

# Six Mile OKs closing funds for children's nature walk

BY LAUREN PIERCE  
THE JOURNAL

SIX MILE — Six Mile Town Council approved a final reading last week to spend no more than \$15,000 from the town's general fund for closing costs on 65 acres gifted to the town for a children's nature walk.

Located off Six Mile Highway adjacent to Six Mile Elementary School, the land was gifted by the late Conrad Ardell Bryson's estate for Bryson Children's Nature Walk, according to town clerk Rita Martin.

"He had a lot of land in the town, and his will has been in probate for I don't know how long," Martin said. "But, anyway, we finally got to the end of it here."

Closing costs include a baseline report, stewardship fee, title policy and other miscellaneous costs. An application is in process to the Upstate Land Conservation Fund for a potential \$8,000 reimbursement, Martin said.

A conservation easement for the property was also approved by council after a final reading at the Dec. 28 meeting.

Councilman James Atkinson said the town has been working on the project "for a period of time in conjunction with Upstate Forever."

He said while the parties had not officially closed on the property, they "should be set up for real estate closing pretty soon" between the Bryson estate, the town and Upstate Forever, which is ensuring "the greenspace is protected, but will be used."

"Their plans are underway to use the property for perpetuity, so that it won't be lost," he said. "We have worked very closely with Scott Park at Upstate Forever on this project, so we're basically looking forward to the gifting being consummated."

Atkinson added the "overall acreage on the entire estate" was sold to private people apart from the 65 acres, "with some really nice greenspace that we wanted to preserve."

"The selling point of the project was to do something beneficial to economically disadvantaged children, and it's a good

thing to do for economically disadvantaged children because, unfortunately, we're losing more and more greenspace every day due to construction and so forth," he said. "One day children won't even really have the opportunity to see greenspace unless some is preserved. In a lot of cases, economically disadvantaged children even have less opportunity for greenspace than other children."

**'Once valued greenspace like this unique site is gone, it is lost forever and can never be recaptured.'**

**James Atkinson**  
Six Mile town councilman

And the project "is a win-win for all parties," Atkinson said.

"The town recognizes the importance of greenspace in its comprehensive plan and to the future of Six Mile," he said. "Once valued greenspace like this unique site is gone, it is lost forever and can never be recaptured. The Bryson estate wanted this site to serve to benefit all, and especially economically disadvantaged children with greenspace usage, education and experience. There will be a day coming soon with

the rapid rate of development in our area where there will be little greenspace for the enjoyment, health and wellbeing of future generations. That is what makes this project so special."

## PROPOSED NATURE WALK FEATURES

Design plans and a timeline have not been finalized, as the project is still in its "early phase," according to Atkinson, but he said some ideas have been tossed around for the project.

"Where the greenspace will be preserved, there would be walking trails and educational opportunities for young people," he said. "They would be building, basically, a boardwalk-type area and so forth would be ultimately constructed for viewing the pond. There was some talk of like a garden-type area to educate children on growing things. There's some, I'd guess you'd say it's a wetlands area that would have been a shame to lose them. The plans aren't completely developed at this time. The objective was to get the deal done and the project closed and so forth so that could move forward."

Atkinson added more details on the project will be released by Upstate Forever "once closing has been completed."