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## Shelby approves sale of township-owned lots to local developer

### BOARD EARMARKS REVENUE TO FUND SPLASH PARK

BY SARAH WOJCIK

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**SHELBY TOWNSHIP** — On Nov. 1, the Board of Trustees voted 6-1 to sell four double lots on the undeveloped, town-

ship-owned property known as "Bellarine Subdivision," next to Cherry Creek Golf Course, to local developer Simone Mauro for \$240,000 and allot the revenue to a splash park feature at Gene Shepherd Park.

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#### Lots

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On Oct. 4, the board unanimously hired a real estate agent to sell four half-acre lots individually after an engineering study conducted last year revealed that there were wetlands on many of 15 vacant lots that the township had been hoping to sell as a package.

Treasurer Michael Flynn said the township engineer determined that four of the lots were buildable and abutted four lots that were not buildable, so the township opted to combine the eight quarter-acre lots into four half-acre lots.

"We had several offers on the property," Flynn said. "It actually sold fairly quickly."

Flynn, a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee, said the group had been raising funds for a splash park feature for some time.

With a \$10,000 donation toward the splash park from the Solid Waste and Recycling Committee, a \$25,000 grant from Sunoco and a \$20,000 grant from a local business owner, Flynn said the committee had raised \$55,000. The proceeds from the double lots would combine with the \$55,000 so that the township would have nearly \$300,000 for the splash park.

The next step, he said, would be to solicit proposals for a design for a splash park.

"Last time, when we tried to solicit bids, we found out that (just asking companies that do this type

of work to give us a splash park with a price) doesn't really result in getting the lowest price and best bang for the buck," Flynn said. "We found that, if we have the design in hand, we can basically bid out the design."

By doing so, he said, the township could receive proposals on a buildable design from more than just companies specializing in splash parks.

"(It could be) anybody that does a water feature, whether it be a pool man or a fountain guy or whatever," he said. "Hopefully, it will result in quite a bit of savings for the township taxpayers. I know a lot of us residents, particularly the ones with young families, are particularly excited about this project, so I will be back to report with an update."

Trustee Nick Nightingale cast the single nay vote.

"I support the sale of the township lots. I do not support the funds being earmarked for the splash park," Nightingale said. "A splash park goes down in value. This township has open liabilities, which is retirement health care liabilities. I believe the money could be invested in a much wiser manner."

Shelby Township resident Clarence Cook said he felt the funds should support the building of a new court or renovations to the Shelby Community Center.

"I was very pleased to hear the (announcement that the township would build a new court and renovate the existing building)," Cook

said. "The park is great, but I think you can wait on that and (focus) on your other priorities up in the beginning; No. 1 should at least be taken care of."

For years, addressing the Community Center's needs has crowned the township's list of top 10 priorities.

At press time, Supervisor Rick Stathakis said the 2017 top 10 pri-

orities list had not been released, but that the splash park at Gene Shepherd Park was among them.

"The thing that was really interesting to me was the fact that the splash park was actually in the top 10 priorities," Stathakis said. "It's about public safety — that is a very important priority. Finances are very important, as well, but quality of life works in there

somehow, and this would be one of those quality-of-life initiatives."

The sold property is located near 24 Mile Road and Van Dyke Avenue. Gene Shepherd Park is located near 23 Mile and Dequindre roads. For more information, call the Treasurer's Office at (586) 731-5154.

Call Staff Writer Sarah Wojcik at (586) 498-1029.



Photo by Erin Sanchez

Township-owned property near Cherry Creek Golf Course recently sold for \$240,000. The township plans to spend the revenue on a new splash park at Gene Shepherd Park.