



ANDERSON TOWNSHIP PARK DISTRICT

8249 Clough Pike
Cincinnati, Ohio 45244-2746
Phone: 513.474.0003; Fax: 513.388.2494
www.andersonparks.com

September 15, 2015

An Update from Your Board of Park Commissioners: Beech Acres Property ~ A Community Decision, November 3, 2015

Since September of 2014 the park board has been navigating the process to acquire Beech Acres Parenting Center's property as public parkland. We are currently in contract with the landowner to purchase the property, contingent upon a levy passing on November 3, approving the funds to purchase the property, by all residents of Anderson Township.

Over the last several months, officials from the Forest Hills School District, Anderson Township Government, and the Anderson Township Park District explored opportunities to work together toward the betterment of the future of our community. One of the opportunities, which resonated with the community, involved a private developer's proposal to bring new development to the current Anderson High School site which would generate revenue to partially fund construction of a new Anderson High School on the Beech Acres property. While we all agreed many benefits may be derived from this concept, all three entities determined there were too many insurmountable hurdles to overcome. Therefore, in a joint statement (August 25, 2015) all three entities were unanimous in the decision that the project was not feasible.

That being said, it has been made clear to the park board by community members that they believe the Anderson High School/economic development concept is still possible and actively being pursued today. The park district values the trust our community has in the park board that we do what we say we are going to do. Because of the significant confusion and frustration the Anderson High School/economic development concept is causing in our community, we specifically want to address the park board's position on this matter and clarify what the upcoming park levy is about.

The common themes we have heard over the past year are:

- The community wants the Beech Acres Parenting Center's 36 acres to be public property.
- The community needs the three entities to work together for the betterment of the community.

The park board continues to explore both public and private partnerships for development of this property. Should the Anderson High School/economic development concept still be viable, which would be a decision to be made by the Forest Hills School District and Anderson Township Government boards, the Anderson Township Park District is still open to the idea. But, the community should be the ultimate decision maker at the ballot box on November 3 to make it parkland, with opportunity for future input to decide whether or not they want a school to be built there. This affords the entities the time required to thoroughly explore the high school/economic development concept and to present the plan to the public.

The bottom line is the community will ultimately decide on the Beech Acres Parenting Center's property:

On November 3, 2015, voters will decide if they want the Beech Acres property to be in the public's hands, at least as parkland. The 0.7 mill, 15-year levy would generate approximately \$12.86 million to 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. A positive vote would assure this property would be held for the community's best interest.

If a plan to put Anderson High School on the property is determined to be viable and a win-win-win scenario is agreed to by all three entities, **the community should be presented with another choice to decide whether or not they want a school to be built there.** If the community approves the school option, the park board will cooperate in conveying the property to the school district.

The park board believes this to be a diplomatic and ethical way to go forward with this very important property and community issue. The only opportunity to capture this property for the community is through the park district this November. How better to decide this outcome than to put the decision in the hands of the community we all serve?

If you have questions about anything park related, please contact Ken Kushner, Executive Director: KKushner@AndersonParks.com; 513.388.2492. You may also contact the Board of Park Commissioners at BoardPresident@AndersonParks.com, or through Ken Kushner.

Your Board of Park Commissioners,

Nadine Gelter, President

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