Written by Carol Pomeday
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Recently formed women's group will launch fundraising campaign to pay for project in Community Park plan

Warm fall weather doesn't normally bring thoughts of snow and ice, but that's what Belgium village officials discussed this week when they approved a plan to develop an ice-skating rink at Community Park.

Dawn Anderson, president of the recently formed Lakeshore Communities Junior Woman's Club and wife of Belgium Wastewater Supt. Neil Anderson, said the club will start raising money for a rink if the board supports it.

"We haven't discussed it at a meeting yet. It just came up when a couple of us were talking," Anderson said. "We're willing to do fundraisers and seek donations if we have your support."

Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum said the village flooded the infield of the baseball field in Community Park last year for an ice-skating rink.

"When it was cold for those two weeks, it was used a lot," he said. "If you get cold weather, it makes good ice. The worst thing is we always get rain in winter and it's a job to redo it."

Neil Anderson said he and his wife researched ice-skating rinks and it appears a white plastic liner is essential because it does not absorb heat. One manufacturer offers kits that include the plastic liner, frames and stakes for about $2,000.

Birenbaum said the village used clear plastic and it worked fine until it rained. It was time consuming trying to maintain smooth ice, he said.

Trustee Vickie Boehnlein asked if flooding the infield ruins it. When she was told it didn't, she said the village should give its blessings.

"The Woman's Club is paying for it, right?" Boehnlein asked. "I don't see any problems with it if it's not going to cost us anything."

"Would the DPW do the install?" asked Trustee Eric Wilkowski, who heads the budget committee.

Mrs. Anderson replied, "We (club members) will have to talk about it. Obviously, we can't install it ourselves. We would look for volunteers or maybe reimburse the village."

The cost and how to pay for it will be answered when the club explores the issue, she said.

The park restrooms, which are heated during the winter, could be unlocked during skating hours, Birenbaum said.

Club officers met Tuesday and are eager to get started, Anderson said Wednesday.

“This has been a passion of mine since we moved here,” she said. “We used to skate on a retention pond behind our subdivision, but the owner won’t let us use it anymore.”

The couple’s 13-year-old son is on a youth hockey team and would like to have ice to practice on, Anderson said.

“It was one reason I started a Junior Woman’s Club because I knew I couldn’t do it by myself. It was kind of a dream that I thought would take years.

“Then Jamie (Cecil, village treasurer and club member) called and said the staff was talking about it and would be interested in working with us on it,” Anderson said.

“Since then, we’ve had more interest in the club. I was so discouraged because not many women joined and so few came to meetings that I was ready to call it quits. Now, people who didn’t join say they can’t come to meetings but would be willing to work on projects.”

The club plans to hold a family bowling fundraiser Sunday, Nov. 7, at the Belgium Community Center, is seeking donations from area businesses and will have ice-rink donation cans in various locations.

In addition, the club plans to sell concessions at the rink on Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays, Anderson said. Anyone interested in working on the project or joining Lakeshore Communities Junior Woman’s Club can call Anderson at 285-3366.

Donations to LCJ Woman’s Club Skate Fund may be sent to 268 Highland Dr., Belgium.