

The Intelligencer.

Pennridge eyes regional skate park

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Leaders of the Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee and the Upper Bucks YMCA are trying to work out a plan. Hurdles remain.

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Pennridge area officials are looking into developing a regional skate park in Upper Bucks County to meet the growing demand for an in-line skating and skateboarding facility.

Leaders of the Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee and the Upper Bucks County YMCA have been trying to work out a plan to

boarding park at the YMCA's Pennridge branch at 801 Washington Ave. in Sellersville, officials said.

They are considering building a park similar to the 12,000-square-foot park slated to open this April at the Central Bucks Family YMCA, according to Nick Lupinacci, chairman of Hilltown Township's parks and recreation board who has been in on the discussions.

Youngsters and teens that may be hoping for a park shouldn't get those hopes too high just yet. The groups involved in the discussions have some hurdles to get over before the park becomes a reality.

"It's a concept right now," Lupinacci said. "The bottom line is we've received a lot of encouraging information."

The main stumbling block at this stage of the discussions is the issue of liability.

Lupinacci said YMCA officials have expressed interest in developing the park at the Sellersville site, but the group doesn't own the land. It leases the property from Sellersville borough and West

Rockhill Township, which share ownership.

The Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee, made up of officials from eight Upper Bucks municipalities, must find out if Sellersville and West Rockhill are comfortable hosting such a park on the property. That issue and others related to the park will be discussed at the coordinating committee's Thursday night meeting.

Lupinacci said 11-year-old Joey Walsh of Hilltown Township deserves the credit for getting the ball rolling on a regional skate park. Walsh went before Hilltown supervisors last October asking that they consider adding a park in Hilltown. Walsh is one of a number of area youngsters who have complained that there aren't enough places for youngsters and teens to skate.

When Walsh pitched his idea to Hilltown's parks and recreation board, the board decided to help Walsh pursue the idea. Walsh has met with the Pennridge Area Coordinating Committee and other area groups to discuss a regional park.

"Once it got started, it snowballed," Lupinacci said.

He said the proposal calls for the YMCA to run the skate park. The hope is that park construction could be paid for with a grant, and that user fees charged for admission to the park will help the YMCA maintain it. Dan Albert, the director of youth programs at the YMCA, could not be reached for comment.

News of a regional park comes after officials in Perkasio decided to put plans for a possible borough skate park on hold. Borough council was considering a skating area as part of an expansion project at Lenape Park.

Councilwoman Nancy Keenan said she would rather borough council get together with leaders of other local municipalities to discuss a regional park.

"None of us alone could afford to hire staff (to supervise a skate park)," Keenan said. "And I think we should definitely work with the school."

"I think we need a place that will provide in-line skating for more than just teens. We should have a facility for skateboarders and bicyclists too. We need to stand back and see what we can really do here."