

MIDDLETOWN

Township to name park in Jones' honor

Beechwood Park will be renamed once its renovation is completed next year.

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STAFF WRITER

Middletown has taken two more actions to honor former township police Officer Chris Jones.

Jones, a 10-year veteran of the force, was killed Jan. 29 in an accident after he stopped a motorist for speeding on the Route 1 Superhighway. He was the first Middletown officer killed in the line of duty.

Before his death, Jones was on a list of officers to be considered for promotion to detective, and he was posthumously promoted.

At Tuesday night's meeting, township Supervisors George Leonhauser, Robert McMonagle, Jasper Caro, Robert McMonagle and Kathy Heuer unanimously voted to retire Jones' badge number, 4466, and his squad car number, 4429, and not use those numbers again in the department.

In another unanimous vote, board members approved the renaming of the township's Beechwood Park in honor of Jones once a \$1.1 million renovation of the park is completed sometime next year. The 15.9-acre park is at West Maple and Beechwood avenues.

Retiring the badge and squad car numbers was done at the suggestion of Acting Public Safety Director Patrick McGinty. Leonhauser, a former township detective, made the motion to rename Beechwood Park.

Before the vote, McMonagle suggested that renaming the township's largest park, the 42.6-acre Middletown Community Park on Langhorne-Yardley Road, would be a better way to honor Jones.

"We should probably talk to the family to find out what they think is the best choice," said McMonagle.

Jones is survived by his wife, Suzanne, and three children.

However, Leonhauser and township Parks and Recreation Director Debby Lamanna said Beechwood was an appropriate park to be renamed for Jones because it's a family oriented facility that, once the renovation is completed, will include amenities like a new playground, a walking trail through the woods and new baseball and soccer fields.

Also, Leonhauser said he already had spoken to family members and he said they were fine with renaming Beechwood.

"It will be nice," said Lamanna. "As the project progresses, we'll talk to the family about creating some kind of memorial area for Officer Jones near the entrance to the park."

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