

* Bird group asks council for new lease

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that is going on at the park, and will be around for the next 50 years, to coordinate planning. The land is owned by the city and under city control, he noted. Despite a lengthy discussion about not wanting to lease the land to the national Pheasants Forever organization and the idea of starting a sportman's association, the council didn't take any action.

Pheasants Forever currently leases the lake bottom. The organization in the last few years has helped clean up debris and planted numerous trees.

The Sappa Park committee, which is part of Decatur Tomorrow, also has helped clean out debris from the park. They have put in several walking trails and a few benches for people to use.

The park is a work in progress, said Dr. May. He said volunteers from several groups have cleaned out 20 to 30 years of dead trees and taken out most of the old fence.

There are a lot of trees, both ones people have planted and volunteers, growing at the park. Spraying a crop on the lake bottom could kill many of them, he said.

Who does Mr. Abbey have a lease with? asked Councilwoman Rhonda May. Pheasants Forever, said Dr. May. So your organization has the capability to change the lease which is up in March? she asked.

Dr. May said if there is a crop planted before the lease is terminated, the farmer has the right to harvest it. After the meeting, Sheriff Badsky said he would tell Mr. Abbey that Pheasants Forever plans to terminate his lease.

The council, said Mayor Joe Stanley, is pleased with the direction the park and lake area are going. He said he thought that was what they said when Dr. May was at the meeting over a month ago.

When the city made the lease with Pheasants Forever, he said, it had the opportunity to make more money with a farm lease. At that time, he said, the council decided they wanted the park to be more for recreation.

Maybe, said Councilwoman May, the park needs a group like a sportsmen's association, since Pheasants Forever seems like a national organization for hunting. There needs to be a group to represent both hunting and recreation, she said.

Sheriff Badsky said hunting is not the main goal of the group. It actually is habitat and preservation, he said.

Waste water plant may get taller fence

The Oberlin City Council discussed putting in a seven-foot high fence around the new waste water treatment facility to help keep deer out of the area so the animals don't damage the liner with their hooves. The facility has an almost four-foot high fence around it now.

Chris Miller, engineer with Miller and Associates, said the city has money left in the contract to add onto the existing fence if the council wants to proceed. He said he has talked to people who have the same kind of liner and they haven't had any problems with deer rips. Those cities don't have higher fences. What is the warranty on the liner? asked Councilwoman Rhonda May. The warranty, said Mr. Miller, covers natural disasters like seam failure or ultraviolet ray damage, but it

doesn't protect against deer. Ms. May said she wasn't very excited about a deer fence. City Administrator Gary Shike asked Dan Castle, city foreman, what he thought.

Mr. Castle said he has talked to people who say deer poke holes in the liner and the city then has to pay to repair them. Mr. Miller said he hasn't been told that.

It sure would be easier to put up the fence now, said Mr. Shike, while the people are still here, rather than later if the city has a problem.

The city is retaining 5 percent of the money for the project, said Mr. Miller. The council didn't make a decision about the deer fence but did agree to pay \$49,091 to Midlands Contracting for work on the facility.

Ms. Sporn will stay on working afternoons until Ms. Henderson, who is retiring from a job in Hays at Home Depot in promotions, can start. Volunteers will continue to cover the morning shifts, Mrs. Horn said.

The new manager has a daughter, Iris Mastin, who living in Oberlin. Ms. Henderson will move here as soon as she retires. She will replace Glenva Nichols, who left the position in April.

The board will pay the manager \$9 an hour for full-time work, she said, adding that this is more than Mrs. Nichols made. Mrs. Horn said they will need to do a few more fund raisers to help with the pay increase.

Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer said she has reservations about a 50-year lease with Pheasants Forever. What if the national group wants to come in and make decisions? she asked.

Dr. May said he thought the lease was just with the Sunflower Chapter, but City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the proposed lease is with the national group.

The only thing that goes to the national group is the dues, said Sheriff Badsky.

The question here is who the lease should be with, said Ms. May, adding that she thinks the council is happy with what is going on at the park.

Carolyn Burtis, co-convenor for the Sappa Park committee with Decatur Tomorrow, said at the group's community conversation last year Sappa Park was one of people's top priorities. Looking at the overall picture, she said, she sees Pheasants Forever leasing the lake bottom as working.

The city already owns the land and oversees everything at the park, she said, so she doesn't see that forming another group is necessary.

The lease can be written so that if the city doesn't like what Pheasants Forever is doing, then they can break it, said Mrs. Burtis. The key to all of this is communication.

At this point, what can be done at the park is unlimited, she added. Anything the park committee does they can let the council know or get permission to do it.

Mrs. Burtis encouraged the council to look at the lease. It isn't as if the city would be locked in for 50 years, she said; there could be a way out if the city didn't like what the organization was doing.

Mrs. Burtis passed around pictures of a lake and wetlands in Wellfleet, Neb. A wetlands here would be great, she said.

The park is a real treasure, said Dr. May, if it is cleaned up and maintained. No one knows what will happen in the next five years, whether the walking trails will take off, camping will, or horse riding, the Frisbee golf course or something else.

Mayor Stanley said he thought that when the lease is up, the council would agree to drop the price.

Mrs. Burtis said her group is interested in changing the lease to \$1 and putting the rest of the money back into the park.

Councilwoman May said she might go for that price for 10 years. The council didn't make any decisions.

At the camp site



IN THE BAND SHELL in City Park, Miranda Long made a pink pillow during the Girl Scout camp last Wednesday. The girls started the camping trip last Tuesday in the park.

They learned to cook outside, went swimming, sang camp fire songs, did crafts, played games and slept in the park. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Foreman wants more equipment space

The Oberlin City foreman talked with the council about purchasing property from a McCook man to get another building to house equipment.

Foreman Dan Castle said the city talked about purchasing the land to the north of the city shop from Terry McCorkle of McCorkle Motors a while ago and they could never come to an agreement.

Mr. Castle said he saw Mr. McCorkle at the building and mentioned again the city buying it. The city has lots of equipment, said Mr. Castle, and not all of it fits in the shop. The city can either build a new one or buy an existing building.

Last time, said Mr. Castle, the city's offer was pretty poor. City

Administrator Gary Shike said the city made an offer about five years ago and it was a lot less than the asking price. Mr. McCorkle didn't make a counter offer.

Mayor Joe Stanley suggested that the council look at the project.

Maybe someone can open the lines of communication, said Mr. Castle.

The council didn't make any decisions.

Some time ago, Mr. Castle said, he had talked to the council about senior employees earning more vacation days.

Now, employees who have worked for 10 years, can earn a day and a quarter a month for 15 days or three weeks a year, said Mr. Castle.

He proposed that after 15 years employees could earn one and a half days per month for 18 days a year and after 20 years they could earn two days a month for 24 days or just under five weeks a year.

Is the city having problems with people using their days? asked Councilman Ray Ward.

Just me, said Mr. Castle, everyone else takes time off.

Do the workers actually want

time off, said Councilwoman Rhonda May. She said when she first started working, the older employees had six weeks off. She said she asked them what they were going to do with it and one said he was going to take next week off to paint his house.

"I thought vacation is wasted on the old," said Ms. May.

Mayor Joe Stanley asked if the council wanted to take a vote on the proposal during the meeting.

Mr. Ward asked that the council look at the suggestion at budget time.

Streets to get sealed

After some discussion the Oberlin City Council accepted the only bid received to seal the streets but decided it needed to come up with a long-term plan to fix the streets.

The city received a bid of 89 cents per square yard for sealing from B&H Paving from Scott City. That would be around \$67,000 based on the area the city did the last time the streets were sealed. City Clerk Deanna Castle said the council has budgeted \$75,000 for the project.

If the city just adds another layer, said Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer, then it really isn't doing anything to fix the roads, just increase the humps.

Then the city has a problem, said Councilman Rob McFee, since nothing has been done for three years to seal and prevent cracks. He said he agrees that something needs to be done about the humps in the streets.

If the council wants to fix the streets, suggested City Foreman Dan Castle, it should set up an account for street infrastructure and get a plan and do it. He suggested taking a half a cent off of each kilowatt of electricity and putting it into the street account.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he has talked to the engineer from Penco about coming to a council meeting to talk about the streets.

Everyone needs to write their notes for upcoming budget meetings and for the Penco engineer, said Mayor Joe Stanley.

The streets still need to be sealed, said Councilman Ray Ward, but an overall project needs to be kept up with.

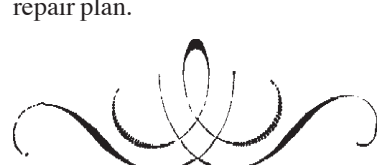
The council agreed to the sealing and to developing a long-term street repair plan.

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