

Group: Timber plan 'flawed'

White Twp. officials urge public patience

By MARGARET HARPER
Gazette Staff Writer

INDIANA GAZETTE MARCH 27, 2008

Group says White's Woods study 'flawed'

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plan was flawed — because it is for a forest, not a park.

Kesner and other FOWW members think the plan was developed under the idea that the land was considered a township forest, which would be governed by 2207. But, Kesner said, the land is really a recreational park purchased with Project 70 funds, which came from taxpayers' money.

If the property cannot be governed by 2207 laws, he claims, the land must be governed by Project 70 restrictions.

Because the land was purchased with Project 70 funds, a deed restriction for the property says the land shall be used for recreation, conservation and historical purposes, and FOWW members do not believe the current plan follows those regulations.

"A successful plan for a park cannot be based on the erroneous assumption it is a forest," FOWW

members said in a prepared statement. "A successful plan for a park requires consultation with park specialists, not forestry experts."

But Garner and solicitor Michael Delaney disagree with FOWW's interpretation of the letter. After speaking with DCNR officials about the reply, Garner and Delaney said 2207 does not apply because the statute never applied to the land, not because the current plan is flawed.

"Our property never applied to that section," Garner said.

Either way, Garner said, he has already sent another letter asking about any restrictions from Project 70.

"We haven't had a response yet," Garner said.

Chairman Robert Overdorff once again urged patience.

"We are pursuing this right down the line," he said.

"It's not something that's become stagnant."

A forestry management plan to harvest trees from White's Woods Nature Center is flawed and needs to be scrapped, according to members of Friends of White's Woods, who oppose the plan.

But White Township supervisors are urging patience and saying it's not time to scrap the idea.

Michael Kesner, FOWW spokesman, asked the White Township supervisors at Wednesday's meeting to abandon the plan, which calls for a selective timber cut of 21 percent of the forest for maintenance purposes.

A better plan, he said, would recognize the recreation and conservation purpose of White's Woods, seek community and FOWW input, and consult park experts, though forestry experts may play some role.

To draft an acceptable plan, Kesner said, a "White's Woods Citizens Advisory Commission" needs to be formed. He urged the supervisors to establish such a group, as "numerous communities in Pennsylvania and neighboring states have such groups," including Haverford in Montgomery County.

In Haverford, he said, a volunteer advisory board "consults with and makes recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Department's policies for the planning, development and use of the township's park and recreation facilities."

The supervisors took no action regarding the formation of such a board.

In part, FOWW members' decision to ask for a new plan stems from a letter received by the township from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Larry Garner, township manager, sent a letter asking if a subsection of Second Class Township Code 2207 applied to the land. Section 2207 governs selective harvesting of township forests.

A reply letter states "because the Department has not exercised its authority under Section 2207 of the Second Class Township Code, this section does not apply to the matter of the forest management plan for White's Woods."

Kesner said FOWW members and their attorney, Rick Watling, believe this means that the

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