

Anderson Concerned Citizens champion Anderson 2020 Plan

Sheila A. Vilvens, svilvens@communitypress.com 4:33 p.m. EST November 20, 2015



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Many questions are being raised, but answers remain in short supply regarding the proposed Anderson 2020 Plan.

On Nov. 9, a joint letter signed by the administrators of Anderson Township, Forest Hills School District and Anderson Park District was sent to Rob Smyjunas of Vandercar Holdings, LLC. and E. Thomas Fernandez of SFA Architects Inc., two of the principals involved in the proposed plan. The letter contained two deadlines and an extensive list of questions.

(Photo: Cincinnati Enquirer)

The first deadline asked Smyjunas and Fernandez to provide responses to the questions about the Anderson 2020 Plan by noon Friday, Nov. 20. The second required that the developer have in place by Dec. 1 plans for both proposed projects that conform to the township's rules for pre-application. *UPDATE Nov. 20: The developer shared with the "Forest Hills Journal" a document that seems to meet both deadlines. As of 3:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 20, Township Administrator Vicky Earhart said that she did not receive the document nor had the schools or parks.*



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The Anderson 2020 Plan proposes construction of a new Anderson High School and the renovation of the RecPlex on the Beech Acres Parenting Center property, and a multi-use development being built on the grounds of the existing Anderson High School – all without additional tax dollars.

The proposal to date, however, has generated many questions that representatives of all three governmental entities say must be answered before moving ahead.

The Anderson 2020 plan has been a topic of discussion throughout the summer and fall, and it was the subject of a joint meeting of the three township governmental entities Oct. 1. At that meeting the three entities agreed that the proposed development needs to be fully vetted and that a list of questions, among other things, should be prepared and presented to the developer for answers.

"We all are in agreement that if your development proposal is not able to provide sufficient TIF dollars to fund a new high school and a new or substantially renovated RecPlex, and fulfill a market demand, the project cannot be successful," the letter states.



Feasibility of proposed project receives scrutiny

(<http://www.cincinnatim.com/story/news/local/anderson-towship/2015/10/02/ahs-beech-acres/73201588/?from=global&sessionKey=&autologin=>)

A grassroots group calling itself Anderson Concerned Citizens has been supportive of the vetting process, but is concerned that the proposal will die if governmental entities do not move forward with purpose.

The group recently met to discuss the proposal and ways they might help the process along.

"Our focus is to champion the Anderson 2020 Plan across the finish line," group member and spokeswoman Joyce Gundling said in an email. "Many residents still don't know it's possible to build a brand new high school and develop the current Anderson High School site at no cost to them. They don't know about the long-term benefits this development offers both our children, through better education facilities, and our residents, through better recreation offerings and an increased tax base. This plan makes Anderson a more attractive, vibrant community and we want to ensure it has a fighting chance."

The group is working to inform residents about the Anderson 2020 Plan and encouraging them to attend meetings of the Anderson Township Board of Trustees and Forest Hills Board of Education and to urge the governmental leaders to take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity, she said.

"We need all our leaders to be all in. Everyone needs to be in the same room working together toward something great for Anderson Township," Gundling said. "We want the residents to have access to the information. Open meetings to the public would be ideal."

[Letter to Vandercar SFA \(https://www.scribd.com/doc/290393405/Letter-to-Vandercar-SFA\)](#)



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