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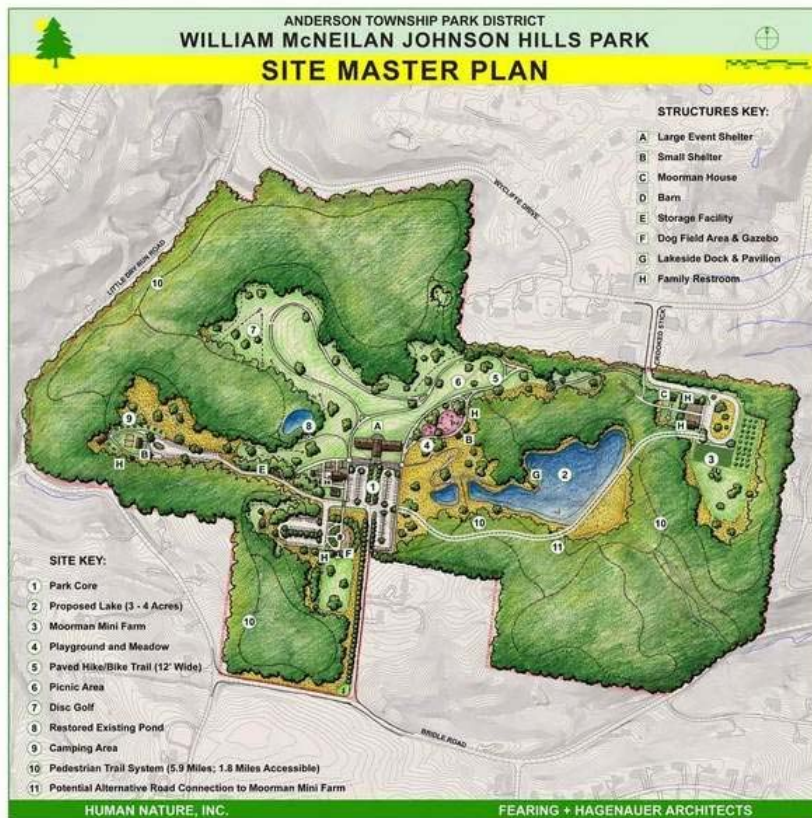
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Problems at one Anderson park benefit another

By Lisa Wakeland



This is the master plan for the Johnson Hills Park development. Issues with the lake location have delayed construction planned for this year.



Concerns surrounding the Johnson Hills Park development have given a boost to a revamped playground at Juilfs Park.

But Anderson Township park commissioners want to make sure there is enough money left to develop Johnson Hills Park at the end of the levy cycle.

During a recent meeting, Park Commissioner Duffy Beischel noted that, as of Dec. 1, the Anderson Township Park District had spent roughly 68 percent of its general

fund budget.

Much of the discrepancy comes from the more than \$400,000 set aside to develop Johnson Hills Park, near Bridle and Little Dry Run roads, said Brian Jordan, the district's financial officer.

Construction on a proposed lake, parking lot and main access road was supposed to begin this year, but the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency expressed concerns earlier this year about the lake's location and the development affecting microorganisms living in the water channels, later classified as streams.

Park Commissioners recently hired a consulting firm to conduct the required studies associated with the initial phase of the lake permit process and that first step will take at least one year.

Most of the unspent money set aside for the Johnson Hills Park development this year would be rolled back into the general fund for next year and transferred to Juilfs Park, off Clough Pike, said Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner.

Next year, the Park District plans to replace the Juilfs Park playground, which was built in the mid-1980s.

That project was bumped up three years because of the snag in the Johnson Hills Park development, Kushner said.

"With what's going on with the EPA (at Johnson Hills Park), that money is going to go toward the playground," he said. "We took the 10-year plan and moved Juilfs from 2015 to 2012, and when the plan gets re-adjusted again, (the money) will go from Juilfs to Johnson."

Beischel said he understands why the funding swap was made, but he asked staff to refrain from that in the future.

"We should not keep moving projects up ... and then at the end of the tax levy, there is no money for Johnson (Hills Park)," he said. "If (the project) gets delayed, that money should be set aside ... and there should be a pot of money to build Johnson."

Voters approved a 1.9-mill levy in 2008, and oney generated from that levy is projected to last for 10 years.

Park Commissioner Nadine Gelter suggested setting aside a certain percentage of the general fund each year for the Johnson Hills Park development, and that money should stay with that park.

The Juilfs Park playground replacement is expected to cost about \$650,000, Kushner said. The Park District has approximately \$380,000 budgeted for that project and Kushner said they are trying to raise private funds to cover the rest of the cost.

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