

## RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS, Mercer County Park Commission (MCPC) has announced a nearly \$20 million taxpayer-funded project to develop the 278-acre Dam 21 site of Mercer County Park (also known as Miry Run Ponds Master Plan); and
- WHEREAS, Dam 21 is located at the convergence of three townships - West Windsor, Hamilton, and Robbinsville Townships; and
- WHEREAS, MCPC's plan includes not only necessary improvements to the area including the planting of trees and elimination of invasive species, but also unnecessary development including the construction of a raised viewing bridge, various boardwalks, several new parking lots, access driveways, and maintenance buildings; and
- WHEREAS, the unnecessary development would disturb the natural habitat of wildlife, woodlands, dam, lake, and trails, displacing wild animals into residential areas and changing the purpose and character from passive to active recreation; and
- WHEREAS, the unnecessary development would necessitate the destruction of naturally forested areas; and
- WHEREAS, the proposed forest and meadow restoration areas will be complicated by invasive species and have a low probability of success; and
- WHEREAS, West Windsor Township Fire and Emergency Services, our Volunteer Fire Companies, and West Windsor Police Department would be called to respond to emergencies there and will therefore see an increase in expenses for emergency services; and
- WHEREAS, access to the area for emergency vehicles is limited; and
- WHEREAS, MCPC has no viable plan for security at the park, and this plan would create several parking areas which would not be monitored that would be a magnet for illegal activities; and
- WHEREAS, with greater public assess of the area, the risks around campfire, grilling, and smoking, combined with the high natural grasses and adjacent wooded area, including fallen trees, will increase the probability of vegetation burns; and
- WHEREAS, the island on the lake is inaccessible to vehicular travel; and
- WHEREAS, the plan includes a swimming beach area and a children's playground; a
- WHEREAS, no boat launch is provided for emergency situations making water rescues difficult; and
- WHEREAS, this development will further increase traffic surrounding the park; and

WHEREAS, the plan includes closing an existing parking lot near “sledding hill” and moving it substantially farther away; and

WHEREAS the plan includes turning several acres of productive farmland in West Windsor Township into a meadow, which would create an additional habitat for the deer population in the Township, reducing the productivity of agriculture on the adjacent farmland; and

WHEREAS the West Windsor Township Open Space Farmland Preservation Plan calls for this area of the Township to be a Farmland Preservation Belt. Active recreation adjacent to this farmland is not envisioned in the Township Master Plan; and

WHEREAS the funds marked for this project could be better spent maintaining and updating the recreation facilities in Mercer County Park in West Windsor Township; and

WHEREAS, more than 920 handwritten petitions and 1,000 online signatures have been collected urging Mercer County Park Commission to stop the unnecessary development portions of the Dam 21 plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council and the Mayor of the Township of West Windsor, in the County of Mercer and the State of New Jersey, that the Township Council and the Mayor of the Township of West Windsor have significant concerns about public safety, negative impacts on the environment and wildlife, the change in purpose and character from passive to active recreation, and the unbridled spending of taxpayer dollars; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that given the environmental and safety impacts of this plan, the Mercer County Park Commission should abandon its plan for unnecessary development, and instead complete only the items necessary for restoration of the area, including eliminating invasive species and planting new trees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that current farmlands should not be disrupted, and should continue to be used as farmland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mercer County Park Commission shall not act upon the current master plan proposal, and the public comment period shall remain open beyond its current January 6, 2020 deadline, until such time as a revised plan consistent herewith is approved by West Windsor Township Council; and

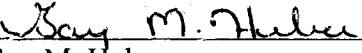
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if the County Parks Commission moves ahead with this plan, then all Mercer County townships who are tasked with providing emergency services in that area should be compensated by the County for the additional expenses incurred and additional personnel that will be required to serve that area; and Emergency Services should be given full access around the entire lake; and

the County should install boat ramps should they be needed for rescue operations;  
and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the Mercer County Park Commission, the Board of Trustees for the Mercer County Park Commission, the Mercer County Executive, and the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Adopted: January 2, 2020

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the West Windsor Township Council at their meeting held on the 2nd day of January 2020.

  
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Gay M. Huber  
Township Clerk  
West Windsor Township