

# Final plans for phase 1A of Aurora Park approved

By KALEY RICHARD

Next year, the Aurora Park will be open and ready for visitors to enjoy Geauga Lake again.

At the Bainbridge Township Trustees' last regular meeting of the year, they approved the final development plan (FDP) for Aurora Park on the Geauga Lake property, a portion of which is shared with the City of Aurora.

Cullen Meves, with MKSK, visited the township trustees for the first time earlier this year in July to present the plans for the first time. In October, she returned to present the preliminary development plan (PDP).

Just last week, the trustees were able to view the FDP for phase 1A, which includes installing a sundeck, a reimagined pier and a gatehouse pavilion. Phase 1B of the plan will come later and include the installation of an adventure play area and restrooms.

The parking lot and entrance to the park will be located in Aurora, while the phase 1A features will be in Bainbridge, Ms. Meves said.

During the time between the trustees viewing the PDP and the FDP, only one thing changed: the reconfiguration of the entrance and the movement of the sign at the front of the entrance.

"There's going to be signage here as well as the kind of iconic, you know, take a photo with it sign," Ms. Meves said, later adding

that it's next to the sidewalk for easy access.

Everything in phase 1A is planned to be installed next summer, she said.

The sundeck will provide access to the lake.

For the pavilion, they're renovating the existing structure and adding color to it, allowing it to be utilized as a gathering space. It will likely be available to reserve for private events, Ms. Meves said.

Next to the pavilion will be the turnstile building, which will include restrooms, a small office and a utility and storage closet, she said.

"So we'll use a sandstone pennant with the painted columns for the structure and painted facades on the structures themselves. And then we are maintaining one of the ticket booths just for nostalgia," Ms. Meves said.

For the reimagined pier, there are plans to rehabilitate the existing dock, she said. The plans also include two historic interpretive signs, one at the gatehouse and one at the pavilion, and two nature-based education signs, Ms. Meves said.

Police Chief Jon Bokovitz asked if the boat launch will be monitored since Bainbridge does not usually deal with watercraft.

The boat launch will mainly be used for kayakers who will have to check in at the main building to rent a kayak, a paddleboat and/or life jacket, Ms. Meves said.

**Cullen Meves, with MKSK, returned to present the final development plan (FDP) for phase 1A of the Aurora Park, which will be installed in 2026. In her presentation, she showed sketches of what the park is expected to look like once completed with the rehabilitated structures. Phase 1A will be all in Bainbridge in Geauga County.**

