

# eye on the eastside

## Park district may seek private funding

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With decades of planned development ahead the Anderson Township Park District is making a push to find private money to help fund projects.

Park Commissioners have asked staff to seek out foundations and other organizations that may fund future projects at Johnson Hills Park, off Bridle and Little Dry Run roads.

"We have to start looking at (private grants) and see if our potential design is going to match up with their mission statement," Park Commissioner Duffy Beischel said at a recent Board of Park Commissioners meeting.

"I don't think we can sit back and wait. Part of it is not only identifying (organizations), but starting to build a relationship with whoever says yes to the money."



The Anderson Township Park District received hundreds of thousands of dollars from private organizations to help build the playground at Beech Acres Park.

Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner said staff hasn't started looking for private funds because the park design is just a concept with pieces that will be pulled out over the years for more detailed plans.

"We're at a point where we can produce grants when we have good projects," Kushner said. "I don't want to get to where we get started and we get grants and have to say we can't use them until we're ready to build."

Beischel said he understands wanting to wait for projects to be ready, but asked for staff to start compiling a list of potential donors at the local, state and national levels.

Park Commissioner Josh Gerth agreed that the Park District should start looking for private foundations to fund projects, but said it often takes someone with experience seeking grants to know where to look.

Gerth added that he didn't think dedicating a staff member to search for private organizations would be the

best use of staff time.

"It seems like, right now, we're 100 percent relying on government money and I just think there needs to be more balance," Beischel said.

Park Commissioner Dale Bartholomew suggested concentrating on working with the [Anderson Foundation for Parks and Recreation](#) and turning over the private grant search to the Foundation.

### **Recent grant applications**

*The Anderson Township Park District applied for two state grants to complete*

*a shelter at Kellogg Park and a paved, loop trail at Johnson Hills Park.*

*Both projects are scheduled for 2012, whether or not the grants are received, Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner has said. The Park District previously applied for grants for these two projects, but were denied.*

*The Kellogg Park shelter will cost approximately \$51,000 and the grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund would pay for 50 percent of the project.*

*The loop trail at Johnson Hills Park is part of the park core area and the grant from the Recreational Trails Program would help pay for roughly half of the \$300,000 project.*

*This segment is about 3,000 feet and the entire trail system will eventually be more than two miles long.*

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