

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS ANDERSON TOWNSHIP PARK DISTRICT

April 8, 2015

Dale Bartholomew, President, called the special meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Anderson Township Park District (“ATPD”) to order at 6:00 pm at Park District Headquarters, 8249 Clough Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45244. Present were Board Members: Nadine Gelter, Rob Herking, and Tom Turchiano. Angie Stocker arrived during the Levy Summary section of the meeting.

Also present were: Ken Kushner, Executive Director; Emily Armstrong, Assistant Director/Board Clerk; Brian Jordan, Financial Officer; Jessica Fall, Recreation Manager; and Sheila Fehn, Office Manager.

GUESTS: Sheila Vilvens, Forest Hills Journal; Residents: Bob Drake; Yan Nasilevich; and Wayne Rod.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA: Mrs. Gelter moved the Board approve the Agenda as presented. Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Public to Address the Board: Mr. Drake asked which resolutions were passed by the Board and if they would be discussed tonight. He asked how much the Beech Acres property costs, and how the Board expects people to decide if they want the ATPD to buy it if the price has not been discussed. He asked what Beech Acres Parenting Center’s situation is.

Mr. Bartholomew said a purchase price has been an executive session matter regarding land acquisition.

Mrs. Gelter said a purchase offer has not been agreed to with the Beech Acres Parenting Center organization.

Mr. Kushner said the land owner is not accepting other proposals and is giving the community an opportunity to acquire the property through the ATPD.

Mr. Bartholomew said the ATPD cannot answer Mr. Drake’s questions about the Beech Acres Parenting Center’s situation.

Community Survey Results: Mr. Bartholomew thanked the guests for attending the meeting. He said the Board understands why Mr. John Fox could not attend the meeting to present the survey information.

Mr. Kushner said Mr. Fox will present the survey research at a future Board meeting. He said the Board has all of the current information and that Mr. Fox is working on the final details, all of which will be posted on the ATPD’s website when available. The ATPD was taking a chance to see if people wanted the property and the components for park improvements. The results were very positive regarding all three components the ATPD is exploring.

Mr. Kushner presented the survey Topline Research Summary and the associated verbatim comments.

The Board discussed at length the results of the survey and the comments submitted.

Mr. Kushner stated the plan for all three components received the most support. The comments were all over the place, representing many interests and desires, and more than the ATPD could possibly do on a 1.0 mill maximum capital levy. He said the Board will need to evaluate everything and work towards a plan that is realistic and likely to be supported by the community. Mr. Fox did the Forest Hills School District's facilities survey last year, and his research data revealed almost exactly the actual end result of the community's vote.

Mr. Bartholomew stated the research shows 60% of those surveyed through a combination of online surveys and random phone calls support the ATPD's efforts to improve the parks. He said he found it interesting that at least 14 negative online survey responses were worded exactly the same way, while he did not see a similar pattern with the positive responses.

Mrs. Gelter said she noticed two responses that seemed odd to her as they were oddly worded and regarded options for the property on behalf of another owner. Her understanding is that Beech Acres Parenting Center is offering the property only to the ATPD at this point.

Mr. Herking said he was surprised by the number of people who want a community pool.

Mr. Kushner said the community is clearly interested in the opportunity the Beech Acres Parenting Center is presenting through the ATPD. Even the negative responses were not negative on all components.

Mr. Kushner presented the Levy Summary and Components piece, which listed the possible park improvement components and expenses, and revenue generated by various levy amounts.

Mr. Bartholomew said he did not realize the amount for the property was disclosed in the materials, and therefore, stated the cost of the property to address Mr. Drake's question is \$187,017 per acre for a total of \$5,370,006 for 28 acres, and \$6,866,142 should the land owner wish to sell 36 acres.

Mr. Turchiano said the cost to a homeowner on a \$100,000 home annually ranges between \$17.50 and \$35, depending on the mill amount selected, and a length of time of either 15 or 20 years. The revenue generated would range between approximately \$6 million to \$24 million.

Mrs. Stocker arrived at 6:18 p.m.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD has operated at a 1.9 mill level since 1992. Since 1975, the ATPD has developed the park system out of its operating levy. The ATPD runs a different system than most organizations because the Board has allowed the staff to accomplish things over the years, with an emphasis on putting the most into the parks as possible.

Mrs. Gelter said she wants to discuss the options and prefers not to make a decision tonight. This is a huge matter of significance for the ATPD and it warrants thoughtful consideration. The ATPD has

not run a capital levy while any of the current members have been on the board. She would like time to digest the information and evaluate all the options.

Mr. Bartholomew said a timing issue requires the Board to make a decision, in order to meet the May 8th deadline set by the land owner. Since the Township Trustees must approve the ATPD's ballot issue, he would like the ATPD's request to be made to the Trustees by their April 16th meeting. He said that would leave the Trustee's May 7th meeting, in case the Trustees don't approve it at the April 16th meeting.

The Board discussed at length the various components and projects that could be accomplished with this levy, including: purchasing the property; renovating the RecPlex; adding on to the RecPlex or adding a new rec center; the probable demolition of some or all of the existing buildings on the new property; readying the new property as a public park; paved trail extensions; and improvements that would enhance the existing parks, restrooms, shade structures, paved trail extensions, parking lots, infrastructure, and land acquisition adjacent to existing parks. Improvements at Johnson Hills Park would be about \$1.5 million for an entrance, entrance road, parking lot and restrooms.

Mr. Bartholomew asked Mr. Kushner to have staff prioritize the park improvements list presented. In his opinion, restrooms are a high priority.

Mr. Kushner stated the list of park improvements was developed in large part from the 2013 Park Improvement Resident Survey. The items people identified as most important included restrooms, paved trails, and shade structures. The shade structures included on the new Juilfs Park playground are a huge hit with park visitors. Restrooms are not extremely exciting but they matter to people. People do not like Port-o-lets and they are actually expensive. Our parks are not temporary, and the cost to rent port-o-lets adds up to significant dollars over time. There are a lot of amenities that could be included but the ATPD needs to determine what is essential to the general public. The survey results indicate people want more than what we could ever do for the maximum levy amount.

Mr. Kushner said everyday is Arbor Day at the ATPD. Volunteers and staff recently planted 600 trees this past weekend, but we need more than trees. Land is limited and we have the opportunity now to capture the Beech Acres property for the community of tomorrow. Beech Acres Parenting Center has offered us a chance to acquire their land, which will never come up again. The decision is the Board's to determine our greatest chance for success with this capital levy. It is up to the Board to decide if the community will support some of the components or all. The ATPD has evolved in phases. Once the ATPD owns the land, other improvements can and will follow. It comes down to time, does the community want the improvements now, or do they want to wait another 10 or 20 years for the next phase? He said the land would set up the park district to be able to serve the community in the future. Beech Acres Park is our most popular park and it would greatly enhance the community to expand it onto the adjacent, last large parcel of land in the center of the community.

Mr. Turchiano said he wants the ATPD to be able to do more than just buy the land. He believes the ATPD needs to be able to do something with the land and not just let it sit. Nothing is cheap and he believes this is the cheapest the property will ever be. He said he is not minimizing what \$35 a year means to families, but that the incremental differences in the levy amounts is not much, compared to what the community would get for the larger amount. He believes the Board should choose a millage in the \$24.50 to \$35 range in order to have enough money for infrastructure and to get a rec center built. He requested staff work on a prioritized list of projects.

Mrs. Gelter said even people who said they do not use the parks still said they see the importance of acquiring the land for park purposes. She does not want to make a decision that will jeopardize the opportunity to acquire the land. She stated she would like to avoid the noise of including components beyond getting the land, renovating the RecPlex, and readying the land as a public park.

Mr. Bartholomew stated he believes the average home value in Anderson Township is \$212,000.

Mr. Herking confirmed the amount per \$100,000 home value was a year's value and established the following levy information:

Levy Options			Estimate Over Levy Life (97% of total)		
			Length of Levy in Years		
New Mill	Estimated Dollars Generated in 2015	Cost to Home Owner per \$100,000			
			10	15	20
0.5	\$612,384	\$17.50	\$6,123,840	\$9,185,760	\$12,247,680
0.6	\$734,860	\$21.00	\$7,348,600	\$11,022,900	\$14,697,200
0.7	\$857,337	\$24.50	\$8,573,370	\$12,860,055	\$17,146,740
0.8	\$979,814	\$28.00	\$9,798,140	\$14,697,210	\$19,596,280
0.9	\$1,102,290	\$31.50	\$11,022,900	\$16,534,350	\$22,045,800
1.0	\$1,224,767	\$35.00	\$12,247,670	\$18,371,505	\$24,495,340

Mr. Herking established the items in red were formally certified by the Hamilton County Auditor and the highlighted items were approximations referred to in the survey as the three components being considered. He said he hates levies and believes he is taxed a lot as a resident. He believes Anderson Township is a nice community as a result of the taxes collected. He is not a fan of the recent monster Forest Hills School District levy but this Board's mission is to improve the parks the best way we can. He said he wants to give the voters a shot at these improvements and that is what matters.

Mrs. Gelter stated she does not think the Board should go for the larger amount and that not every voter gets the nuances of what they would get for more money. She believes if the ATPD goes for the largest amount, the ATPD may lose out on the land completely. In her opinion, a lower amount focusing on the land purchase, RecPlex renovation, and preparing the land as a public park is a better sell to the voter. She is concerned if the ATPD goes for the maximum, people may not vote for it because it may include a part of the plan they don't like.

Mr. Herking said he originally thought the same as Mrs. Gelter, but in his opinion, voters are either opposed to parks or they are not. He does not think the people would oppose it because of a part they may not care for.

Mr. Bartholomew believes 40% of the voters automatically vote no to all issues.

Mrs. Stocker said she is looking at the levy as both a Board member and as a resident park visitor. The maximum levy would do the most good, and got the highest support on the survey. As a commissioner, she wants to get the land and believes restrooms would be a huge improvement in the parks that don't have them, or need more of them. Her use of the parks has evolved over the past 10 years. Where she used to spend a lot of time in the parks at her kid's baseball games, she now visits the parks for the paved trails for health and fitness purposes for herself. She is concerned a lower amount will not enable the ATPD to do what needs to be done for the greatest number of park visitors. She does not believe the difference in the amounts is that significant and that the maximum amount yields a much greater return to the residents. She is concerned the lower amount will leave the ATPD stagnant in areas. She stated the Board is making this decision on behalf of a variety of people with a variety of interests. She does not believe there is anything controversial in anything the ATPD is proposing.

Mr. Bartholomew said ownership of the land opens up opportunities for grants, donations, and partnerships of great significance. If we capture the land and fix up the RecPlex, the ATPD can get somewhere on what we are trying to accomplish.

Mrs. Gelter said some people think we need a safe driveway in and out of Johnson Hills Park, others disagree and see no need for a safe driveway at that park. Some people may not see the need for restrooms at Laverty Park.

Mr. Bartholomew asked the Board for their thoughts on a 0.9 mill level for 20 years. He believes that amount would generate the opportunity for matching grants.

Mr. Kushner stated the ATPD passed its first 1.9 mill operating levy in 1992, which has since completely redefined the entire park system. When the ATPD was first created in 1975, community members were sold on a dream of what could be. Now, 40 years later, people see what they get and they want more. He said the ATPD is meeting on this matter today because the Beech Acres Parenting Center is offering us a chance to acquire their land for the community. This has been the most significant goal of the ATPD for over 25 years. He believes Anderson is a community on the move and that the survey demonstrates people are ready to take the next step.

Mr. Bartholomew stated he would put the ATPD operation up against any organization. He knows the things the ATPD is capable of accomplishing and he wants to make a decision that helps continue the ATPD's progress to improve the community.

Mr. Turchiano said no one likes taxes and that he believes people who are against a levy for the parks are against it no matter what. He believes people will support the levy even if there are parts that don't particularly matter to them. He does not want to minimize any amount of money for taxes, and believes the return to the community far outweighs the cost. He said Beech Acres Park is already a jewel in the crown of this community and that the survey shows people want it to be more than it is.

Mr. Herking said 70% of the community is interested in improving the community through the parks.

Mrs. Gelter said the survey shows this property matters to the community and that they understand this is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Mr. Kushner said the ATPD can accomplish park improvements over time if the Board is concerned about the amount that would add to the levy. He stated that parks are one of the few things residents pay taxes for that they can use every day if they choose. He said the parks appeal to every demographic.

Mr. Bartholomew asked if there would be a significant increase in staff in a new rec center.

Mrs. Fall said more part-time staff would be needed to run more activities and courts, but that the cost for such staff is included in the registration or rental fees. The ATPD currently runs multiple courts in various locations at one time. The RecPlex is in use seven days a week already, but there would possibly be additional hours because of the potential indoor walking trail.

Mrs. Armstrong said some of the staffing would be consolidated in many cases, as one facility attendant is needed for one court or four courts. The walking trail would affect our business as we will have a membership base for the first time and the building will be in use, outside of scheduled programs and leagues.

Mr. Herking moved the Board move forward with a 1.0 mill levy for 20 years to purchase the Beech Acres Parenting Center Property, renovate the RecPlex, ready the property as a public park, extend the Beech Acres Park trail, build a new recreation center, and improve the eight existing parks.

Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion.

Mr. Bartholomew encouraged discussion on the matter.

Mrs. Gelter said she believed the amount should be lower and that she would like to leave off the general park improvements and the new recreation center components.

Voting: Yes: Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (4); No: Mrs. Gelter. (1). The motion carried.

Mr. Bartholomew stated the next step would be to formally approve a resolution, declaring it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation. He referenced the corresponding resolution, 2015-05, which the Board passed at the March 10th regular meeting, requesting the county auditor to certify matters in connection with a proposed tax levy at the 1.0 mill level for 20 years.

Resolution 2015-11 ~ Declaring It Necessary to Levy a Tax:

Mrs. Stocker moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-11, declaring it necessary to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation**, at a rate not exceeding one (1.00) mills for each one dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to ten cents (\$0.10) for each one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of valuation, for a twenty (20) year period of time.

Mr. Herking seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 2015-12 ~ Requesting Board of Township Trustees of Anderson Township to Approve Tax Levy Request:

Mr. Bartholomew asked staff to correct an errant word in the resolution.

Mr. Herking moved the Board approve **Resolution 2015-12, requesting Board of Township Trustees of Anderson Township to Approve Tax Levy Request**, at a rate not exceeding one (1.00)

mills for each one dollar (\$1.00) of valuation, which amounts to ten cents (\$0.10) for each one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of valuation, for a twenty (20) year period of time, as amended.

Mrs. Stocker seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

Public to Address the Board:

Mr. Drake said the ATPD is intentionally not providing requested information since he asked about the price of the Beech Acres Parenting property earlier in the meeting and Mr. Bartholomew did not tell him until later in the meeting. He asked for clarification of the levy amounts discussed previously in the meeting. He asked for the list of projects being considered in the park improvements component. He said he is concerned the levy would include funds to develop Johnson Hills Park. He asked about the ATPD's 1992 levy and why the new levy being considered is so great. He asked how much the survey cost and when he can see the data.

Mr. Bartholomew said the property price has been an Executive Session matter until being included in the Board's meeting information today. He clarified the levy amounts that were discussed, which included the property purchase at two different acreage amounts. He instructed staff to send Mr. Drake the levy summary and components information, which includes the park improvements list, and the survey results. He said the park improvements list currently includes \$1.5 million for the entrance, roadway, parking, and restrooms at Johnson Hills Park. He further stated the information will be online after next week's regular Board meeting.

Mr. Kushner stated the landowner has not decided yet if they want to sell 28 or 36 acres, which is why both numbers are included. He stated all the information will be posted online once the Board has had an opportunity to review it and make changes. He said the ATPD's operating levy is different than a capital levy. Currently, the ATPD has a 10-year operating levy at 1.9 mills which expires. Since 1992, the ATPD has passed two more operating levies at 1.9 mills each. The ATPD currently has no capital levy and stated the proposed capital levy would be the first of its kind for the ATPD. While the ATPD could accomplish pieces of the park improvements component from its operating levy over time, the minimum of the Beech Acres property and associated renovations are not possible in the ATPD's operating levy.

Mr. Jordan said the survey cost \$14,250.

Mr. Bartholomew thanked the guests for attending the meeting and said they are welcome to stay while the Board goes into Executive session.

At 7:17 pm Mrs. Stocker moved the Board adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

At 7:24 pm Mr. Herking moved the Board adjourn the Executive Session and re-open the regular meeting. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

No decision was made by the Board at this time.

At 7:24 pm, there being no further business to be brought before this Board, Mr. Herking moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Turchiano seconded the motion. Voting: Yes: Mrs. Gelter, Mr. Herking, Mr. Bartholomew, Mrs. Stocker, and Mr. Turchiano. (5); No: None. The motion carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing are the minutes of the April 8, 2015 special meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners, which minutes reflect the essence of the meeting and are not verbatim.

Emily Armstrong
Board Clerk

Dale Bartholomew

Nadine Gelter

Rob Herking

Angie Stocker

Tom Turchiano