

Anderson Park Board hopes to renew land talks with BAPC

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(Photo: Thanks to Anderson Park District)

Similar to the movie "Groundhog Day," when the main character relives the same day over and over, the Anderson Park District seems to be reliving the same events.

During its February meeting the Anderson Board of Park Commissioners authorized Executive Director Ken Kushner to enter negotiations with Beech Acres Parenting Center for the possible purchase of property.

It was around this time last year when the park district was wrapping up negotiations for the purchase of about 28 acres and the RecPlex from the parenting center located along Beechmont Avenue. The deal was contingent upon the park district passing a levy last November. The board voted in July to place a levy on the ballot.

Plans changed, however, after the Anderson 2020 Plan was proposed. This plan, in part, proposed construction of a new Anderson High School on the Beech Acres Property and a multi-use development located at the current AHS site. In order for this plan to be fully vetted the park board, in October, transferred its BAPC purchase agreement to Anderson Township Board of Trustees. The trustees offered to buy and hold the land until its future could be determined. Also in October, the park district pulled its levy from the ballot.

Ultimately, the Forest Hills Board of Education found the Anderson 2020 Plan not feasible. On Feb. 4 the trustees directed township Administrator Vicky Earhart to discontinue negotiations for the purchase of the BAPC land. These actions opened the door for the parks to renew negotiations with the parenting center.

Additionally, the park district is working with Brandstetter Carroll on a master plan for the BAPC land, Kushner said. Previous plans were for 28 acres. The park district hopes to negotiate for the purchase of all 36 acres that could potentially be sold.

The goal is to continue to provide and expand indoor recreation space for the community, Kushner said.

"This community is desperate for gym space on a level that doesn't exist here," he said. The existing RecPlex is the park district's only indoor recreation facility. In order to meet the community's need for gym space, the park district works with local schools and other entities.

"We are limited by the space and what we can do," Kushner said. "That's why we rent other facilities, and they are at capacity."

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