

Towns team up on open space purchase

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middletown / penndel

Middletown and Penndel have teamed up to try to buy open space for passive recreation.

The neighboring towns want to purchase Spring Valley Farm from the Evans family. The parcel, which is just more than 10 acres, is on Walnut Street, off Neshaminy Street. Most of the acreage is in Middletown, said Debby Lamanna, parks and recreation director for Middletown.

Lamanna walked the property about a year ago and determined that Middletown would benefit from the land. The township reached out to Penndel since a small portion of the Evans' property is in the borough and near the Penndel Memorial Recreation Center on Dalola Avenue.

Lamanna said the land's features fit well for passive recreation. There's a large lawn area, a small creek, a house, a springhouse, gardens, rare trees and a wooded area.

The Middletown official said the land purchasing process has a way to go - the parcel hasn't even been appraised. Because both towns would be using money from the Buck County Open Space Program, the county would need to approve the purchase. Middletown receives about \$1 million and Penndel about \$200,000 from the program, Lamanna said.

Lamanna said the Evans family approached Middletown about the possibility of selling the property. She said the family was interested in the parcel remaining undeveloped.

The Courier Times was unsuccessful in reaching the Evans family or Penndel Councilwoman Barbara Heffelfinger for comment. Heffelfinger is the chairwoman for the borough's Open Space Committee, which is handling the project before council votes on it. Earlier in the month, she told council of the purchase possibility, but didn't provide details.

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