

Downingtown Main Street Association dedicates Armor Alley

Downingtown Main Street Association dedicates the Armor Alley during a ceremony Tuesday

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Officials involved in the making of the Armor Alley cut the ribbon during an official dedication ceremony held Tuesday evening.

DOWNINGTOWN—Developer Sarah Peck and designer Michael Wagoner had envisioned something better for a small space in the borough near the Coffee Cup, where they shared ideas over a cup of coffee.

Peck recalls the area had overgrown grass at a pocket park that could be revitalized and become a walkable area while connecting the restaurants on Lancaster Avenue to the

Mill Town Square shopping center. She said they both wanted to take the eyesore and fix it up to make it a "welcoming gathering place."

Wagoner said it would create additional public space for people to sit and wait or use during their lunch break.

"People didn't really use it before," he said of the space.

A few years ago, the Main Street began hosting Summer Jam at the pocket park, now called the Armor Alley. Electrical outlets were strategically placed for such events and lights were added, along with nice landscaping. Everyone who worked on the project has ties to the Downingtown area, and that made it more special to them to clean up the area and make it a functional space.

"It was more than just a job," Peck said. "It's a nice example of people coming together to make something better."

Kristen MacLaughlin, with KM Gardens, had completed the landscaping. She agrees with the fact that the space had potential and now she uses that space as well. Prior to becoming involved in the project, she had not spent time at that location. She noted that there is foot traffic in that area with the Lord's Pantry.

"You want people to come there and use the space," MacLaughlin said.

The Armor Alley was officially dedicated Tuesday night with a ceremony and treats from The Farmhouse Coffee and The Creamery, local shops owned by Dana and Pete Petrizzio. A musician sang and played his guitar while members of the public and borough officials gathered to celebrate the milestone and enjoy their time at an outdoor location complete with benches.

"Tonight's gathering is exactly what we envisioned," Peck said of their dream.

The gathering celebrated the completion of the first phase of the project, which was completed with a state grant. Borough officials supported Main Street and gave their blessings for the project. The second phase will connect to the Mill Town Square shopping center and involve redoing the walkway by placing pavers to match the park. Peck said that by visually connecting the areas, it will draw more people to the business district.

Tim and Amy Grenz live in an apartment near the pocket park and they have watched the redevelopment.

"It's cool to see the construction and the progress they have made. We've seen it come together and we wanted to see what it's all about," Tim said about attending the

celebration. "We wanted to get more connected within the community and meet the business owners."

Amy works at two nearby locations and she walks past the park on her walk to work. She attended the event because she supports the revitalization of that space to improve the borough. They both enjoy the outdoors and they like that there is a walkable outdoor space where they can gather near where they live.

It was the first time that Tammy Swanson, of West Bradford Township, came to the Armor Alley. Her family attends many township community events and they wanted to see the new space in the borough.

"It's nice," she said. "We like being outside and it's nice to come to an outdoor event."

Downingtown Main Street Association (DMSA) Chairman Colby Martin thanked several people for being instrumental in the project, including Peck, Wagoner, former DMSA Chairman Steve Plaughter, Downingtown Borough Manager Stephen Sullins, the seven council members and Jack Law, director of Public Works Department. He said Downingtown is a great place to live, work and visit. He said while it was a lengthy process, "we are happy we are in the space now."

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Pictured is the drawing of the Armor Alley in Downingtown Borough, located along East Lancaster Avenue.



Borough officials and members of the public gather during the dedication of the Armor Alley on Tuesday night, hosted by the Downingtown Main Street Association.