

Fun Spot eyed as 4-H park

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ANGOLA —Fun Spot Amusement Park might become part of the Steuben County park complex.

The consensus on expansion of the Steuben County 4-H Fairgrounds and county park seemed to be toward moving the fairgrounds to the land now occupied by the closed Fun Spot Amusement Park at Crooked Lake.

That twist came in the 11th hour of the planning process being done by the county park improvement committee and its hired consultant, Troyer Group, Mishawaka, said Paul Sparks, a Steuben County Councilman who serves on the committee.

The possibility of acquiring the property was inserted as Troyer started coming up with conceptual designs. Three plans were presented Friday afternoon to the committee. They included using the existing park facilities at Crooked Lake by itself and then in two options of purchasing either the Fun Spot property or 95 acres of vacant land to the southwest of the current park.

"I really like No. 3 (adding 95 acres) but I don't see it happening," said Frank Charlton, who represents 4-H interests on the committee. Charlton said he thought option No. 1, which includes the Fun Spot land, would be the most practical.

"I like the concept of No. 1 (buying Fun Spot) but I like bits and pieces of the other two," said Eric Ditmars, county park manager.

Neasa Kalme, 4-H Extension [educator](#), said she preferred the option that would add 95 acres to the park complex.

Sparks said he would like to see the county purchase both properties but acknowledged that might not be financially feasible.

Other attendees estimated just purchasing the Fun Spot property and developing the park as designed by Troyer could cost upward of \$6 million. Commissioner F. Mayo Sanders said the rides at the park are in the process of being sold.

Each option included adding a community building, rental cottages, seasonal and reservation camping, walking trails, a bark park, an amphitheatre, recreational areas, playgrounds and use of lakeside amenities, such as the beach and boating.

If the Fun Spot land is acquired, many of the existing buildings could be used, utilities were already on site and the 4-H fairgrounds would be enlarged. It would also allow for more camping and creation of more green space at the current fairgrounds.

The same is true with the 95 acres to the southwest. However, said Michael Reese, landscape architect with Troyer, there would be considerable costs for earth work and running utilities.

Commissioners said they would get firm cost estimates on the two available properties and forward that information to Troyer. The next step for Troyer would be to come up with more detailed plans for the sites and estimate possible costs and possible revenue that might be generated from the facilities.

County officials are hoping the facility will become used much of the year and generate revenue from events.

Images



Michael Reese, a landscape architect with The Troyer Group, Mishawaka, points detail on one of the conceptual illustrations for the Steuben County Park. In the right part of the photo, this plan shows the inclusion of land occupied by the closed Fun Spot Amusement Park.