

Duck Creek open house draws a big crowd of

Collins Park golf supporters

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BY TOM HENRY / THE BLADE

A standing-room-only crowd of about 100 people huddled inside the basement of Birmingham Branch Library on Tuesday night for an open house about Duck Creek restoration that the city had advertised as a community meeting for the Collins Park Municipal Golf Course's future.

Speakers told the crowd it was an open house for discussing the waterway. Still, several residents raised questions about the golf course's future before meeting one-on-one to talk about the creek's restoration, anyway.

Joe Fausnaugh, Toledo parks, recreation, and youth services director, told The Blade during an interview that no decisions have been made about the golf course, and that the city intends to open it in the spring again as it has for many years.

The open house was for those involved with Duck Creek's restoration to start gathering information for a feasibility study that will propose ways in which the long-abused waterway could be improved to help fish and wildlife.

The city could consider closing Collins Park Municipal Golf Course if that's what the majority of residents want, but Mr. Fausnaugh and others involved with the Duck Creek project agreed that wasn't the sentiment of those who attended the open house.

"I don't think that's what we're hearing tonight," Mr. Fausnaugh said. "If the community wants golf hear that message."

Mr. Fausnaugh told The Blade he plans to visit one of the nation's premier Audubon golf courses while attending the upcoming conference in the Chicago area, to get more ideas on how recreation and environmental re complement one another.

"It's kind of a benchmark for how you naturalize a golf course," he said. "I don't think we can get Collins park to that level. But you don't know how good you can be until you see the best."

Eric Ellis, Great Lakes Commission project manager, told The Blade that the planning for Duck Creek environmental improvements is being funded by the federal government's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, including \$200,000 for a feasibility study that could take up to 18 months to complete. The open house was the first phase of collecting information from the community for that feasibility study.



Eric Ellis speaks during a meeting to discuss restoring the habitat of Duck Creek at the Birmingham Toledo on March 21.

THE BLADE/REBECCA BENSON

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“The main thing is what the local neighborhood wants to see out there,” Mr. Ellis said.

Scientists will also be determining what’s possible in terms of restoration through research done in the coming months, he said.

“This summer, there will be a wide variety of data collected at the site,” Mr. Ellis said.

Greer Harewood of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said NOAA is a funding to improve the creek’s water quality.

But Ms. Harewood, a NOAA Great Lakes habitat restoration specialist, also said that agency wants improvements that are “reflective of what the community wants.”

Kris Patterson, Partners for Clean Streams executive director, said that improvements to the half-mile section of Duck Creek that flows through the golf course take the region another step forward in meeting the objectives of the Maumee Area of Concern program.

The local AOC is one of 43 groups of rivers, streams, and harbors the U.S. and Canadian government identified as pollution hotspots in need of special attention back in 1987. Mr. Ellis gave the crowd a brief overview of the AOC program before speakers went to their assigned tables for the open house.

Duck Creek, which also flows through an industrial zone before emptying into western Lake Erie’s Maumee Bay, is "really, really developed and there are few open areas," Ms. Patterson said.

“Collins Park is one of the few areas you can get to the creek and see the creek,” she said.

ALL COMMENTS 1

NEWEST ▾



Carlton Surtman · 2 HRS AGO

[Janice Flahiff, spouse of Carlton Surtman, Blade subscriber]

Good to see action being taken with community input.

I wish this project every success.

\$200,000 is a bit of stick shock for me as well as seeing it will take 18 months for this feasibility study. Maybe largely because the creek needs to be studied all four seasons?

A bit dense this morning, did not see the connection right off that

Area of Concern has the acronym AOC!

"forward in meeting the objectives of the Maumee Area of Concern program.

The local AOC"

For anyone interested, more info on this AOC site through the EPA

Here's a search phrase

"epa maumee great lakes"

More on AOC's can be found using these words

epa aoc

Once again, thanks for keeping us current on environmental issues, Tom Henry

REPLY 2 0