

N MICHIGAN NEIGHBORS

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SECTION M

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BEDFORD TOWNSHIP

State grant sought for park

By MARK REITER
 BLADE STAFF WRITER

TEMPERANCE — Bedford Township is trying for a state grant to help pay for developing land that was bought three years ago into a community park.

The township board last week approved applying for a \$300,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the first phase of Lewis Ansted Community Park.

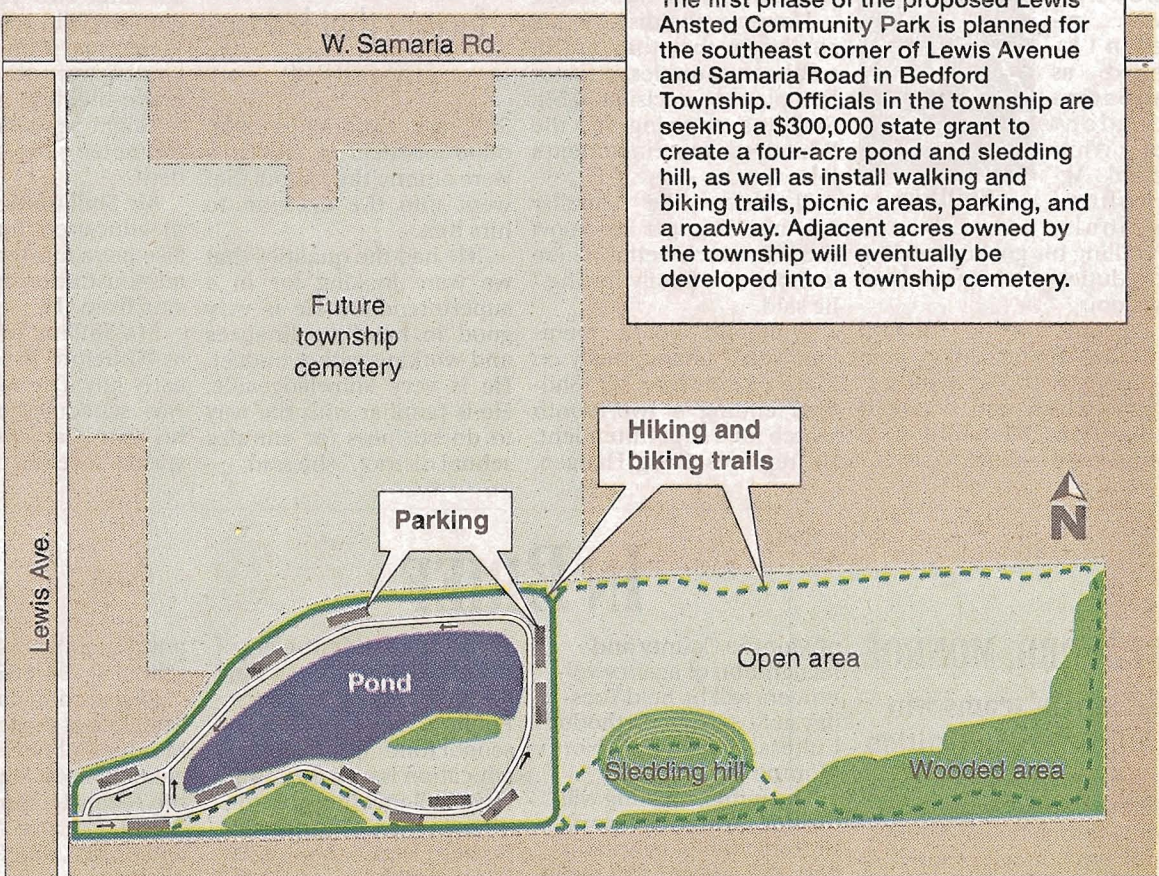
"It is extremely exciting to think that residents of the township could soon be able to stay within the community for more recreational and outdoor activities," Treasurer Sherri Meyer said.

The new park, which is planned for 57 acres of township-owned land on Lewis Avenue, south of West Samaria Road, is intended to be a passive park, with a nature preserve, fishing pond, wooded areas, and walking trails.

"We want to keep the park in a natural setting as much as possible," said Bob Hamilton of Mannik & Smith Group Inc., the township's planning and engineering consultant.

At a hearing on the park commission's request for the grant, Carol Frederick asked township

LEWIS ANSTED COMMUNITY PARK



The first phase of the proposed Lewis Ansted Community Park is planned for the southeast corner of Lewis Avenue and Samaria Road in Bedford Township. Officials in the township are seeking a \$300,000 state grant to create a four-acre pond and sledding hill, as well as install walking and biking trails, picnic areas, parking, and a roadway. Adjacent acres owned by the township will eventually be developed into a township cemetery.

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SOURCE: Bedford Twp.

THE BLADE

Park

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officials to implement design elements in the park to accommodate people with disabilities as well as those with physical limitations, including age.

"There is a wonderful opportunity to structure the park to provide universal accessibility," she said.

Mr. Hamilton said the park would be built to comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The deadline for the township to submit the grant application to the state is next Wednesday.

Mr. Hamilton, who is municipal service director for the Maumee-based firm, said the township should hear in December whether it will receive the DNR grant.

If the township is successful in securing the grant, it would match the funds with \$100,000 in township money that has been saved for the project.

The initial phase would encompass about 36 acres of a 70-acre parcel the township bought in 2006. The township plans to use 15 acres of the land for a future cemetery.

The grant money would help pay for digging a four-acre pond and using fill from it to build a sledding hill; creating a crushed-stone path for walking and biking around the perimeter of the pond; the entrance off Lewis, and a paved drive, parking, and picnic areas.

Mr. Hamilton said an additional phase might include clearing vegetation from Johnson Drain to encourage a natural stream, and creating walking and

biking trails around the perimeter of the park, more parking, and a natural area with native grasses.

"The walking path will be extended to the top of the sledding hill to give park users a beautiful view of the lake. But we want to keep it in a natural setting as much as possible," Mr. Hamilton said.

Other concepts being considered for future development could include a nature interpretation center that would house restrooms.

Mr. Hamilton said some of the work such as planting grasses and building pathways for the second phase could be undertaken by volunteers or others involved in community service projects.

"There could be a lot done and much of it could be done by volunteer groups," he said.