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Forks Township supervisors OK Penn's Ridge playground equipment

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By LYNN OLANOFF

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FORKS TWP. | Despite one supervisor's concerns that building a neighborhood park would encourage drug use and gang activity, township supervisors voted 4-1 Thursday to buy playground equipment for the Penn's Ridge development.

The \$35,643 expenditure will buy two large playground structures at Penn's Ridge Boulevard and Silo Drive. One structure would be geared toward children ages 2 to 5, while the other would be for older children up to age 12, Supervisor Robert Egolf said.

Supervisor Erik Chuss repeated concerns he said he's heard from many township residents, including senior citizens in the nearby Upstream Farm complex. These residents fear the park may bring noise, traffic, swearing, vandalism, drug use and gang activity, he said.

He also pointed to the problem Easton is having with some of its parks and gang activity.

"Maybe this won't happen and probably it won't, but there's a good chance," Chuss said.

Other supervisors said they don't want to stall the park plan just because there's a chance there may be problems.

"I find it very selfish we will not put parks in anywhere but our township park because it is a venue for crime," Supervisors Chairman C. David Howell. "If that's the case, recreation will cease to exist in our township."

Township police Chief Greg Dorney said he wasn't too concerned about crime in the park, but that it adds another area to patrol in an already large township.

The township's plans for the Penn's Ridge recreation area also include a \$34,000 basketball court and 27 parking spots.

The work is part of an overall \$174,599 neighborhood parks plan that also would add recreation to West Newlins Road, Braden Airpark on Sullivan Trail, Vista Estates at Winchester Street and Upper Way, Lafayette Meco Park at Richmond Road and Meco Road East, Gollub Park and Ramblewood East.

All the money comes from the township's \$1.9 million fund of developers' recreation fees.

Reporter Lynn Olanoff can be reached at 610-867-5000 or by e-mail at lolanoff@express-times.com.

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