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Wednesday, January 10, 2007

South Union supervisors earmark CDBG money

By Steve Ostrosky, Herald-Standard
03/16/2004

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The South Union Township supervisors will spend their 2004 federal block grant on two infrastructure projects and focus the remainder on recreation, according to discussion at a hearing Monday.

The township is slated to receive \$228,980 as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) this fiscal year, but will have \$177,664 to allocate toward projects, according to Andrew French, assistant director of the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority.

Some of the allocation goes for administrative and planning fees, environmental reviews and to the county fund for housing rehabilitation, he said.

After discussion, the supervisors agreed that \$25,000 would be spent to cover any further costs associated with the Mountain View Road storm sewer project and spend \$65,000 of the allocation on a storm sewer improvement project along Michael Drive.

Ray Polaski, director of the authority, asked the supervisors for \$30,000 from the grant as match money for a proposed pond and trail in the Fayette County Business Park. He said the authority will contribute \$30,000 and the authority has written a grant to the National Road Heritage Park for the remainder of funds.

He said once the work is completed, the roads will be dedicated to the township and the park will be dedicated to the township as part of its overall recreation program.

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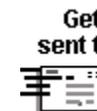
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Supervisor Robert Schiffbauer said he agreed with the proposal, but was hesitant to allocate money to the business park recreation area because there are other recreation areas within the township that are in need of funds.

"I'm not sure how useable a walking trail would be at this time because of the minimal amount of development going on right now at the business park," he said. "As it develops, there will be a substantial increase in demand for something like that."

The supervisors decided to spend the remainder of the 2004 CDBG funds, roughly \$87,664, on recreation improvements that may include money for the trail if grant money becomes available and a township match is needed.

During the supervisors meeting, Schiffbauer took a moment to chastise the state Department of Transportation (PennDOT) for its system of building and improving roads all over the state. He called PennDOT a "bureaucratic dinosaur" that lacks cooperation with counties and municipalities that rely on road improvements for economic development.

"It has been difficult and frustrating to deal with PennDOT on many issues, in particular, highways and how they relate to growth," he said.

Schiffbauer has repeatedly expressed his displeasure with PennDOT officials who decided, seemingly at the last minute, to remove projects from one phase of the Transportation Improvement Program and push them back to the second or third four-year phase. He said the township will continue to press for completion of the Walnut Hill Road interchange along Route 119 and for improvements to Matthew Drive, New Salem Road and within the Fayette County Business Park.

"If anyone thinks that we're going to accept PennDOT's past practices, we're not," Schiffbauer said. "The governor has promised he would make changes in PennDOT, but it's been over a year and little or no change has taken place."

The supervisors also voted to apply to the county for \$5,000 to help construct a road from Tuskegee Terrace to Whiteman Avenue, voted to contribute \$5,000 toward the funding of a comprehensive plan with North Union Township, and voted to reappoint Richard Hughes to the township planning commission for a four-year term.

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