

South Barrington Friday Five #1

Hello and welcome to a new feature on Fridays called #Friday5 with the South Barrington Park District.

For those of you unfamiliar with this social media term, #Friday5 is where people are asked and answer five questions about a subject or person. There are no questions off limits, and everything is answered.

However, I'm sure the burning question for you is: What does #Friday5 have to do with the South Barrington Park District?

Glad you asked: During the park district's previous sale of Area N, residents requested more communication regarding the sale. So, to make sure everyone is fully informed, officials with the South Barrington Park District will be doing a #Friday5 to answer all questions specific to the sale of Area N every Friday between now and the auction on Feb. 28.

To be clear: These are YOUR questions, statements, and other communication we have collected, read on social media, websites, and emails, and heard in board meetings. Like we said, we want the truth out there to let people know the most honest information before this auction takes place in three months. So, if you ask a question on social media, in an email, or in a board meeting, we will post these questions here to answer.

Now, of course, because we are only able to answer five questions every Friday, if you ASK a question and we don't answer it right away, check back in the following weeks as we will answer in the future. According to the calendar, we will be able to complete 12 #Friday5s before the auction takes place. So, more than likely, we should be able to get to your question.

So, without further delay:

Question 1: Can the church bid at the next auction?

Answer: Simple answer is yes. Like anyone else, the Fourth Avenue Gospel has the right to bid on the property during the next auction on Feb. 28. It is illegal for the park district to open a property up for auction "except for this one group." So, bottom line, ALL BIDDERS will be welcome to bid on the property during the public auction.

Question 2: Can the park district dictate what can and cannot be built on the property?

Answer: Absolutely not. The park district board does not have the authority to say what can and cannot be built on the property. The village of South Barrington oversees zoning of all properties within the village, so for a property owner to build something specific on land they own, they must make sure the zoning of said land falls within that specific zoning classification.

But, to answer this question definitively, the park district does not have the right to dictate what a property owner does with the land after the auction process.

Question 3: Why isn't the park district developing the land?

Answer: The cost to develop and maintain Area N is too great for the park district to pay for with our current tax base. We intentionally strive to keep our tax rates low for residents in South Barrington while

working hard to give residents the best programs and facilities we can possibly offer. Developing this land will be more expensive than we can afford.

Simultaneously, we want to upgrade several area parks to make them more attractive to residents. The money from the sale of Area N is intended to be used to upgrade these parks to bring them up to the standards the community expects. Thus, it's more cost effective for the park district to sell area N and use the proceeds from the sale to fix the problems at our other area parks. This has always been our plan.

Question 4: Why not go out for a tax rate increase to develop Area N AND upgrade the parks.

Answer: There's an old adage: "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." This is perfect for the South Barrington Park District when discussing the potential auction of Area N vs. going out for a tax rate increase referendum.

Basically, the adage means it's better to count on what you have instead of planning on something you don't have. While we have heard from several locals that they would go out and vote for a tax rate increase, there are more voters in all South Barrington than just those surrounding this property. The effort to get a tax rate increase passed in these times – where tax bills just increased significantly - is a proposition that is not in the best interest at this time.

Question 5: Who will be doing the auction?

Answer: The South Barrington Park District has hired an outside auction house to handle the sale of the property on Feb. 28. The name of the auction house is Rick Levin and Associates. For more information on the company, feel free to peruse their website at www.ricklevin.com.

Remember, we are seeking more questions, so please feel free to respond to this on our social media or email us with additional questions. Otherwise, have a great weekend and we will see you all next week!!