

Are Our Safety Paths Safe?

If you think the Township is making sure all Safety Paths and Trails shown on the Safety Paths and Trails Master Plan are maintained in safe condition, you would be wrong. Recently the Safety Paths and Trails Committee (SPTC) commissioned a study by PEA of the condition of only the Safety Paths and Trails the Township owns and maintains (about 10% of the total) and is struggled at their June 1 meeting to determine how to find contractors or township employees to make needed repairs.

The remaining safety paths (90%) are totally left up to homeowners associations' discretion to both inspect and repair. At the April 22 meeting, Committee member, Ron Hein made a motion to get an estimate to have all Safety Paths inspected by PEA. This motion was defeated. Really? No to getting an estimate?!

MOTION by Hein seconded by Casadei to have PEA provide an estimate for a path assessment including all township safety paths. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Hein, Casadei Nays: Quesenberry, Zale, Johnson, Dwyer Absent: None Motion failed: 2/4

Not in these 4/22 minutes <https://ecode360.com/documents/OA3183/public/605523998.pdf> is Committee member, John Casadei's personal report of a very serious injury he received from being thrown over the handlebars when his bicycle front wheel was caught in a wide crack between concrete and asphalt pavement surfaces.

My personal view is that the SPTC needs to stop building any new trails (finish Gallagher, of course) until they have accomplished number 5 below from their Master Plan after being informed by #7. Committee Member Lisa Sokol would be a great source for #7 as she has experience in Orion Township and has expressed value for maintenance as a priority.

To fail to do this is risking a serious injury to a child and an expensive lawsuit due to township negligence, in my opinion.

From Safety Paths and Trails Master Plan on page 1 at this link:
<https://ecode360.com/documents/OA3183/public/348893092.pdf>

The Oakland Township Safety Paths and Trails Committee, composed of township officials and involved residents, holds regular monthly meetings to accomplish the following:

- 1. Establish systematic desirability and feasibility criteria to aid in the selection of potential projects***
- 2. Work with professional engineering consultants to consider safety paths and trails design, cost, and construction location***
- 3. Work with engineering and legal consultants and township staff to secure necessary easements from private landowners***
- 4. Recommend safety paths and trail projects to the board of trustees***

5. Establish policies and guidelines which will help direct the implementation and maintenance of safety paths and trails

6. Gain an understanding of how our township's safety paths and trails system fits into the larger regional and state trail planning and funding vision

7. Review how safety paths and trails groups operate in other communities, and study what policies, procedures and tools they use

8. Review/update our township's trail and safety path information online and in township newsletters