



Anderson Park District reforms sought

By Lisa Wakeland • lwakeland@communitypress.com • November 12, 2010

A group of Anderson Township residents and business owners are petitioning the Anderson Township Park District for reforms after Board of Park Commissioners denied an easement for a proposed sewer line extension through Riverside Park along Round Bottom Road.

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Business owner Mark Schmidt, who led the petition drive, said the Park District is using flawed logic to deny an easement that will bring a sanitary sewer to many residences and businesses in northern Anderson Township.

Schmidt, owner of Blue Chip Pavement Maintenance Inc. on Mt. Carmel Road, claims the Park District refused to grant the easement to push through development of new all-weather synthetic fields at Riverside Park.

"From my point of view, the information they were using to inform their decisions was faulty on a number of levels," Schmidt said.

The Park District has stated concerns that construction of the proposed sewer line would negatively impact use of the fields and future development at Riverside Park.

"The loss of use of the park and not getting it back in the condition it's in now is the biggest (concern)," Park Commission President Dale Bartholomew said. "It's our duty as park commissioners to protect our parks."

It makes more sense to place the sewer line on the north side of the road opposite the park, said

Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner, because the area is fairly open except for Newtown Farm Market.

He added that the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD), which is installing the new sewer line, is investigating the feasibility and additional costs associated with moving the line.

"The taxpayers of Anderson Township have a lot of money already invested in that 47-acre piece of property," Kushner said of Riverside Park, which drew close to 100,000 people before the synthetic fields were installed.

"When there is a viable option on the other side of the road, why not keep this intact? I don't think that question being raised is out of line."

Tony Dick of MSD told the Park District in a letter dated Aug. 26, 2009, that relocating the sewer line - scheduled for construction in 2012 - would cost between \$305,400 and \$1.5 million, but Kushner and the park commissioners said they do not believe the relocation costs would be that high.

The initial phase of the Dry Run sewer expansion project in Newtown is expected to continue until spring 2012.

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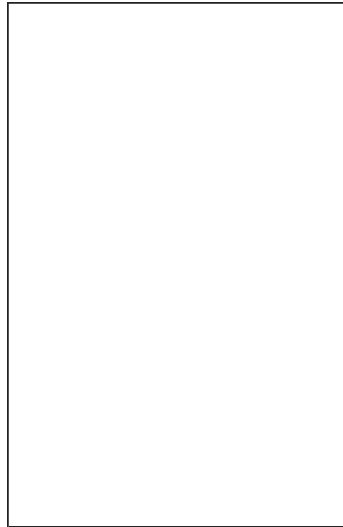


The second phase, which runs through Anderson Township, will start at Round Bottom Road and continue to a point just northeast of Broadwell Road, then continue along Broadwell to a point near its intersection with the proposed Ancor Connector.

The Sewer District asked for a 20-foot permanent easement, and if the sewer line was installed in front of Riverside Park the Park District would not be able to install any permanent structures, such as lights or additional trees, on the easement.

Schmidt said the Park District's concerns have been addressed by MSD, but "they seem to ignore the benefits of this plan" and a sanitary sewer is a basic right for citizens.

The petitioners also listed 14 proposed changes, such as cutting the budget and gaining more input on significant public works initiatives like the synthetic fields, they see as "necessary to realign the Anderson Township Park Board to better serve the public's interests."



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Mark Schmidt's company, Blue Chip Pavement Maintenance Inc., recently had a contract with the Anderson Township Park District to fix the parking lot at Lavery Park.

Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner said the job was not completed to the specifications in the contract and the Park District was billed for an additional 16 tons of asphalt that was never placed on the parking lot.

The timing of Schmidt's complaints about the sewer easement coincide with the pavement work at Lavery Park and Kushner said that raises an issue with



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Schmidt said he instructed his employees to fix the problem and his company is treating the Park District like any other customer.

He said his involvement in the sewer project has nothing to do with what happened with the job on the Lavery Park parking lot.

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