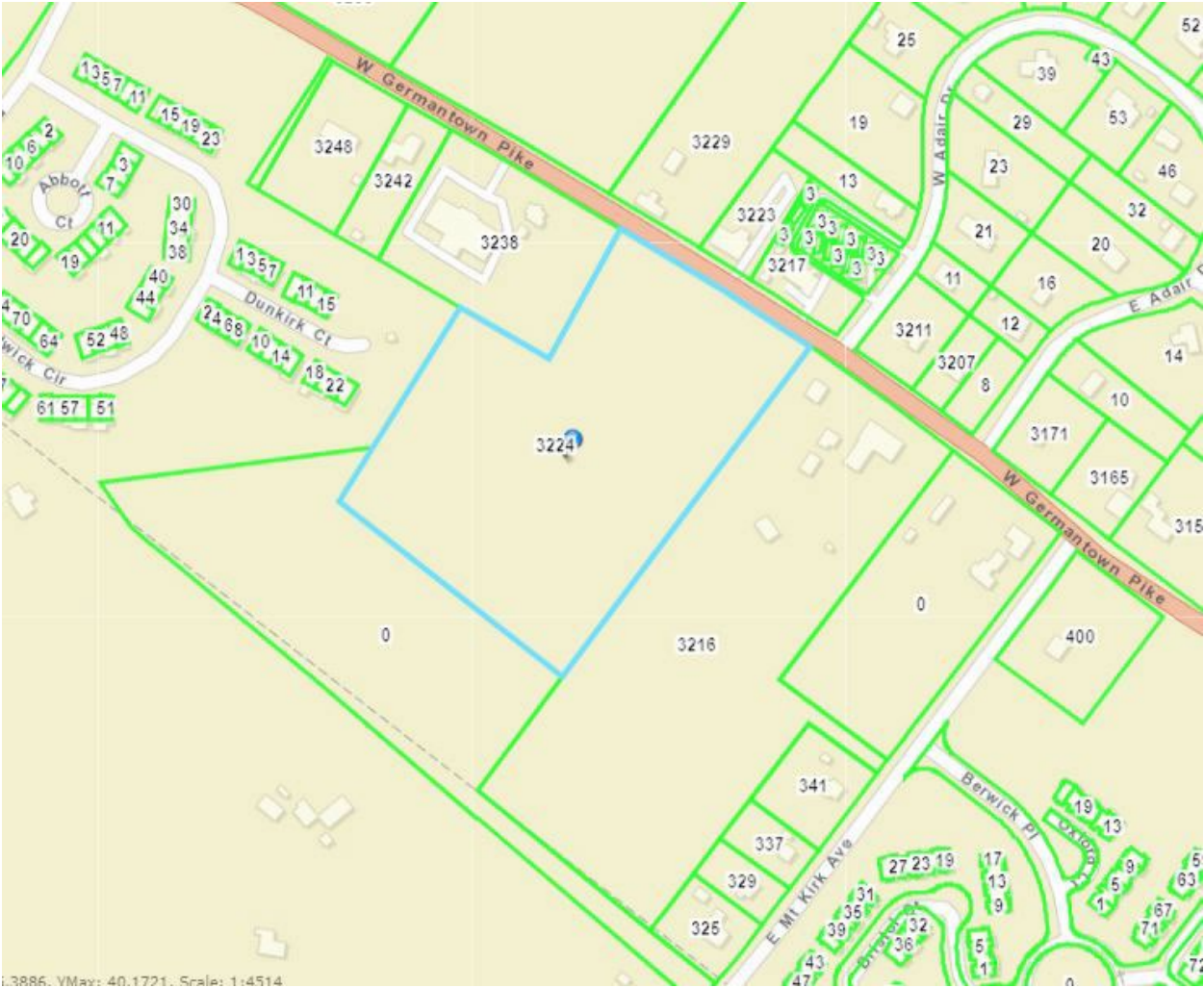
It is important to keep this assignment within its scope. Once analyzed, the answers to the three questions posed above should make the seemingly obvious much clearer. The Township's goal of acquiring 300 acres of open space by 2030 is aggressive and stands to benefit from a clearer understanding of the baseline need for new open space. This insight can be used alongside existing documents, plans, or otherwise to make informed decisions about utilization of limited resources.

Property: Dyka Property

Address: 3224 Germantown Pike

Acreage: 10 acres

Notes: Abuts Mt. Kirk Park. Houses a cell phone tower that is leased by the Township. Area is largely wooded and includes a stream through the center of the property.



Property: Mt. Kirk Park

Address: 232 E. Mount Kirk Ave.

Acreage: 7.61 acres

Notes: Features a walking trail, multi-use field, two restroom, a pavilion area with picnic tables, and impervious parking area. A stream runs through the rear of the property which backs up to a community of Townhomes.

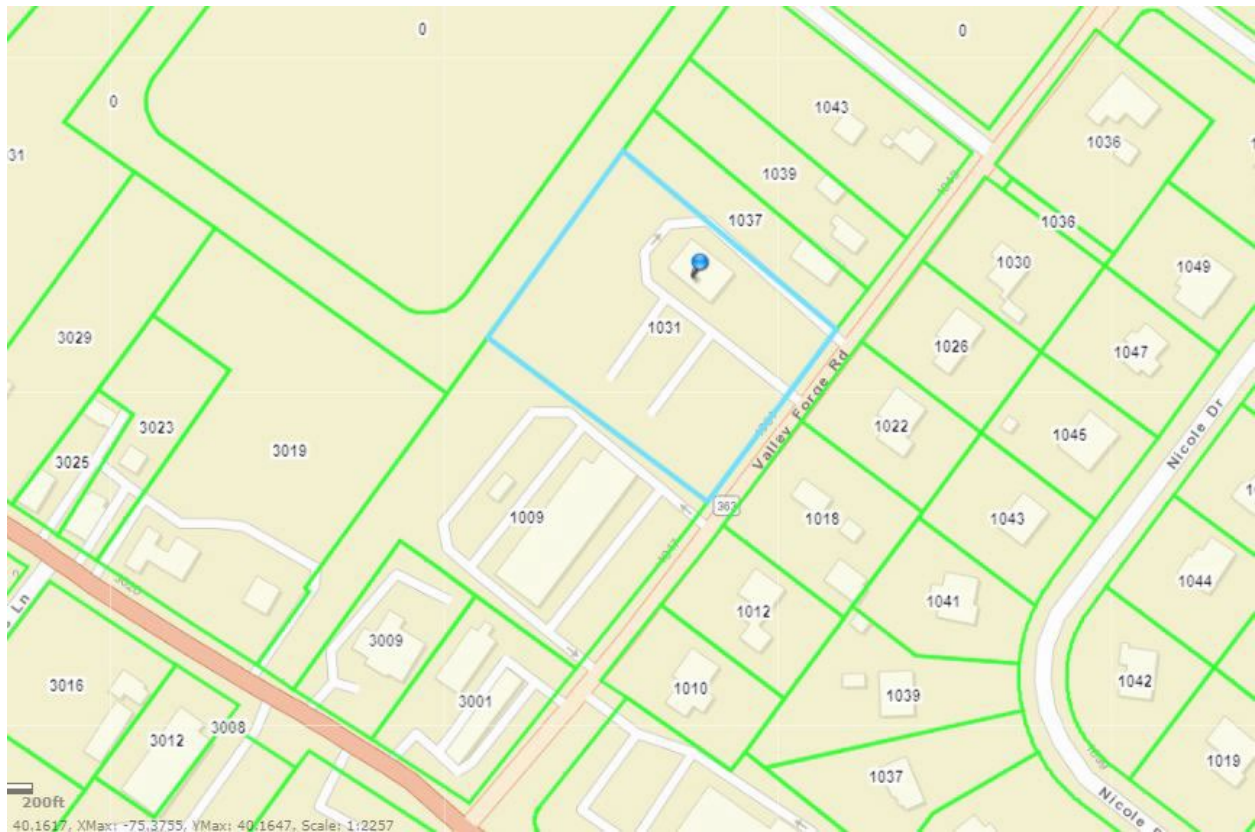


Property: Community Hall

Address: 1031 Valley Forge Road

Acreage: 1.96 acres

Notes: Features the Worcester Township Meeting Hall, formerly the Grange Building which also serves as a polling place for primary and general elections. The basement of the hall is home to a local Boy Scout Troop who uses the space for meetings and storage. The building has one shared bathroom.

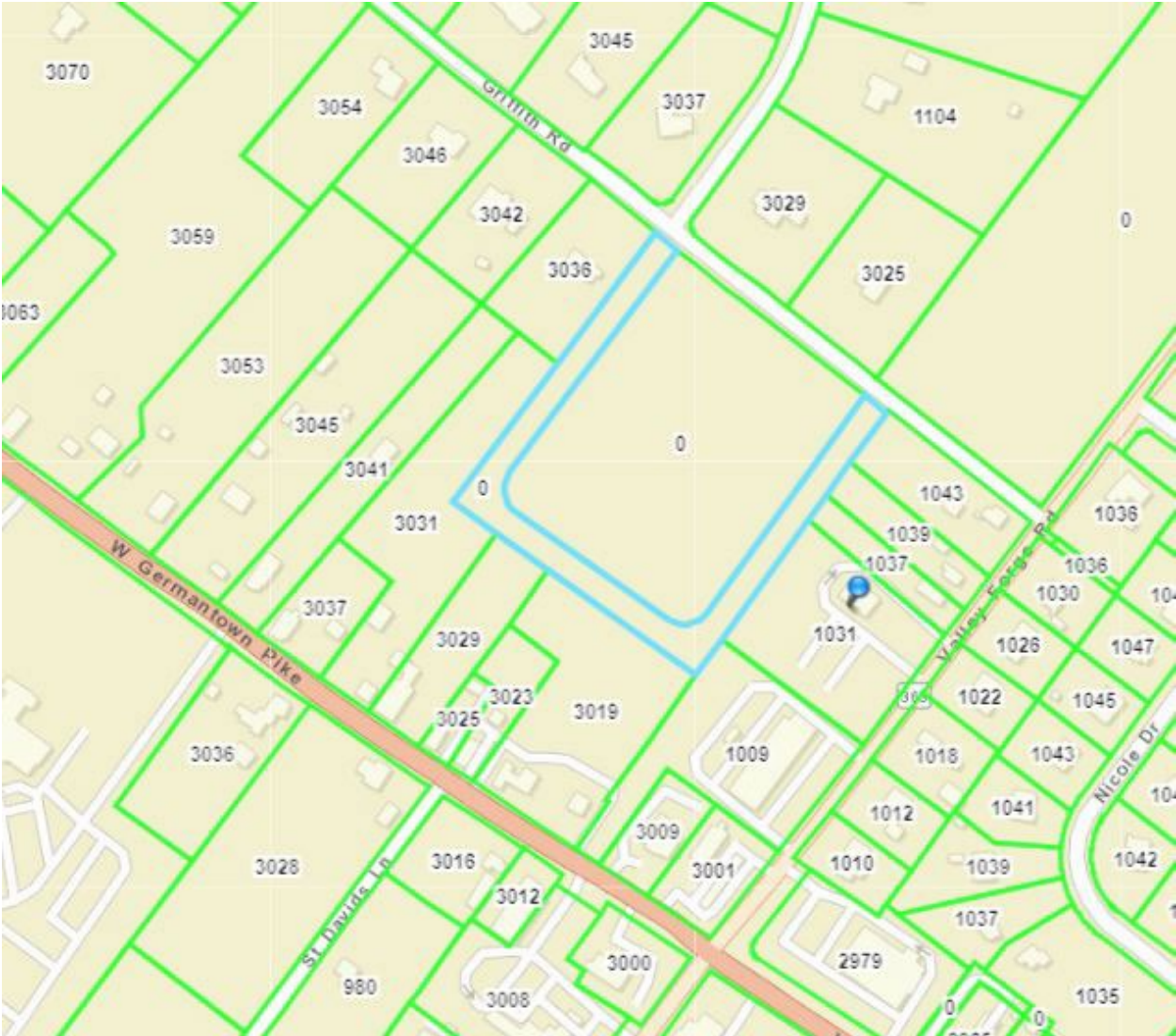


Property: Heyser Field

Address: 1031 Valley Forge Road

Acreage: 3.82 acres

Notes: features a Horse Ring and swing set area style playground. Utilizes shared parking with Community Hall.



Property: Zacharias Trail

Address: Hollow Road, Green Hill Road.

Acreage: 47.34 acres

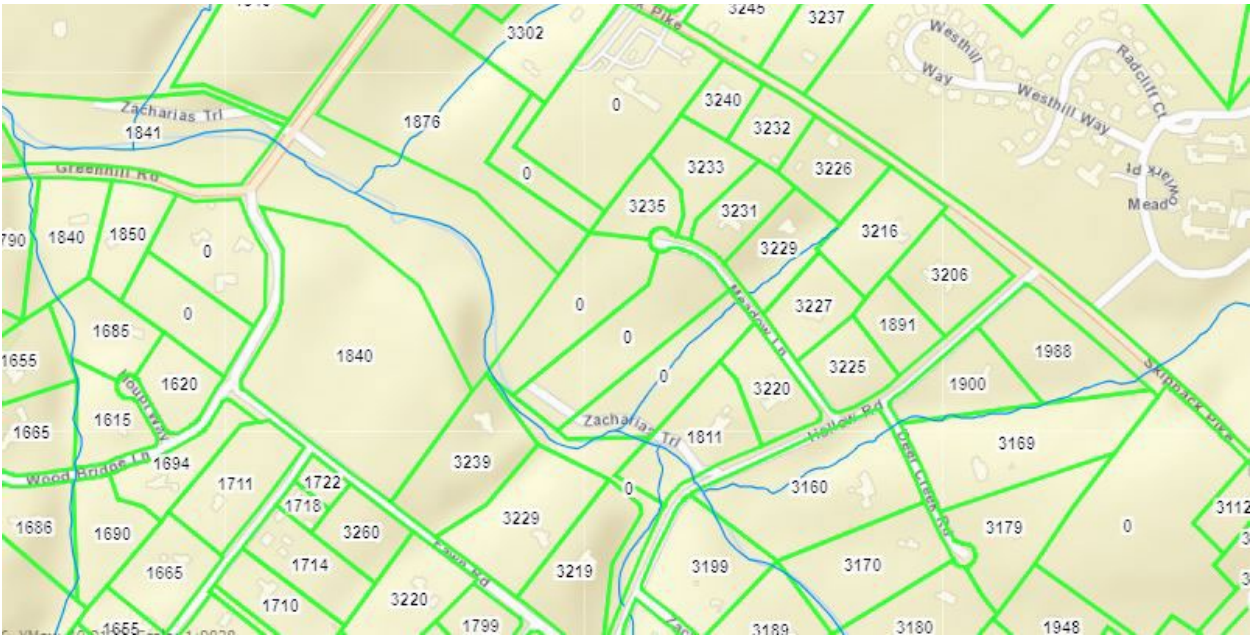
Notes: Extends from Heebner Park to dead end. Currently being extended as part of a project with Skippack Township and DCNR.

Property: Meadow Lane

Address: 3 Building Lots

Acreage: 14.8 acres

Notes: One lot has a stream running through property. All lots abut the Zacharias Trail.

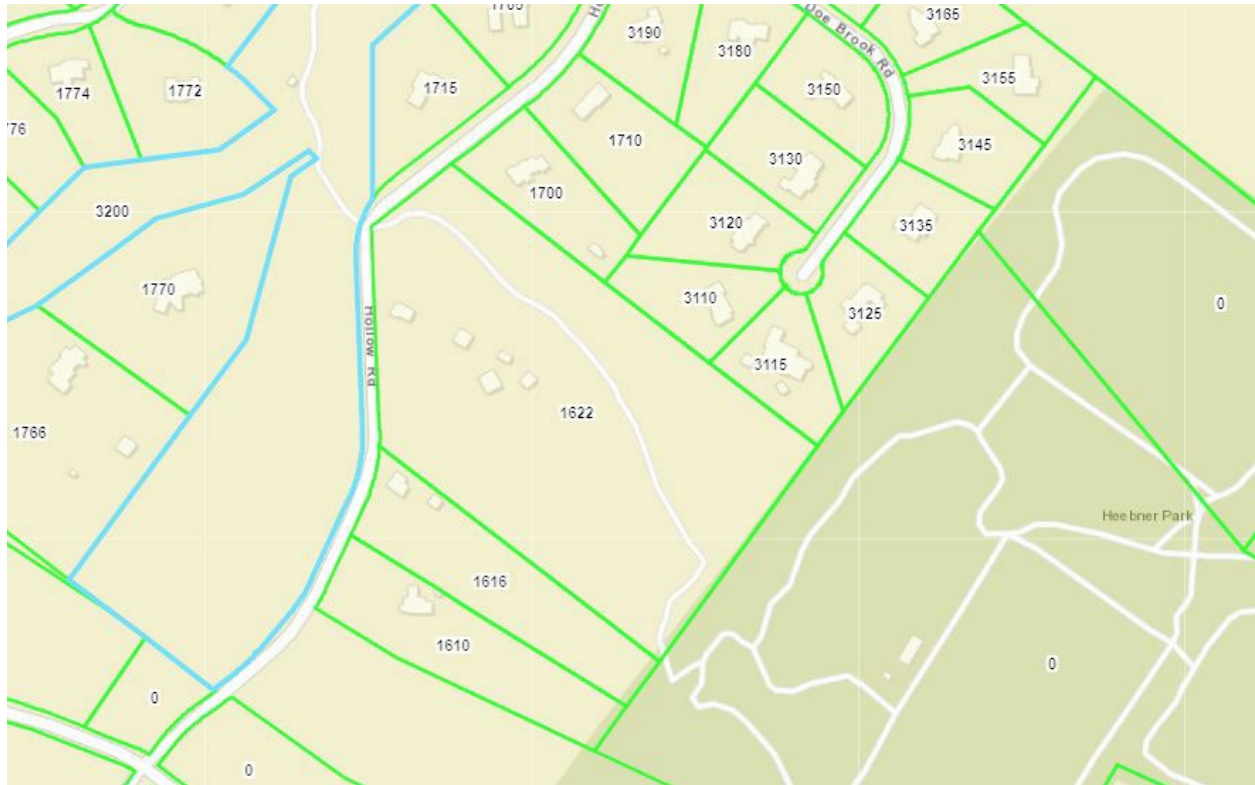


Property: 1622 Hollow Road

Address: Single Family Home (rented by Township)

Acreage: 14 acres

Notes: Property is currently rented to a family on a year-to-year lease. Property has portion of Zacharias Trailing running through the property between Heebner Park and Hollow Road.

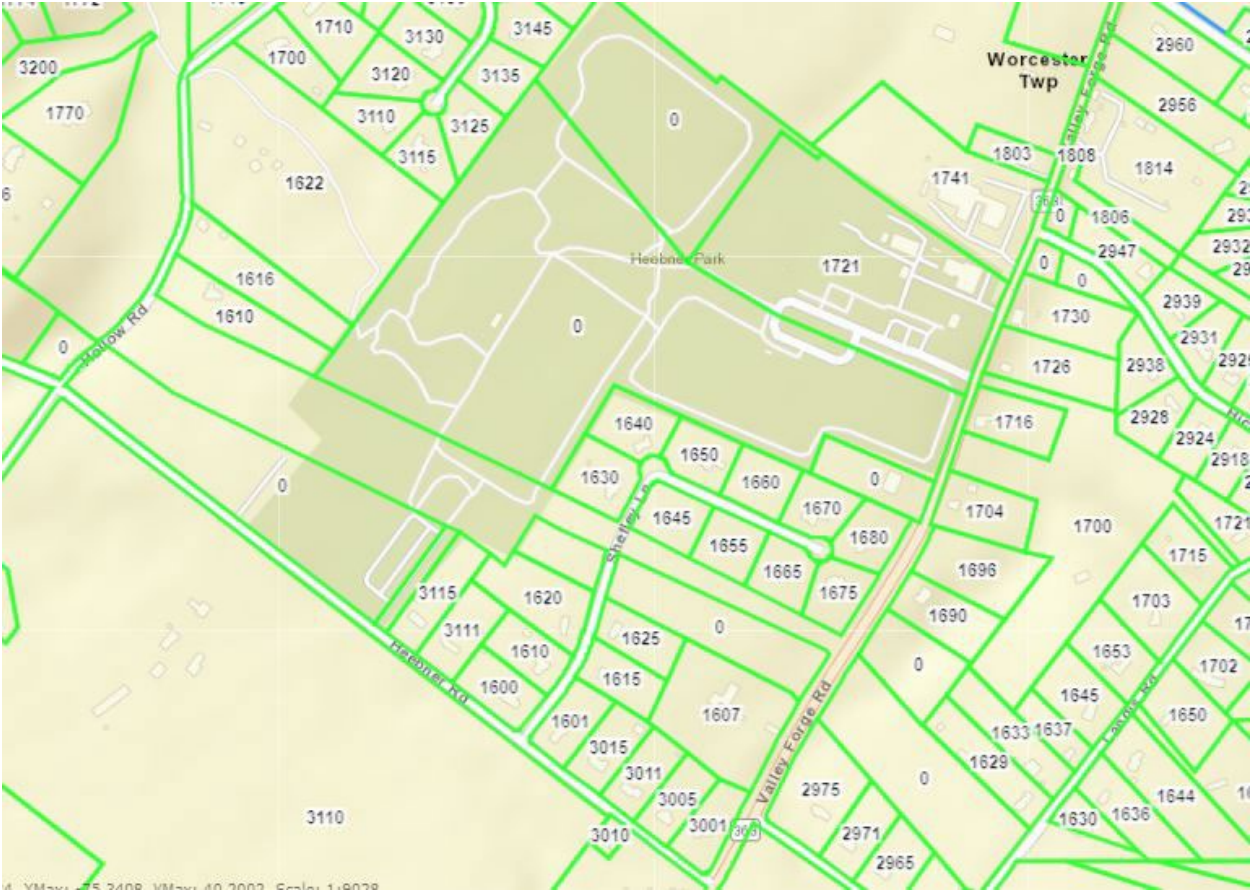


Property: Heebner Park

Address: 1721 Valley Forge Road

Acreage: 88.59 acres

Notes: The Township's largest Park, Heebner is home to the Township Building, Public Works Department, and numerous playing fields, basketball, and tennis courts, as well as a playground. The park also has several memorials, a gazebo, snack stands, and two separate bathroom facilities. The park has parking along Heebner Road as well as Valley Forge Road. Heebner Park is scheduled for road resurfacing in the parking lots next year.

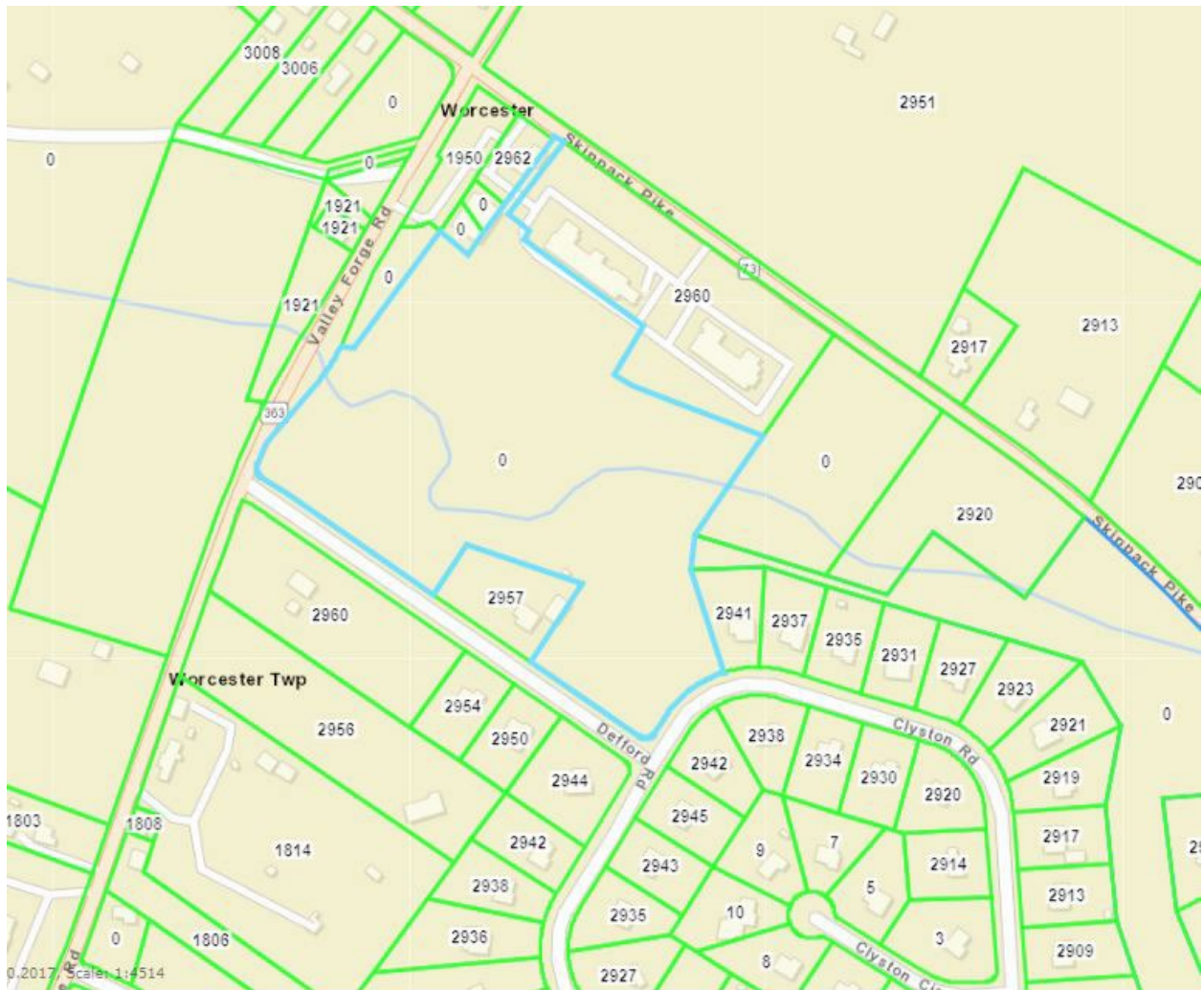


Property: Defford Square

Address: Defford Road/Hickory Hill

Acreage: 26.61 acres

Notes: Site of unconnected trail and pedestrian bridge. Has some picnic tables. Area includes some meadow space, wooded area, and stream area. The area handles a great deal of storm water during rain events.



Property: Farmer Union Hall

Address: 2011 Valley Forge Road

Acreage: .49 acres

Notes: Home to the Worcester Historical Society and Museum. The WHS is a \$1/year tenant and shares the costs of operating the building with the Township.



Property: Sunny Brook Park

Address: 2532 Long Meadow

Acreage: 9 acres

Notes: Features two baseball fields and a soccer field. Includes parking and a bathroom facility.



Property: The Enclave

Address: Deep Meadow Lane

Acreage: 11.04 acres (aggregate)

Notes: This property has two parcels, one is a 2.14-acre lot, the other an 8.9-acre lot.



Property: Nike Park

Address: 1170 Trooper Road

Acreage: 9.2 acres

Notes: Current used for municipal composting and residential composting. Has a pole barn being erected soon for housing equipment used for mulching and chipping.



Property: Fisher Road Property

Address: 3335 Fisher Road

Acreage: 40.59 acres

Notes: Property features a nearly update equestrian barn. There is also a heavily distressed single family home and pump house on site. The property was a farm for many years and has four large meadow pastures. There is also a riparian zone and dry creek bed on the property.

