



SAVE HINES PARK

DON'T SELL OUR PARKLAND!

WAYNE COUNTY RESIDENTS CONVENE TO PROTEST PARKLAND SALE

LIVONIA. January 9, 2019--Residents of Wayne County gathered at the Bennett Civic Center Library in Livonia on January 9 to voice their objection to the sale of County parklands.

In August of 2016, the residents of Wayne County unanimously voted to approve a millage to support the operation of the Wayne County Park System.

“They did not pass the millage to sell parkland,” says Michael Rudell, a Livonia resident. A group of concerned residents referred to as “**Save Hines Park**” organized in 2018 to stop the sale of the Warren Valley Golf Course and surrounding parklands. They are now launching a public awareness campaign aimed at stopping the sale of parklands through the proposed Wayne County “Mill Run Project.”

This historic park system was established by the Wayne County Road Commission as Park Trustees in 1919 with the gift of the land now known as Elizabeth Park in Trenton. The original park development plan designed by the Park Trustees was a chain of flood plain lands along the Detroit, Rouge and Huron Rivers that encircled the region in a green necklace. With this in mind, Edward Hines, one of the original Road Commissioners, agreed to redevelop the failing dams and enlarged the mill ponds along the Rouge River to power Henry Ford’s Village Industry Plants. In return, all of the Plants and the land around them was deeded over to the Road Commission as Park Trustees to be incorporated into a parkway in 1948 by Ford Motor Company.

The Wayne County Department of Economic Development has put these historic mills up for sale stating they want to have them redeveloped. However, not only are the mills up for sale, but much of the parkland around them.

“Our biggest concern is the 11 acres up for sale behind Wilcox Mill for housing. This parcel includes the bikepath, sections of the River and even Hines Drive. We did not pass the park millage so that the parks would be sold off to private developers for housing. This negatively impacts our floodway, reduces the ability to bring in future grants and destroys the continuity of the parkway,” says Bill Craig, president of the Holiday Park Nature Preserve, another park in the County system that faced redevelopment in the past.

“Adaptive reuse of these facilities is possible under a joint lease agreement not requiring the sale of parkland. The County Park System developed a Rouge River Master Plan in 1989 proposing joint partnership use of these historically registered mills much like the National Historic Structures Lease Program used by the National Parks System. When I was working for the park system, we had a number

of public and private organizations inquiring about jointly using these historic structures. They were willing to invest in the buildout of the structures and provide matching funds for grants the County could access,” stated Nancy Darga, the former Chief of Design for Wayne County Parks.

The Mills were actively being used by the County then, and still are today. Newburgh Mill houses the Wayne County Sheriff’s Mounted Division. Wilcox Mill Just got a new \$100,000 roof in 2016 and is used to shelter valuable light exhibits and generators. The amount of money the County would receive for the proposed sale of these two mills is less than what needed to relocate these functions to other areas.

“There is no economic benefit to selling the Mills. If the goal is to increase the recreational value of the historic structures, we can do so without selling them. The County should leverage grants, foundation monies and private donations. You can not do that if the lands are in private ownership. Selling the land around Wilcox Mill to build housing does not add recreational value. The supporters of the Wayne County Park Millage supported the millage to save the parks, not sell them,” added Darga.

ABOUT SAVE HINES PARK

[Save Hines Park has started a petition](#) with more than 5,500 signatures and a Facebook group, @savehinespark, to share upcoming details and facts. The group’s website is www.savehinespark.com.

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