

# Column: Park board - High school plan not viable

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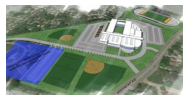


On behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners, I would like to take this opportunity to address some residents' recent comments and provide them with information regarding the park district's effort to buy Beech Acres Parenting Center's property and the RecPlex.

It appears some information has been left out of the public conversation on this matter. After working towards this goal for more than 25 years, we entered into formal negotiations with the landowner in September 2014. In March the park district was approached by the Forest Hills School District and Anderson Township Trustees to explore a collaborative concept for this property.

Despite many executive sessions with the Forest Hills School District and the township trustees, the park board determined the concept had too many financial holes and red flags. Additionally, the park district was not included financially in the concept – it did not include a tax-free, new recreation building for the community

as is being implied.



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If you believe the park district is the holdup on this concept we encourage you to evaluate the financial component yourself to determine if there is an actual plan that establishes solvency. Such information can be requested from either the Forest Hills School District or Anderson Township. The information was requested multiple times, but it was never provided to the park board.

The idea for a new high school does not hinge on the Beech Acres property. There is plenty of time to get this right and due diligence is imperative.

The park board determined at its June 23 meeting there was no viable plan that warranted the park district to pass on the opportunity to buy the property for the community. For this reason, and due to the June 24 deadline imposed by the landowner, the park board decided to move forward with a levy to purchase the property which includes Anderson's only public recreation facility.

The Anderson Township Park District and its board take their obligation to all tax payers seriously. The fact is the community has been offered a chance to acquire this iconic property only through the park district. Our longstanding partnership with the landowner is why this opportunity has come about now for the residents of Anderson Township. The park district's goal has and continues to be to secure this beautiful property as parkland for our current and future residents.

Nadine Gelter is president of the Board of Park Commissioners and a member since 1997 Anderson Township Park District.

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