



Brown Township, Franklin County

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GROWTH AND THE FUTURE

Ed's Note: Over spring break, I attended a "Growth and the Future" conference at the refurbished Columbus Athenaeum (formerly the Masonic Temple) downtown. It was a two-day conference for planners, government officials, environmentalists, developers, and the like. Over 500 people attended. Needless to say, much information was gathered. Too much for one article in a newsletter. So I have copied two items of interest for this publication. One is a collection entitled "A Line in the Muck" by Paul Dumouchelle of the Darby Creek Association. If anyone would like to submit an opinion article for the newsletter, please keep it to one page typed and send it to the township office for review.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Submitted by Joe Martin

The committee met with land developers, Mr. Dan O'Brien of Planned Development Corporation and Mr. Terry Andrews of C.V. Perry and Co. at the April 22nd meeting. Mr. Ray Graves of Foxfire Golf Club and Mr. Larry Brockett of the OSU Extension Office also gave presentations concerning golf courses in the Big Darby Creek watershed.

The motivation of the meeting was to better understand the pros and cons of clustered home communities and active recreational land uses. Several township residents who attended questioned the guests about land development concepts, infrastructure maintenance costs, drainage and environmental degradation of the Big Darby Creek. Members of the Nature Conservancy expressed grave concern for the segment of the Darby from Plain City to just south of Route 40, the Hellbranch tributary, the Clover Groff Ditch and the Hamilton Ditch.

Allen Neimayer, of MORPC will give a short presentation on cluster home zoning and Transfer of Development Rights at the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 27th at 7:00 p.m. at the township hall. Steering committee members are Joe Martin, Harold Jerman, Donna Carrel, Jeff Smith and Glen Siemer.

ELEMENTS OF BROWN TOWNSHIP HISTORY

Darby Post Office

A little known fact about Brown Township has recently been discovered. The township had one of the very early post offices. It was established in July 1878 and it is understood to have been on the Henry Francis Farm, now owned by the Colwells. Kathy Colwell is a direct descendant and lives in the first brick home in Brown Township. The post office was known as "Darby" with Joseph O'Hara as the

postmaster.

Information obtained by Ray Bradley (1996) and copied from the Northwest Historical Society's newsletter.

Bridges to the Past

According to the Columbus Historical Society, the first covered bridge in Franklin County was located on Scioto Darby Creek Road as it crosses into Madison County. Little else is known about this bridge other than it was believed to be destroyed in the 1913 flood. Read on: " Less than three miles south of Scioto Darby Road is Beach Road where a 110 foot truss covered bridge was built at what was then known as Lane's Ford. The Smith Bridge Company built this bridge in 1875. It had a short life as it was replaced in 1888 by the fine old steel truss on the site today. This old steel bridge was built by the Columbus Bridge Company and today is the oldest highway bridge in Franklin County that is still carrying traffic. We believe that is also the last of the old high steel truss highway bridges in Franklin County." (Miriam F. Wood, May 1996)

Note: This bridge on Beach Road is scheduled for replacement by the year 2000.

Brown Township Depot

The replica of the old Brown Township depot at Homestead Park is almost complete. The trustees are asking for any donations of historical information about trains, telegraphs, or Brown Township. Any old photographs, letters or maps that can be copied and returned would be appreciated. Would there be any train buffs interested in providing information or donating items of interest?

There is also interest in establishing a "Memory Lane" while walking to the depot which would be lined with trees. These trees would be planted in memory of loved ones passed on. What a way to honor the memory of a Brown Township resident who has meant so much to us or to a family member we will always cherish. Let us know your thoughts. Contact Trustee Pam Sayre at 878-0199.

OPINION

A Line in the Muck

By Paul Dumouchelle

We are all proud of the Darby Creek Association for opposing the dam proposals of earlier years and organizing our annual Clean Sweeps. Yet the job of protecting this treasured stream is far from over. A destructive and insidious force continues its work everyday throughout the watershed. This force removes the natural earth cover, the very source of the creek's sustaining waters. This force goes by the name _____ of _____ "economic development". With each new square yard of pavement and every roof shingle, the Darby becomes more vulnerable to flash flooding; silting and pollutants from auto drippings.

Nowhere in this vulnerability more evident than in Hellbranch Run, in western Franklin County. The Hellbranch is the first major tributary of the Darby to face intensive development pressures coming from Columbus. The edge of the Hellbranch basin closest to Columbus is already overrun with shopping centers and subdivisions. What will prevent the entire Hellbranch from being paved over? Soon a precedent may be set establishing the Hellbranch as no different from other degraded waterways across the state. As soon as this happens, can the rest of the Darby watershed be far behind?

I say we draw a line in the muck of the Hellbranch basin and say, "You will not pave beyond here".

We need more than just to prevent destruction, however, we need to restore the Hellbranch to what it was just a few decades ago. A comparison of Hellbranch fish species collected by George Phinney in

the late 50's (doctoral thesis at OSU) with Dan Rice's (ODNR) samples of 1991 show a 25% decline in fish species in Hellbranch Run. We want a reversal of this trend. Achieving this objective will make Hellbranch Run a positive and beneficial tributary to Big Darby Creek rather than the negative contributor of today. How will we do this? By working together.

Your first step is to call the number listed below so you can be involved in our organizing activities. Our first course of action is to ensure that anyone developing land in the basin adheres to the current law in their erosion control practices. I am summarizing the law and clarifying how citizens can file complaints to start enforcement action against ignorant, incompetent or irresponsible developers.

This is just the first step. Much more than that must be done to restore Hellbranch Run to the biodiversity documented just 35 years ago.

In any such effort we should all remember why we bother. My personal reason for this effort is rooted in my childhood years. I was blessed to grow up alongside the Detroit River and its tributaries. At the time, the early 70's, the Detroit River was choking on phosphates and the surviving fish were inedible due to mercury poisoning. Yet even then, the water contained a spiritual message that has guided me. In solitary moments of connection with the waterways, I have found a clearer definition of myself and my relationship to that which created me than in any other experience. "Economic development" is destroying a people's ability to experience that connection- this is a dangerous trend requiring reversal.

This effort is part of a larger, ongoing struggle. It will not be easy. But if the Hellbranch degrades the Darby far enough, there are those who will claim the Darby is no longer worth protecting. There is a perverse logic among those fixated on economic development that argues for continuation of ecological degradation once such destruction has already occurred. One can imagine such people arguing that the Cuyahoga River of the 1960's should have been converted into an incinerator since it had already burned once.

My hope is that the Hellbranch will not be condemned to eternal degradation but that it will become an inspiration that reminds us of our roots in, and sustenance from, the Earth. I am working so the Hellbranch may be a place where we can experience those rare time-space events when we feel the natural world's pull and it connects us to that which is greater than our own personal existence. If you have also felt those connections and desire to preserve them for future generations, call me and join me.

Paul Dumouchelle, Hellbranch Run Coordinator 614-761-1247

LISTEN TO WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING.....

For 13 metropolitan areas in Ohio, urban land grew by 63% while population grew 13% between 1960 and 1990. Thus for every one percent increase in population, urban land expanded by 4.7%. This is twice the national average of 2.3% for the same period. Low-density sprawl is the common practice in Ohio. -*David Rusk, consultant and former Mayor, Albuquerque, NM.*

"This isn't about stopping development, It's about influencing how it happens." - *Fred Dailey, Director, Ohio Dept. of Agriculture*

"Some communities are going to be victims of change.. they won't understand it, they won't adapt to it, and they will fail; others will prosper, most likely those that understand that planning is a lot more than next week's zoning case..." -*Henry Cisneros, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development*

"People move for good reasons. They seek bigger houses, larger yards, a better education for their children, safety, trees, open space, and an escape from crime, concrete and congestion - the perceived problems of the city." -*Alan Miller, Assistant City Editor, Columbus Dispatch.*

"As soon as you put sewers in, it's like fertilizing the ground. Things grow." -*Bill Habig, Exec. Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*

"It would be nice to have communities sitting around and talking about how we can make houses more affordable, rather than the opposite." -*Ted Uritus, President, Building Industry Association*

"In a nutshell, the more people, the lower my quality of life. With all those homes, it won't be long until they'll be building strip centers..." -*Michael Carey, Outville resident*

"Planning articulates a vision of what a community should look like and the infrastructure needed to serve it." -*Stuart Meck, former Oxford planning director*

"The politics of poverty and urban issues has taken a back seat. In the 1960s and even the 70's, it was politically correct, for lack of a better term, to talk about issues of poverty and urban issues. Since then, it has become politically incorrect." -*Michael Coleman, Councilman City of Columbus*

"Governments are making rules and regulations without consideration of the effect it will have on landowners and their rights." -*Larry Gearhardt, Legislative Analyst, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation*

"Urban expansion is the greatest threat to the preservation of the Darby Creeks." - *Marc Smith, fishery biologist for the Ohio EPA*

"It's the use of the automobile and our current highway policies that are responsible for our unnecessary loss of farmland." -*Michael Wilkos, former transportation planner*

"Yes, we can expand our agriculture elsewhere but these soils may not be as good as the ones we've paved over." -*Dr. Fred Miller, OSU School of Natural Resources*

"Local officials and residents ought to look at our study of Madison Village and Township. We found that for every \$1 of revenue raised by residential development, the communities spent \$1.54 in direct services, including education, health and human services, public safety and public works. On the other hand, the average ration for farm, forest and open land was - \$1 to 34 cents - for every dollar raised; after services were provided, 66 cents remained." -*Tom Rapin, Lake Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor.*

All quotes reprinted with permission from The Columbus Dispatch, "The Price of Progress", September 8-12, 1996

HEAT RELATED EMERGENCIES

Throughout the year, the Norwich Township Fire Department is here to help you when you have an emergency; our agency provides quality services in the area of Emergency Medical Services, Fire Suppression, Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Education.

During the summer, one type of medical emergency that we respond to is heat related, which most time is preventable. This type of emergency can afflict people of any age group, and typically the older

you are, the more likely it will be more severe than on a younger person.

In hot weather, the idea is to keep your body cool by perspiration, during activity you can lose up to 1 liter of fluid per hour. The goal is to lose enough water to keep you cool, but not too much to cause a chemical disturbance or imbalance.

Prevention is a key to this medical emergency. When it is hot and you are active, drink plenty of water both prior to and during the activity; when you are finished continue to replenish the lost fluids either with water or a commercial exercise drink. Also, maintain a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, this will help you maintain the balance of lost nutrients. If you get hot and tired, do not hesitate to take a break and remove yourself from the environment. Many times people will push themselves and say, "I won't take a break until I get so far into the project". The proper way to judge a project is to take a break when you need it, not when you have accomplished so much work.

Signs and symptoms of a heat related medical emergency might include: muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting and skin may be cool, pale and moist or hot, flushed and dry.

If you think you have overdone it, do not hesitate to CALL 911. Heat related emergencies can be very dangerous and even fatal. Remember the Norwich Township Fire Dept. is just a phone call away, 24 hours a day.

TRASH DISTRICT

Submitted by Ron Williams

Because we are rural and low density, price breaks for trash removal from a single hauler are not a consideration according to Johnson Disposal and Waste Management. Waste Management, at this time, does not service the Brown Township area. Should the township develop a higher density, a trash district could be reconsidered.

JOINT RECREATIONAL DISTRICT

Submitted by Dave Ahlum

Results from the surveys received by June 1 will be available to the media. Regular meetings are open to the public and are published in the Northwest News. Anyone who has questions or concerns about the Joint Recreational District should call Dave Ahlum during the day at 876-5622 or evenings at 876-4824. He needs your input.