

BED NOW 3/27/10

# Park millage faces another vote

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Amy Doering goes to Bedford Township parks often.

With children 7, 4 and 2, Mrs. Doering has been pleased with the cleanliness and upkeep of the parks within the township.

Her family moved to Temperance two years ago for several reasons, including the parks and library.

"My kids love them," Mrs. Doering said. "I would definitely vote for the parks."

Mrs. Doering and Bedford Township voters yet again will decide on a tax to maintain the township's parks.

The Bedford Township Board unanimously approved the addition of a tax request during its regular meeting March 16.

The Bedford Park Commission

requested a 0.175-mill five-year tax to be placed on the Aug. 3 primary election for maintenance and operation.

Bedford Township has five parks maintained by the township and one, Vienna, which is operated by the county. The township owns the yet undeveloped Lewis Ansted Park as well.

The Doerings use Carr's Grove Park in Temperance often. Mrs. Doering said friends of her family have enjoyed using the facility for special events like graduation parties.

"I consider the parks one of the gems of Bedford Township," said Trustee Larry O'Dell. "It's quite a reasonable request."

If approved, the tax would cost \$17.50 for the owner of a \$200,000 home with a \$100,000 taxable value. It is expected to generate about

\$175,000 in the first year.

Three previous attempts to pass a maintenance request have been voted down. The most recent was in August, 2008.

Trustee Paul Francis said the tax money generated from the request could not be used for acquisition, just for operational and maintenance expenses.

"We still have to care for the parks like mow grass," Mr. Francis said. "The request is inexpensive and if we don't maintain the parks, they will dissolve."

John Mohr, park board member, said the township should be proud of its parks.

"We have a fine park system with state-of-the-art playground equipment," he said. "We do understand the financial crunch, but we have reduced our budget by \$15,000."

The township pays \$135,000 for

the parks from its general fund. That contribution was reduced from \$150,000 for the 2010 fiscal year, Supervisor Walt Wilburn said.

Friends of the Bedford Parks was created to help raise awareness of the importance of maintaining the park system. Kate Schmus, a Temperance resident, headed the group in 2008. Mrs. Schmus said the group has "fizzled out" since the 2008 effort.

"It would be nice," Mrs. Schmus said of getting the group back up and running.

At this time, Mrs. Schmus has not been contacted by members of the parks commission to renew the push to get this tax passed.

In 2005, the state gave Bedford Township an award for its parks system and its overall quality of life.