

Sports field

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- The value of adjoining properties will be lowered.
- The area would have to be extensively rezoned because two "commercial-sized" parking lots and a commercial concession stand are in the plans.
- The 33-foot-wide proposed access road is too narrow to comply with the Dallas Township zoning ordinance's required 50-foot roadway.
- Development of the site could affect nearby wetlands and an underground drainage aqueduct which has been on the site for many years.
- The fields may be used for non-district sports events by private sports groups which already have their own fields.

The attorneys say they have made several requests but have not received information on the project, proof of public meetings to discuss it and minutes of these public meetings.

"This has been the best-kept secret for the past 15 years," Krohn said. "They came up with this plan. Where was the discussion?"

According to Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' Association legal counsel David Morgan, the district must hold open, advertised meetings to discuss the project.

"It doesn't matter if it's the entire school board or a school board committee - if they meet under pre-arranged circumstances and have a quorum present, they are obligated to give the public access to these meetings," he said. "This is a Sunshine Law violation."

"This is an enormous commercial use for the benefit of private organizations," Phillips said. "We intend to protect our property and will hold board members accountable, both personally and as school board members."

He said that his wife had been told by board members at a school

board meeting that they didn't know anything about the project, then after the meeting told one of their neighbors that they intended to take part of his back yard for the project.

Cappellini is concerned about the project's possible effect on nearby wetlands and a forested area.

"You can't replace something like this once it has been destroyed," he said. "I never saw a school board vote to put in a forest instead of a ball field."

According to superintendent Gerald Wycallis, the ball fields have been part of the district's long-range plan since 1992 and have been discussed at "a number of public meetings since 1988."

Quad Three Group, an engineering firm, has prepared all of its reports to date without charging the district anything, he said.

At its February 14 committee-of-the-whole meeting, the board directed two representatives of Quad Three to bring an estimate of costs to prepare further studies of the site to the March meeting, Wycallis said.

"This is just a proposal," he said. "We're simply getting information on what kind of fields and how many fields can go back there."

Construction would be funded by \$265,000 left over from the refinancing of a bond issue, earmarked for making capital improvements, Wycallis said.

"This has been on the committee's agenda several times and has been discussed with the Back Mountain Little League and Back Mountain Soccer," he said. "The public has talked about it for more than five years. There is no plan - it's still in its preliminary stages."

Neighbors have mixed feelings

Two neighbors who heard development of the site discussed at the school board meeting have different reactions.

"You could have worse things in your back yard than a soccer field," said Lois Noble, a former youth soccer coach who moved to the area seven years ago.

"I'm a little apprehensive about it," said Earl Monk, who is very involved in area sports. "I recognize the need for fields, but have two concerns. The preliminary plans call for the access road to be one house up from us. Traffic, especially younger drivers who might not think to be alert for little children like mine, would increase through our neighborhood. I'm also concerned that changing the site could also change its drainage and runoff. A long time ago our house had water problems. It's all very preliminary - I want to stay informed and involved."

Paul Walsh, Sr., didn't know about the development project until someone anonymously sent him a copy of the plans.

"The easement for the access road appears to be on my property line," he said. "I have heard rumors about it, but this was the first concrete thing that I have seen."

He said that the facility would be nice for the young people, but he has "mixed feelings" about the increased traffic that it would bring.

"I would like to hear more about this," he said. "I would like - and expect - to be notified of any future development of this land so that I can discuss it with the school board."

David Orrson volunteers on Junior Achievement project



DAVID ORRSON

Junior Achievement's Applied Economics Volunteer David Orrson, Shavertown has entered into a partnership with John Francella, an educator at G.A.R. High School. An Assistant Vice President, First Eastern Bank, NA, Edwardsville, David's work in the classroom will help the students accomplish Junior Achievement's primary goal of having a better prepared workforce by helping the students understand such key topics as:

The Federal Reserve System; the banking system, specific products checking and savings ac-

counts, lending; and finally how changes in interest rates affect individuals.

Orrson is volunteering in one of four Junior Achievement Programs reaching 5,000 children from Kindergarten to 12th grade annually in Northeastern Pa. The class visits, which began on December 6, and will end in February 1994, will allow David, a graduate of Wyoming Valley West High School and Wilkes College, B.S.; and Wilkes University, MBA, an opportunity to share his banking expertise with 27 tenth graders this semester.

50 years

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"I devised a couple of special uses for the gable ladder," he said proudly. "Chief Jacobs in Luzerne didn't believe that my ideas could be done, so I showed him."

Used to gain access to roofs, a gable ladder has hooks at one end which grab into a roof's shingles.

Gordon figured out how to attach it to an extension ladder, gaining an extra eight feet of height, and how to use the hooks to smash the glass from a second-story window, then anchor it into the sill and climb up the outside wall. "Just like a fly," he chuckled.

He recalled when he drove the first tanker at the scene of the fire at the Back Mountain Lumber Company.

"That was a bad one," he said. "When it exploded, the concussion blew me right out of the tanker's cab onto the highway."

His worst fire, also during the '50's, was an explosion at a

Luzerne black powder plant, which the entire Back Mountain turned out to assist at.

Firefighters found bodies and parts of bodies blown up to 150 yards away, onto Main Street, on top of Connolly's gas station on the highway and on top of a nearby culm bank, Gordon said.

"No one knew at the time how many bodies we would find," he said.

An October, 1990, accident in which a gasoline tanker overturned, closing Route 309 for eight hours, was a particular challenge for Gordon.

"If that tanker had blown up, we would have lost the entire area," he said.

With traffic routed to Pioneer Ave. in Dallas and Main Road in Shavertown, the fire police had their hands full helping to keep things moving.

"Our biggest problem was getting the tractor-trailers through Fernbrook Corners," he said.

"They kept rubbing against the telephone poles. We had to move cars to give them more room to turn."

The fire police didn't only need to know how to direct traffic, Gordon said. They had to pass a First Responder course, have hazardous materials training and be prepared for every type of disaster.

The fun part of his job was bringing the Dallas football team home from every playoff game during its 1993 championship season.

"I waited with the guys down at the Luzerne ramp and brought them home in style," he said.

The community has been Pappy Gordon's life. Now it hurts him to be unable to do what he wants to.

"I've always tried to help out wherever I could," he said. "The worst part was the day I took myself off the active duty list. I'm like the old fire horse - I don't want to stop."

Zoning board

(continued from page 1)

Drury said he would have attended if he was asked. "I had told Keith Harry that if they had that meeting, I wanted to be there," Drury said. "He told me that it had been cancelled because Sopp had received a stop work order and he didn't comply with it."

Drury said that when he learned that the meeting had been held without him, he asked Keith Harry about it and was told that it was better that Drury wasn't there.

Both men rent building space on Route 415 from Paglianite, owner of The Grotto restaurant next door.

After hearing an appeal by Drury, the zoning board had ruled that Sopp was operating a manufacturing business in a commercial area not zoned for it.

The zoning board was scheduled to consider a request by Sopp for a variance to continue operating his business in its present location February 22.

Sopp and Armand Mascioli,


acting on Paglianite's behalf, met with the zoning board February 1. Tomulaitis confirmed. Drury was not present.

"They were making an attempt to mediate the issue with Drury," Tomulaitis said.

According to the borough's zoning code, a mediation can be used instead of a hearing to settle a zoning dispute, but it must be done without members of the zoning board present. Board members are not allowed to "initiate the use of mediation," according to page 15-5 of the code.


"I had gotten wind that someone found out that this was possibly an illegal meeting," Tomulaitis said. "I'm new and trying to do the right thing. We must go by the law. I hope to see this resolved soon."

Maza did not return five telephone calls from a reporter attempting to verify that she had advised Harry to call the meeting.




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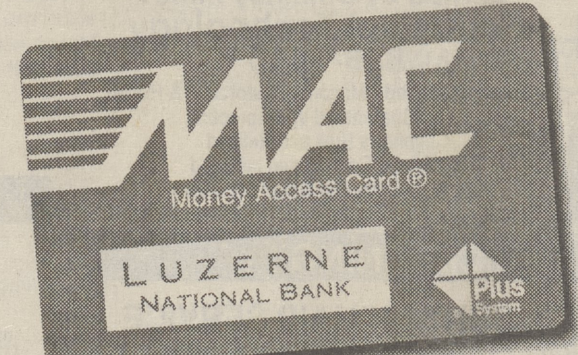
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