



## ANDERSON TOWNSHIP PARK DISTRICT

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### **A Message from Your Board of Park Commissioners:**

#### **Beech Acres Property ~ A Community Decision, November 3, 2015**

Since 1975 the Anderson Township Park District Board of Park Commissioners has taken steps to strengthen and improve Anderson Township, serving as stewards of the future by establishing active parks throughout the community. Quality public parks are key features of a thriving and active community. Anderson parks and facilities provide opportunities for healthy lifestyle activities which attract and retain residents.

The community has been the benefactor of a longstanding relationship between the Anderson Township Park District and Beech Acres Parenting Center. Since the 1970s Beech Acres has allowed the community to enjoy much of their property as a park. The Park Board eventually purchased 25 acres and continues to lease the RecPlex to provide for the recreational needs of the growing community. In September of 2014, the Park Board was elated when the opportunity to purchase the remaining property presented itself. The phenomenal growth and success of Beech Acres Parenting Center and radical change from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century orphanage to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century parenting center have meant that the agency requires different physical facilities to best meet the needs of the families it serves. For that reason, Beech Acres was willing to entertain the Park Board's proposal to acquire the property — a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Land acquisition adjacent to existing parks is a priority of the park district, especially when the land includes the RecPlex, Anderson's only public recreation facility and home to our Recreation Department. The Park Board believes this property is essential to the immediate and long-term ability for the park district to meet the recreational needs of the community. Beech Acres' property is an iconic feature of Anderson Township at a main gateway to our community. The land purchase would continue the park district's RecPlex business as the hub of our recreation programs, leagues, and events. Most large events at Beech Acres Park require the RecPlex and surrounding property, including Greater Anderson Days. The Beech Acres Park maintenance compound also resides on this property, which supports all park district properties.

Over the past several months, the Park Board carefully considered the options on this time-sensitive and important property matter. The Commissioners had many extensive discussions in public meetings and conducted a professional community survey to determine the community's interest and the best path to capture the land for the lifetime of the community. The Commissioners agreed it to be additionally important to secure enough funding to renovate the existing RecPlex and prepare the

property as a public park. This effort is entirely beyond the means of the park district's 1.9 mill operating levy, and therefore the Park Board determined a capital levy to be the best viable option.

Accordingly, the Park Board decided to move forward with a 0.7 mill, 15-year levy to be voted on by the residents of Anderson this November. The levy would generate approximately \$12.86 million to permanently acquire the 36 acres including the RecPlex, renovate the RecPlex, and prepare the property for use by the public. The cost to the owner of a \$100,000 home would be \$24.50 per year. The Park Board believes its most important role is to acquire the property today, so the park district can grow with the community of tomorrow. A community survey substantiated this belief as 71% of the respondents agreed the park district should take advantage of the opportunity to purchase the land and RecPlex owned by Beech Acres Parenting Center, to meet the immediate and future recreational needs of the community. Meanwhile, the Park Board is committed to exploring both public and private partnerships, to bring future recreation components to fruition for the greatest benefit to the community with as little tax-payer liability as possible.

We thank the community for its long-standing support of the park district. Visit [AndersonParks.com](http://AndersonParks.com) to see the entire results of the community survey from this past spring. If you have questions about anything park related, please contact Ken Kushner, Executive Director: [KKushner@AndersonParks.com](mailto:KKushner@AndersonParks.com); 513.388.2492.

We have heard it said, "The Township form of government is the closest to the people." The people of Anderson 40 years ago decided to create the park district to provide for the community's active recreational needs. This November, it will be up to the people of Anderson today to decide where we go in our next forty years.

**Your Board of Park Commissioners,**

Dale Bartholomew, Nadine Gelter, Tom Turchiano, Rob Herking and Angie Stocker