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MAQUOKETA SENTINEL-PRESS

Volume 157, No. 2 ■ 20 pages Plus Supplements ■ Saturday, May 22, 2010 ■ \$1.00 per copy

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Seven campsites to be added

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Additional camping pads will be constructed at the city campground at Horseshoe Pond Park, a slim majority of Maquoketa City Council members decided this week despite budget concerns expressed by opponents.

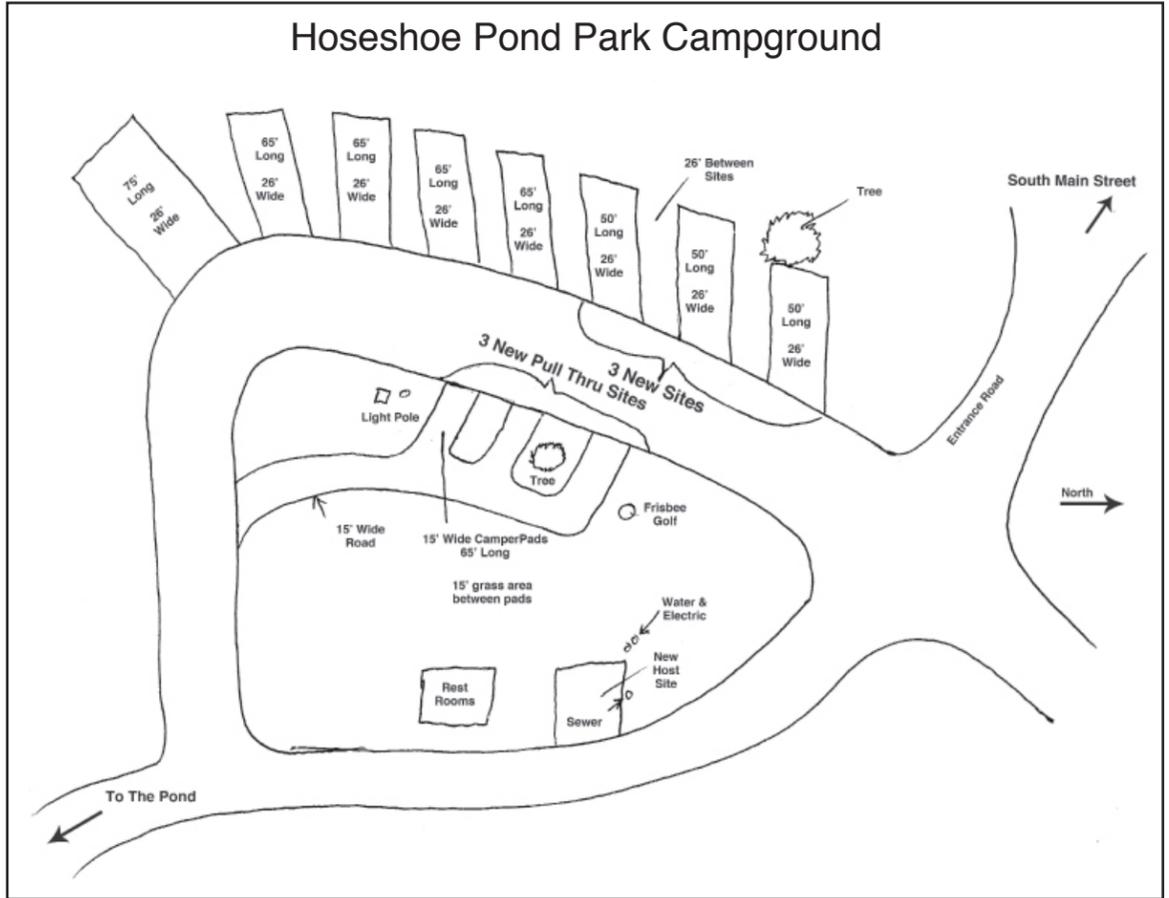
On a series of four 4-3 votes Monday night, May 17, the council gave the public works department directions for the construction of seven additional campsites at the park at the south edge of the city.

The campground has taken in increasing amounts of revenue since it was developed several years ago. Proposals to expand the campground to capitalize on the growing popularity of the facility and to bring in more revenue have sparked heated discussions among the council since they were first suggested last summer.

A divided council on Monday approved a modified plan to construct seven new campsites at the park and to provide each with electrical hook-ups, a picnic table and a fire ring.

The council adopted a set of recommendations made by the city's Tree Board, which met just before the council meeting.

■ CAMPGROUND, Please turn to page 12



Graphic shows location of the campground at Horseshoe Pond Park in Maquoketa. The City Council on Monday night, May 17, approved construction of seven new sites, all of which will be furnished with electric service, picnic tables and fire rings.

Delwood answers whole grade sharing questions

By KELLY GERLACH

Their 23-year whole grade sharing agreement provides more opportunities for their students and set the precedent that whole grade sharing is not a death sentence for small rural school districts.

Those are only a couple of the opinions and comments Delwood Community School District Superintendent/ Principal Sue Goodall and board member Ron Filloon shared with Andrew Community School Board members and about 35 district residents and employees Monday, May 17.

Andrew invited Delwood representatives to speak informally about their whole grade sharing agreement with the Maquoketa Community School District and answer residents' questions about the agreement and how it works.

Most of those questions focused on academic performance, financial stability and tax rates, scheduling, busing and Delwood's relationship with Maquoketa.

Goodall and Filloon spoke not only as district officials but as parents. (At the end of the meeting, Goodall also said that she is a 1975 Andrew graduate. Filloon is a Delwood graduate.)

"We don't have all the answers," Goodall said. "This (agreement) is just what works for us."

She opened Monday evening's presentation by painting a picture of Delwood in the mid-1980s. She said the Farm Crisis, reduced enrollment (student enrollment dipped below 300), an aging building and decreasing unspent balance forced the district to consider some alternative to operating a full K-12 district.

Minus the crisis, it's the same boat Andrew is in.

Goodall and Filloon said they weren't involved in the whole grade sharing process at that time, "but I know it was very, very tough for everyone involved. I know when they closed the

school at Elwood, it was really hard on the community. In the long run it was a good decision but a difficult decision.

"But our seventh graders adjust well. I think it's harder for parents to adjust to change. (When students are in a smaller district), they know all the students, all the parents and families, everyone. That's not the case in a larger school. It's probably one of the hardest parts," Goodall said.

She and Filloon said Delwood considered agreements with Lost Nation, Calmus-Wheatland, DeWitt, Northeast and Maquoketa school districts when researching what would be best for their districts. The answer seemed to be Maquoketa, they explained.

"If that district folds, then the whole state probably folds," Filloon said.

The last class graduated from Delwood Community High School in 1987. Delwood then housed grades K-6 and sent grades 7-12 to Maquoketa. It's the same year that Maquoketa moved ninth grade to the high school.

"(Maquoketa) has family and consumer sciences, marching band and chorus, industrial technology - that's why we send our seventh graders there, to give our students the opportunity to try everything they want to try. We try to make them leaders while they're here and in seventh through twelfth grades they apply what they've learned," Goodall added.

Under the terms of the Delwood-Maquoketa sharing agreement, Delwood sends 92 percent of the state aid it receives per pupil to Maquoketa. That money goes to Maquoketa's general fund, to be used to educate the students at the high school and middle school levels.

In addition, Delwood shares about \$65,000 of its local option sales and service tax dollars with Maquoketa. A special Facilities Committee

determines how that money will be spent. The committee is comprised of each district's superintendent, one school board member per district, and an appointed member of the Delwood community. They decide which high school and middle school projects will be funded with the local option dollars.

Goodall and Filloon emphasized that even though Delwood doesn't have any official authority on Maquoketa's school board, Maquoketa welcomes their comments, questions, concerns and opinions on matters affecting their students.

Goodall said she works to make sure Delwood's curriculum is in line with Maquoketa's. She said the districts host joint meetings twice per school year to provide updates on test scores, programs, and other shared points of interest.

She works with Maquoketa to arrange the school calendar. Goodall said aligning calendars eases transportation hassles, early dismissals, etc. She served on the committee that helped design Maquoketa's new high school gym. Filloon last year served on Maquoketa's technology committee.

"(Maquoketa) is very good about including our parents. I really feel like we're partners with Maquoketa. We make decisions together," the superintendent said.

Whole grade sharing forced both districts to realign their schedules. Goodall said Delwood classes used to end at 3:15 p.m., but they extended their day an extra 15 minutes to allow for 7-12 students being bused back to Delwood.

"It's easy with one partner to make all of those schedules work," she said.

Delwood also maintains its own transportation department with a fleet of four buses.

■ DELWOOD, Please turn to page 3