

Insurance costs could block skateboard park

Although fewer than 20 people attended a skateboarding meeting Thursday, it has not deterred Pat Murray from lobbying the town for a suitable park for the skateboarders to use.

Murray, 20, is trying to get town council to establish a facility for skateboarders to use instead of the streets. It is illegal in Midland to skateboard on the streets.

Murray has talked to the town about using Centennial Arena from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays during the winter. By next summer, he hopes to have an outdoor area.

Although he says talks with the town have been favorable, a concern about insurance is causing a problem. Murray says it has been estimated by town officials that liability insurance for the arena, per day, would be approximately \$600. He hopes to get a definite answer from the Parks Board in early October.

The expense involved in starting such a program is a major stumbling block, however. Murray told the kids that many fund raising endeavors would be needed. The money raised would cover the initial expense of the equipment, the ongoing insurance and payment for a supervisor with first-aid knowledge.

Murray says the plans for the indoor facility consists of two half pikes (ramps) and four quarter pikes. The outdoor facility would consist of an additional bowl.

Murray says although he has a certain interest in skateboarding, he is dedicating his time to this because he believes the kids should have a safe place to enjoy the popular sport, instead of doing it in traffic. He says it is far better seeing them spend their time skateboarding than getting into trouble elsewhere.

"I'm definitely looking forward to the outcome of this," Murray says. "I'm pretty enthused about it."

A few concerned parents brought their children to the meeting, although not all of them stayed. Nelson Cote, who was there as "a father," believes such a facility is necessary in the town. He says it is a shame the kids are restricted by law from enjoying the popular sport.

"I think they should have some sort of facility. If it's illegal to do it on public property, then they should have some sort of facility where they can do it."

Thomas Fischer, 15, an avid skateboarder, believes the park would attract others from various cities to the area to use the facility, thus increasing tourism in Midland.

Ammon Varney, 11, also sees some positive financial gains in a skateboarding park and club.

"I think if there was a membership of about \$30 a year, they would make a

profit," he says. "Skateboarding has been in for a long time, so they'd make a lot of money."

Murray says hopes to have the park in operation by Nov. 1, pending a decision from the town.



Nowhere to park

Skateboarders in Midland have been petitioning council for a specially designated park. There have been fears that the insurance costs for such a project might be

prohibitive. Skateboarders say a park would be the best way to make the sport safe for everyone.

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Tiny Township council will receive a petition signed by hundreds of Balm Beach residents on Wednesday.

David Phillips of Tiny Beaches Road North said he has more than 500 signatures from the area between Concessions 9 and 10, Lots 17 and 18, between the shoreline and five blocks from the water. More signatures have been gathered from Concession 11 residents.

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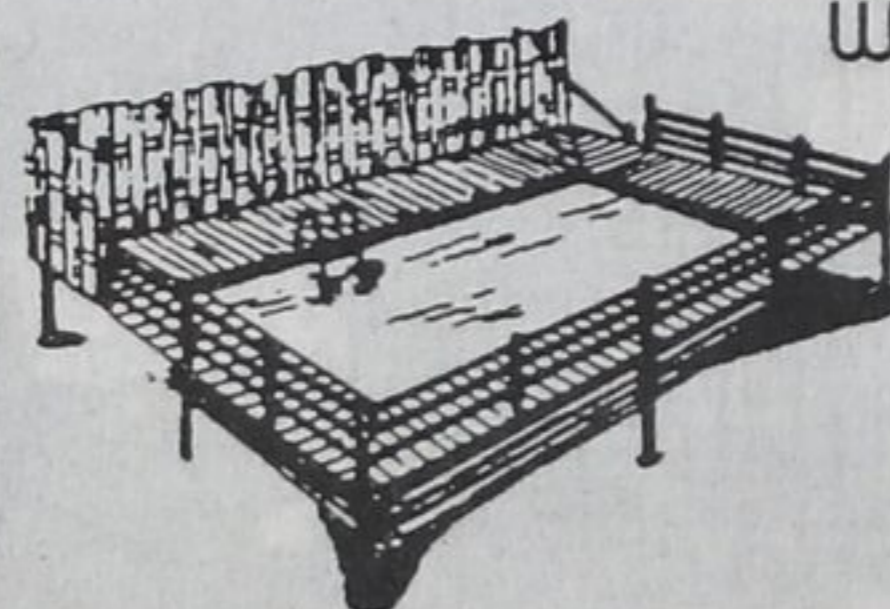


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