

Tire dumps

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half." Jackson Township residents and supervisors are growing weary of inaction by DEP. "In this part of the state, DEP isn't doing anything," said Ed Chesnovitch. "The hardest thing our local DEP does is go to work in the morning."

The board is asking DEP to enforce fines or other suitable retribution. "Otherwise, what's going to stop them after we clean it up from getting another 4,000 in? Then we'll clean it up again?" asked Malak.

"I don't think anybody in Jackson Township should pay for anybody else's gain," Supervisor Al Fox said. "We're not going to do it that way."

Malak said while he has discussed possible legal procedures the township can take with the supervisors, the time for it is premature.

Fox agreed. "We need to address this step by step. Let them tell us what they are going to do and what they are not going to do," he said. "We haven't gotten to that point yet."

Tire dumps and junk sites have become an unfortunate and too frequent problem of late in the township. Last month, John Filip filed a complaint with the township zoning officer, to be forwarded to the DEP, concerning 50 to 100 tires illegally dumped on the southwest corner of his property. In 2000, neighbors complained about the number of vehicles and tires on the property of Raymond Malak, Chase Road. He received notification of a number of zoning ordinances he violated. Raymond Malak filed a land use appeal to the township zoning board in July 2000 and lost. Then he filed an appeal to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas, and lost an October 23 ruling by Judge Peter Paul Olszewski.

In other business:

In an ongoing effort to update local ordinances, the board of supervisors authorized the solicitor to start procedures for amending the zoning ordinance to include cell phone towers and to review and submit an adult entertainment ordinance. "These are legal issues that have

been overlooked for years," Malak said. "We are trying to be pro-active rather than reactive."

In addition, the board passed PA Act 45 of 2000, the first statewide building code, the International Building Code, making Jackson Township one of the first to conform. The new uniform building code will become mandatory for all Pennsylvania municipalities in the spring.

In the police report, Chief Jerry Leedock reported a quiet month and held the unseasonably warm weather accountable for the calm. Fox said bullet-proof vests had arrived last week for every officer and wearing them would be mandatory.

Chief Leedock has been watching traffic at the Huntsville intersection between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m., doing a count of the number of cars passing through the one-way intersection at Sutton Road. "We want to correct that hazard," said Fox of the dangerous intersection. Leedock reported a whopping 430 cars passed through in the half hour. The gathered data will be sent on to PennDOT.

Supervisor John Wilkes congratulated Chief Leedock on his assist at Harveys Lake in the apprehension of an armed felon and on the smooth and complaint-free handling by the chief and his staff of the recent winter snowstorm.

Wilkes wished to remind all Jackson township residents of the snow and ice ordinance prohibiting shoveling snow into the streets and parking on the street. He went on to say heavy equipment would be in use to widen streets and would be going on until at least next Tuesday to allow for safer travel on township roads. "We're not doing this just to block your driveways," he added. "But to allow you more lane to travel and safer travel for the motoring public."

A reorganization meeting was held before the regular meeting. District Justice James Tupper swore in Fox and Wilkes, Barbara Bazil, Kathleen Lonon, and Sharon Link, replacing Shellene Bruno, who resigned effective Jan. 1, will be the auditors.



POST PHOTO/TIMOTHY J. RAUB

Back Mountain Youth Soccer already uses some of the fields at the proposed regional recreation center for practice.

Rec complex

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graphical studies, so we can get started with the construction."

The proposed facility, located in Lehman Township along Outlet and Firehouse roads, will include five little league baseball and softball fields, providing a new home for Back Mountain Baseball, a Back Mountain Youth Soccer complex with playing and practice fields, a picnic area, wetland conservation area, hiking trails, an outdoor ice skating/hockey rink and an indoor recreation center.

"We have received financial commitment from most of the municipalities involved," said Sutton. "Back Mountain Youth Soccer and Back Mountain Baseball have also lent their support, and are anxious to help."

Back Mountain Baseball Association president Jack Snyder likes the idea of Back Mountain Baseball having a new place to

call home in Lehman Township, and believes that the Back Mountain area is overdue for a large central recreation area.

"We are looking into going (to the Back Mountain Recreation Center)," said Snyder. "There is a need for a new recreation facility, because it seems that (all athletic leagues) are cramped for space."

But the move will not take place for some time, since construction of the fields has not even begun, and time must be given for the grass fields to grow.

The project has been broken down into three phases, with the beginning of Phase II coming in the spring. The beginning of Phase III, the construction of the indoor facility, is something Sutton says will be looked at after the outdoor facilities are finished.

"To complete the entire facility, both indoor and outdoor, it will cost \$12-14 million," said Sut-

ton. "We have not even begun to explore funding for the indoor facility, but we definitely don't want to affect the taxing of residents of the Back Mountain. That has been our goal from the beginning. We don't want to go to the municipalities and ask for tax dollars."

The facility will serve residents in eight townships - Dallas, Kingston, Franklin, Lehman, Noxen, Jackson and Ross - and two boroughs, Harveys Lake and Dallas.

The project received a huge boost from the state in June with a \$500,000 grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The grant provided the majority of the funding needed to purchase the 130-acre property.

"We do not see any major obstacles in the construction of this facility," said Sutton. "It is all going to come down to the money."

Regional police

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ship resume discussions on the issue.

"From the borough's point of view, the only thing stopping the process right now is that Dallas Township is bogged down in arbitration," said Moskovitz. "I am convinced though, that once the arbitration is resolved we will once again undertake the regionalization issue."

Plans to regionalize the forces began to take shape in July when officials from both municipalities met with members of the Governor's Center for Local Government Services. There they discussed a feasibility study outlining a regional police force for the two municipalities.

Regionalizing the police departments will mean constant 24-hour police coverage for both municipalities, as well as more officers on duty at any given time. As separate departments, Dallas Township has numerous officers on duty around the clock, while Dallas Borough had only one officer on duty at times.

"This is something that should provide both municipalities with more opportunities to serve the communities more professionally, and more equipped," said Moskovitz.


Moskovitz said that by regionalizing the departments, not only will residents be better served, there will also be the opportunity for the new department to add detectives and sergeants, who will oversee the operations of each shift.

"Right now, the borough only has one officer on duty at some times of the day," said Moskovitz. "But with a regionalized force, sergeants will oversee the operations."

Some major details still must be worked out before the two municipalities unite forces, though. With the considerably larger police force, must come a new police station that could house more officers.


Efforts to regionalize other municipal services have been successful.

"The Dallas Area Municipal Authority has been very successful at an affordable cost to residents," said Moskovitz. "This is the direction that many local governments are moving."



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