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Park neighbors concerned about traffic, property values

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More than 25 residents attended last night's Anderson Township Park District meeting to relay concerns about the Johnson Hills Park development plans.

• <http://rodeo.cincinnati.com/getlocal/comm.aspx?id=100109>">More Anderson Township news at Cincinnati.com/Andersontownship

Residents in the Sanctuary of Ivy Hills neighborhood, which abuts the park, petitioned the Park Board to amend the plans with primary concerns about safety, visibility of park amenities and creating a buffer zone.

Mike Cromer, who lives on Castle Pines Lane, said the proposed entrance to the back of the park, off Crooked Stick Court, would increase traffic and pose a safety risk to the neighborhood children.

Karen D'Agostino, who lives on Crooked Stick Court, said the back entrance could decrease property values and wanted a buffer between the park and the neighborhood.

Other residents questioned the planned amenities including tent camping, a fishing lake, disc golf course and community gardens and how they relate to Johnson Hills as a passive park.

"Our definition of passive park ... does not preclude active recreation possibilities," said Park Commission President Duffy Beischel.

"We believe living near a park enhances property values."

Beischel tried to ease fears that a back entrance would create a noticeable increase in traffic and pose a safety risk to neighborhood children.

He said those concerns appear every time a park is in the development stages, though issues rarely occur.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Anderson Township Fire Department require access to the back of the park, Beischel said, but the park commissioners would look at the possibility of paving a connector road from the front entrance on Bridle Road to the back of the park.

If that is a feasible option, the back entrance could be gated, emergency access only.

"We're trying to work with you and need you to work with us," Beischel said.

"It has to be give and take."

Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner said it will take decades to fully develop the park and engineers, architects and other professionals will be consulted throughout the process for feasibility and cost issues.

Construction of the main entrance, large shelter and lake will begin after Feb. 15.

Additional Facts

Park development

To see the development plans for Johnson Hills Park, off Little Dry Run and Bridle roads, visit www.andersonparks.com
