

# THE SOURCE

**SHELBY TOWNSHIP**

# Board approves final round of wetland monitoring for Gene Shepherd Park

**By SEAN DELANEY**

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At its last regular meeting, the Shelby Township Board of Trustees voted 5-2 to enter into an agreement that will allow ASTI Environmental of Brighton, Mich., to perform wetland monitoring and invasive species control for 2016 at Gene Shepherd Park for a cost not to exceed \$7,000.

"ASTI will complete a minimum of three site inspections on the property to assess wetland vegetation establishment, document wildlife usage, and determine the extent of necessary invasive plant species treatment," said Dianne Martin, vice president of ASTI Environmental.

"If ASTI determines that herbicide treatment of invasive plant species is warranted, ASTI will

obtain the proper permit and conduct the treatment program, including the required follow-up reporting requirements."

According to Martin, ASTI will summarize the data collected and provide the information to the township in an annual report.

"The monitoring report will be submitted to the (Michigan Department of Environmental Quality) prior to Dec. 31, 2016, for review and comment," she said. "Included in the report will be a written summary of all the problem areas that were identified and potential corrective measures to address them, including any herbicide treatment that was accomplished."

Located on the site of the former Soccer City complex near 23 Mile and Dequindre roads, the park features a covered pavilion, tennis and sand volleyball courts,

a bocce ball and horseshoe pit, a soccer field and indoor restrooms. It is named for Shelby Township's late fire chief Gene Shepherd, who lost his battle with cancer in 2012.

Under former Supervisor Ralph Maccarone, the township agreed to lease the land and the right to operate a soccer complex for 25 years to Soccer City. In exchange, Soccer City promised to invest \$3.5 million to improve the land. But less than a year after the deal was approved by the Board of Trustees, problems surfaced.

Township officials accused Soccer City of violating provisions of the agreement and for damaging wetlands at the site. By 2008, the agreement was terminated.

Eventually, the township paid Soccer City \$1 million, in part as reimbursement for improvements to the property, and the wetlands issues were resolved as

part of a consent judgment with the MDEQ.

"As a result of a requirement by the MDEQ, our township is required to perform wetland monitoring and invasive species control at the park," Township Supervisor Richard Stathakis said.

According to Martin, Shelby Township must monitor the restoration area for a minimum of three years.

"It's a three-year commitment, and this is the end of the three years," Trustee Paula Filar said. "We had a commitment to the MDEQ that we had to meet, and this is the last of that three-year commitment."

Trustees Paul Viar and Nick Nightingale voted against the proposal. Viar took issue with the expense, and Nightingale expressed concerns about the process.