

MIDDLETOWN

Supervisors cancel contract for basketball court

The township will still have to pay more than \$15,000 for expenses already incurred.

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Hoop enthusiasts will have to look elsewhere for fullcourt action, and Middletown is still on the hook for \$15,360 even after canceling a contract for a full basketball court in the Cobalt Ridge section.

The township supervisors called a halt after some nearby residents expressed concerns about parking, the court's location near a playground for small children and other issues.

K.E. Seifert Inc. of Langhorne had been awarded a \$59,990 contract for the court, and will be paid \$15,340 for expenses already incurred, said township Parks and Recreation Director Debby Lamanna

While canceling the contract, the supervisors also directed Lamanna and other officials to conduct a study of recreation needs in the Levittown part of the township. That will include creating a timeline and cost estimate for master site plan projects for Twin Oaks Park and the Queen Anne and Mill Creek Greenways, including the area where the court was to be constructed.

The full court was scheduled to replace a half court at the Cobalt Ridge Green Belt Park on Cobalt Cross Road. While Lamanna and other recreation officials had solicited input from residents near the project, there was no systematic notification about construction of the full court to all nearby residents, and some became alarmed when they saw Seifert workers staking out the dimensions of the court.

"It's certainly unfortunate there had to be a loss of money, but I think the township now has the opportunity to look at the issue of recreation in Levittown and create a comprehensive plan to address those needs in that part of the township," said Lamanna.

It's not a total loss, she added. Some of the \$15,360 being paid to the Seifert firm is to reimburse the company for backboards and other basketball equipment that can now be used at another township park, said Lamanna. Also, money for the full basketball court was not coming out of taxpayer funds but from recreational impact fees paid by developers, she said.

The township has five full basketball courts in the Langhorne part of Middletown but only one, in Quincy Hollow, in the Levittown part, said Lamanna.

Matt Vivian, a resident and basketball player who lives near the Cobalt Ridge park, hopes that situation can be corrected.

"It's disappointing and I don't think it's fair to the Levittown kids," he said. "We went through all this for four or five years trying to get a full court, and now this happened and I'm sure it will be another few years before it's considered again."

Supervisor Chuck Thompson, who sat in on meetings with residents about the basketball court, said he believes the board made the right decision, given all the concerns. "This probably was not the best spot," he said.

Lamanna said township officials will work on a policy that will notify all residents within 500 feet of a proposed township project like the basketball court.