

Throop to develop reclaimed mine site as park

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When Throop Councilman Thomas Lukasewicz looks at 48 acres of reclaimed mine land above Franko Street, he sees more than jagged, rust-colored boulders and a terrain of crushed black sediment.

He sees the potential for a family gathering place that rivals a state park, but he and other borough officials want to hear what borough residents have to say on the topic before making any plans.

That's why they will host two public brainstorming sessions, set for Monday, Feb. 1, and Monday, Feb. 8, at 6 p.m. at the Borough Building on Sanderson Street.

Officials hope to gain feedback from residents that will shape their plans for the site, said grant writer Joyce Hatala.

"In order to get any grant money, you have to have a site plan, and the various state and federal agencies like to know you've incorporated peoples' ideas," she said.

Her hope is the sessions will generate enough feedback for her to start writing grants for state funding, she said.

"It's easier to get money when you know what you need," she said.

Borough funds are limited for this project, which includes \$400,000 in potential county funding, Mr. Lukasewicz said.

His vision for the site is a recreation complex with walking trails, an archery range and an observation point where residents can scope out the site's panoramic view of the Midvalley.

"You've got a hell of a view," he said. "I mean, you're on top of the world."

The borough acquired the deed for the land in 2001, and originally planed to build a public works building, ice-skating rink, playground, amphitheater and multipurpose athletic field.

"The ideas were very grandiose at that time," he said. "I assume now they'll be scaled back."

The land has been used as a source of clean fill material during the cleanup of the Marjol Battery site, which lies downhill from the 48 acres.

Borough officials arranged for crews hired by Gould Electronics to use site material instead of hauling truckloads of fill through the borough, he said. About 225,000 tons of fill was removed during the cleanup.

The borough will also take possession of a road constructed to move the fill to the battery site. Crews will finish the road to borough specifications before it is turned over, he said.

"There's a lot of potential," he said.

Residents can also e-mail ideas to throopboro@comcast.net.

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