

Anderson Parks Board talks priorities

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(Photo: Sheila Vilvens/The Community Press)

General improvements planned for 2016 and beyond in Anderson Township basically mirror those from past years.

The focus continues to be on: public Wi-Fi; restrooms in parks without and additional restrooms in parks with; covered dugouts; model air plane flying area; family swings; playgrounds; shade structures; shelters; trails and trail extensions; land acquisition (priority on properties adjacent to existing parks and facilities; parking lot improvements; all weather ball fields; indoor recreational space; planters and plantings; operations/maintenance support facilities.

All of the items are priorities, but not all will be completed in 2016. The priorities list were developed following a 2013 community survey conducted by the park district.

At Beech Acres Park, summer programs will continue in 2016. The RexPlex, which is owned by Beech Acres Parenting Center and used by the park district, will also continue to be part of the summer programs, at least through this summer, Executive Director Ken Kushner said.

Clear Creek Park saw many improvements in 2015 with the addition of the pickleball courts and the Little Miami Bike Trail extension. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the official opening of the trail is scheduled for May 21, Kushner said.

Over the years, Clear Creek has been on a well system for its water, he said. This summer the park will connect to public water at the driving range end.

Julifs Park will be busy this summer with the installation of the new water play area thanks to funding from two grants received by the park district, Kushner said. This will complete the park's playground.

Last December the Julifs family donated another \$10,000 making it possible for the park district to redo the basketball courts.

At Johnson Hills Park, nature programs will continue. The park district is working with Anderson Township on getting sidewalks to the park, Kushner said. Connectivity is important, though no work is expected to occur in 2016. Once work begins, sidewalks will most likely be installed on Bridle first.

"There's been no engineering work on it as yet. It's a project that's years out," Kushner said.

Other work to be done this summer at Johnson Hills will be similar to last year. Clearing of brush and of dead ash trees, restoration of the pond and removal of invasive species.

A playground was installed in Kellogg Park last year. Work this year will focus primarily on trail extensions.

At Lavery Park, honeysuckle removal is the focus. The installation of restrooms and parking enhancements are both priorities for this park, but both would require the purchase of an adjacent property, Kushner said. Also on the list for a future project is covered dug-outs.

A new playground structure was installed at Riverside Park last summer, replacing an old structure moved from Nagel years ago. An engineer will look at parking improvements for the future, specifically at fields No. 1 and No. 2. Other priorities for future projects at Riverside include restrooms at the all-weather fields, the installation of all-weather fields for fields 3-6 and installation of a shelter by the main parking lot.

A project happening this summer at Riverside is the painting of the fencing and backstops.

A priority for Veterans Park is covered dugouts. This park is what park board members referenced as one of the park district's "best kept secrets."

"There are people at Veterans Park all the time," Park Board President Nadine Gelter said. "I don't think people realize it's there because there's not a lot of sports scheduled there. It's a sweet little park. One baseball field, two soccer fields in the fall. It's a destination area for moms groups."

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