

Board focused on Harlem Township Community Park

By Gary Budzak

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GALENA — Harlem Township is home to a single community park, which has received a lot of attention this year from the Harlem Township Board of Trustees.

According to meeting minutes, Harlem's Park Committee identifies "items that may need attention in (Harlem Township Community Park). Items may or may not be performed by the committee as the board understands some items will need to be hired done. It will be determined caseby- case, when the board approves the project to be completed."

For example, Dave Snyder with the committee requested and received from the board permission to hire Lurley Hernandez for flower bed maintenance at the school memorial and Vicki Tieche for the Grange flower beds. They also approved repairing park benches. In other cases, Snyder was told to consider "local groups that would like to volunteer to complete some projects."

This year, the board has also said "they would like to see some new track added that leads to the playground." Resurfacing the track, excluding the basketball court, went to Buckeye Paving for \$33,450. In terms of other work, the park's playground has a second phase to complete, which would cost \$33,000. The board decided to hold off during the coronavirus pandemic, and it wanted to see how the playground is currently being used.

Also, a meeting with the Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District was planned regarding the park's drainage issue. There was talk about consulting with the property owner west of the park and work along state Route 605 to help with the drainage.

The Park Committee was looking into grants to repair and move a drinking fountain, redo restrooms, and to fix a leaky roof on the restrooms. The latter was approved for just over \$4,500. Once the work was completed, the board decided "to keep the port-a-john to a date uncertain at this time due to the coronavirus."

Also due to the pandemic, Harlem Township Heritage cancelled Harlem Days this year. Grange rentals have been postponed or cancelled, and the facility was cleaned.

Harlem's Garden Club wished to buy a commemorative tree for the park in memory of Betty Johnson. Belinda Jackson was complimented for her work on the flower beds at Fancher Cemetery. Also, a deep well hand water pump in Maple Grove Cemetery was installed.

A request from the Harlem Heat baseball team to reserve the ball field on Saturday mornings was denied, but a tournament with teams from Westerville was approved. The trustees also allowed the Heat to extend and maintain the ball field by four feet around the perimeter at the team's expense.

In other township matters, trustees approved the Maintenance Department's use of the concrete plant, as well as repair work to the roof and siding. They approved a speed limit decrease on Hatch Road, which connects to SR 605 and Fancher Road.

Trustees also prepared a request for engineering assistance to reduce the speed limit on Trenton Road from 55 mph to 45 mph, as well as Ohio Public Works Commission funding.

The trustees also received engineering assistance on culverts for Brookview Drive.

Trustees approved tree removal on Duncan Run Road and Hunt Cemetery by Hardwick Tree Care. The township is ordering 250 tons of rock salt for the 2020-2021 winter, and trustees are looking into complaints about signage on Gorsuch Road and gravel at Keller Pines.

The 2020 Road Improvement Program from the Delaware County Engineer's Office was approved, which included resurfacing work on Adams Road, Ivy Ridge Place and Robins Road.

There was new signage installed at SR 605 and Center Village Road, with the stop bar moved. Lastly, FEMA is going to purchase the property at state Route 37 and Lewis Road.

Earlier in the year, trustees David Jackson, Jerry Paul, and Bob Singer approved rezoning 5.3 acres on Center Village Road from Agricultural Residential to Farm Residential.

They were also asked to rezone 6.8 acres on Fancher Road from Agricultural Residential to Planned Commercial Development for Miller Landscape. Many residents spoke out about the company being near a cemetery at the top of a hill.

Trustees Paul and Singer said they had no problem with the business, but they felt the location might create a safety issue with the increased traffic and a hidden drive.

In staffing decisions, trustees appointed Vicki Tieche as the township historian. Sherrie Steele was reappointed as zoning secretary; Scott Schmidt was reappointed cemetery sexton; Matt Kurz was appointed zoning inspector. Valerie Hammill was hired as administrative assistant; Bob Piper for maintenance. Julie Debolt resigned as fiscal officer on Aug. 1; and Lisa Hursey was appointed deputy fiscal officer.

First Commonwealth Bank of Sunbury is the township's depository; Tyler Lane from the Delaware Prosecutor's Office is the township's representative, and The Gazette is the paper of general circulation for township notices.

Harlem Township is in a two-year gas aggregation contract with Volunteer Energy; insured by Rinehart Walters Danner; and a Zoning Inspector Bond that was to expire in April was renewed by the trustees.

Jackson is the chairman of the board, Paul is vice chairman, and former chair Singer is alternate. In recent months, the trustees have used Zoom for virtual meetings.

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