

The Source

For Shelby Township and Utica

Sunday, August 23, 2015

\$.50

FACEBOOK.COM/ADVISORSOURCEMEDIA

TWITTER.COM/ADVISORSOURCE

source newspapers.com

PARCELS

Township to consider selling lots to finance court improvements

By SEAN DELANEY

sean.delaney@advisorsource.com; @sdelaney81

Shelby Township officials say the sale of nine township-owned lots near the Cherry Creek Golf Course could generate approximately \$350,000 in funds, which could be used to make improvements to the 41-A District Court and other adjoining facilities.

"We're not getting a nickel of revenue out of these lots right now, but if people build on them, we could be looking at a significant amount of revenue," Trustee Paul Viar said. "It will be a boost to the bottom line of what we need to revamp the court, and it won't take as much money from the general fund."

In November 2014, Viar and Treasurer Michael Flynn presented the idea of selling 15 of the township-owned lots in the Bellamine Manor Subdivision and received authorization from the Board of Trust-



Shelby Township Treasurer Michael Flynn and Trustee Paul Viar say the sale of nine township-owned lots near the Cherry Creek Golf Course could generate approximately \$350,000 in funds, which could be used to make improvements to the 41-A District Court and other adjoining facilities.

SOURCE PHOTOS/SEAN DELANEY

relocation.

Although a tentative agreement was reached regarding how to allocate those and other long-term costs should the 41-A District Court relocate, Macomb Township officials later voted to abandon the idea after an auditing firm projected that the court would not generate enough money to pay off bonds that would be necessary to construct a new building.

With relocation off the table, Shelby Township officials began looking at ways to fund improvements to the court, as well as the adjacent commu-

ees to have Fazal Khan and Associates, the township's engineering firm, conduct a topographical survey of the area.

"We finally got the topographical survey back this month, and there's some bad news for us," Flynn said. "Much of the area north of Maris Drive and west of Bellarine Drive is a protected wetland, so it's taken six of our original 15 lots off the table."

That leaves the township

with nine usable lots.

"The rough estimate from the engineer is that they're worth about \$30,000 to \$40,000 a piece, so we're still looking at about \$350,000," Flynn said. "That's good money and it will help to remodel the court, now that we're going to keep it."

The prospect of the 41-A District Court leaving its longtime home on Van Dyke north of 23 Mile Road first surfaced several years ago

when Macomb Township came forward with a tentative offer to build a new courthouse near its township hall after court officials expressed frustration with their current accommodations in Shelby Township.

However, the court's "legacy costs," which include but are not limited to the underfunded portion of the health care benefits for former court employees, quickly became the main obstacle to the proposed



SCHOOLS » PAGE A3

Huron Academy to expand with new school building



PROJECTS » PAGE B1

Defining home improvement ROI

PREVIEW » PAGE C1

Prep football teams set to open 2015 season

PARCELS » PAGE A5

Parcels

FROM PAGE A1

nity center which houses the senior center, library and Shelby TV.

"The reason we were never able to touch on any renovation ideas before is because you would have to renovate around the court," Shelby Township Supervisor Richard Stathakis said. "It's the anchor there, so we had to know first what we were going to do with the court before we could make decisions about the senior center, library and Shelby TV."

With that in mind, the Board of Trustees approved an agreement on Aug. 4 that

prohibits the chief judge of the court from requesting that the court sit anywhere but Shelby Township for the next 20 years so that the township "may undertake the expense necessary to make the improvements to the court" with the understanding that renovations to the building must begin within one year of the signing of the agreement.

"Because of the great work our board did, we (and Attorney Rob Huth) have successfully negotiated an agreement - not to build a new court building but to renovate the existing building," Stathakis said. "And as long as we're going to renovate the court, we might as well do the library, senior

center and Shelby TV."

Viar and Flynn said they hope to present a proposal to the Board of Trustees at the Sept. 1 meeting regarding the potential sale of the lots.

"The suggestion at this point will probably be to sell off the remaining nine (lots) as a block," Flynn said.

While initial estimates indicated that making improvements to the lots - trimming trees, paving trails, connecting existing water lines - could raise their value, Flynn said the township engineer advised against it after learning the results of the topographical survey.

"Due to the fact that it was cut down from 15 lots to nine lots, the engineer didn't

feel it was feasible that the township put in the infrastructure that would be required for a finished product for someone to build on," Flynn said. "So whoever buys these lots will have to pay for the sewer connections, paving, etc. But it's still a very nice area and I suspect these lots will be very hotly bid for by developers and/or private citizens due to a severe shortage of buildable lots in Shelby Township."

According to Flynn, the lots are already zoned for residential use.

"Everything is complete in terms of zoning," he said. "The only thing that we're waiting for is a developer to come in and make an offer."