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Anderson park plans include camping, lake

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A lake, camping area and disc golf are all part of the new site plans for Johnson Hills Park in Anderson Township.

Consultants from Human Nature Inc. presented the preliminary site plans for the park, off Little Dry Run and Bridle roads, at last night's park commissioners meeting.

Design Consultant Gary Wolnitzek said they revised the large shelter, defined the camping area, added more parking and alternate accessways, reconfigured the disc golf course and refocused the Moorman House.

The Moorman House, an 18th century home, will be renovated and transformed into a historic homestead with vegetable gardens and possibly horses or other livestock.

An open-air shelter will take the place of the existing horse stables and be roughly the same size.

It could be divided into two separate spaces with enough room for 300 people and would resemble English or American horse facilities.

Park Commissioner Lisa Klancher suggested the shelter have a small prep kitchen with counters and a sink to better accommodate gatherings.

Accessways around Johnson Hills Park would be 12-foot wide paved paths, the standard around all the parks in the township.

Hiking trails would be maintained throughout the 136-acre park

The 18-hole Frisbee disc golf course will wind through the woods on the west side of the park near the camping area, which will have a picnic shelter, sand volleyball court and other amenities.

A lake will be on the east side of the property and Park District Executive Director said soil and drainage studies show the property could support an 8-acre lake, but it will likely be half that size.

The home of Marian Johnson, whose husband is the namesake of the park, will stay on the property and have botanical gardens.

There was some discussion on transforming her house into a nature center or caretaker home, and placing a small, outdoor amphitheater near the house for various programs.

Resident Jim Buck, who lives next to Johnson Hills Park, said he likes the plan, but wants to make sure any improvements will not have a negative effect on his property.

The park commissioners agreed that the plan looks great and will conduct open houses for the public later this month.

Complete development of Johnson Hills Park is expected to take decades.

Additional Facts

Main features

- * A fishing lake
 - * Large shelter
 - * Tent-camping area
 - * Frisbee golf course
 - * Historic homestead
 - * Other amenities include shelters, off-leash dog area, playground and hiking trails.
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