



## **Greene County Commissioners' Office**

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### **News Release**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Commissioners meet with committee to discuss Wisecarver plans**

WAYNESBURG, PA. – Greene County Commissioners recently met with representatives from a non-profit organization to continue discussions regarding the organization's plans to build three softball fields on property in Franklin Township.

The property, which is part of a tract of land commonly known as Wisecarver Dam and Reservoir, is being sub-leased to the Wisecarver Complex Committee. The sub-lease – which was approved by the Commissioners on April 18 – is for a term of 25 years, with two additional terms of 10 years at the request of the committee.

The County obtained a 99-year lease on the property from the Southwestern Pennsylvania Water Authority several years ago, and the Commissioners officially agreed to sub-lease a portion of the property to the Wisecarver Complex Committee last month.

Before the committee was formed, area residents Danielle Kerr and Chay Lahew approached the Commissioners in late 2017 seeking help in finding a site where girls' softball fields could be built. Kerr said the Waynesburg Girls Softball Rec League, a 5-team league (8U, 10U and 12U) within the Mason-Dixon Softball Division, was looking for space that it could call home.

“The league was searching for something that we could build and use all year long,” she said. “The Commissioners began looking into property at Wisecarver ... they and the County were, and continue to be, very supportive of our initiative.”

In December 2017, Kerr, Lahew and eight other residents formed the Wisecarver Complex Committee; now that the sub-lease has been approved, the committee members have been on a mission to raise funds to build three girls' softball fields on the property.

Following the inquiry from Kerr and Lahew, the Commissioners thought that Wisecarver might be a solution. They directed Mackin Engineering to provide a proposal to survey the reservoir property to determine the best locations for the ballfields.

“We felt that the area would be more than suitable for what they were seeking, so we thoroughly looked into it, and sure enough, it seemed to be perfect for them,” said Commissioner Blair Zimmerman. “Wisecarver has enormous recreational potential, so having ballfields on some of that valuable property is a great fit.”

Last year, the Commissioners secured grant funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources that will be used to help pay for a parking lot and walking trails around the sub-leased property, while the committee will be responsible for the excavation and construction of the fields.

The committee also plans to build a concession stand, rest rooms and batting cages, and intends to apply for state grants to help pay for these costs. Kerr said any area businesses, agencies and/or individuals who may be interested in financially assisting the committee in this endeavor may contact her at 724-825-7676.

Mackin Engineering has surveyed the property, drafted site plans and submitted the permit applications to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Currently, the committee is awaiting approval permits from the DEP; Kerr, who serves as Vice-President for the committee, said once the permits are approved it is hoped that they can soon “break ground” on the property.

“We are really excited,” she said. “The league struggled to have a suitable rec field for a very long time, and we’ve never had a field that we could call our own. Now, thanks to the efforts of the Commissioners and the committee, we will soon be able to do just that.”

Kerr said the initiative will not just benefit the Waynesburg Rec League, it will attract many residents in- and out-of-county, making it a “win-win” for the County.

“We have an opportunity to make a big impact on the lives of our Greene County youth, and I am humbled to be a part of it,” Kerr said. “We have a big job ahead of us, but I am confident that with community support we can make this happen.”

Chay Lahew, President of the Committee, said, “We are excited for the opportunity to create a one-of-a-kind softball complex that will be the center piece of the Wisecarver Complex.”

As for Wisecarver’s future, Zimmerman said he and his fellow Commissioners Dave Coder and Archie Trader are excited.

“We’ve always said Wisecarver is a diamond in the rough in this County, and very soon everyone is going to see just how bright that diamond can shine,” he said.



**IN THE PHOTO:**

Pictured (l. to r.), seated: Wisecarver Complex Committee members Amy Sibert, Jim Armstrong, Danielle Kerr (Vice-President, holding a proposed blueprint of the property), Chay Lahew (President) and Lou Giachetti. Standing: Committee member Patrick Fitch; Greene County Commissioners Blair Zimmerman, Archie Trader and Dave Coder; and Committee member Chase Shaffer. Not pictured are Committee members Neil Shannon (Secretary), Shawn Wood (Treasurer) and Dave Jones.