

Safety improvements needed at Monocacy Hill

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For Journal Register News Service

Monarch Fire Department personnel said April 18 that rocks need to be cleared on Monocacy Hill Recreation Area, Geiger Road, Douglassville, to improve safety for hikers and access to the area in the event of an emergency.

Assistant Fire Chief Robert Kline told the Amity Township Board of Supervisors that the fire department battled a fire on the hill on April 16 from 7 to 11:30 p.m., which could have threatened the nearby homes on Slate Run Road, if not for a 911 call.

Kline said the fire was contained to one, hollow tree in the middle of the hill, and the 911 call may have been made by the person who set the fire.

"The hollow tree was set on fire and was burning inside and around the base," said Kline, adding, "Someone had to definitely light it up, it wouldn't start on its own."

Board Chairman Robert R. Yanos said he is concerned since all of the homes on Slate Run Road could be consumed and there could have been more serious consequences.

"We shouldn't lose sight of getting better access to the center of the Hill," said Yanos. "We have to do more than we're doing."

"Our biggest issue is the safety and the liability issue," said Supervisor Paul R. Weller.

Kline said a small blade would move the rock off the hill and improve the access for the fire department's Kubota vehicle.

"I would be concerned to live there," said Kline. "Prevailing winds will blow fire in there. I don't think we can get to every spot on the hill, but we need to make every attempt. Union Township bought a [bull]dozer and they're making trails with it, and that's what's going to happen [on the hill]."

Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said the township will also develop a notification or call system for residents on Slate Run Road in the event of a fire.

Public Works Foreman Alistair Howell-Clarke said he will meet with Kline and Monarch Fire Department personnel on the hill to assess the situation of clearing the rocks.

Amity Township received a \$65,570.12 insurance dividend check for its excellent low loss ratio.

Richard I. Hart, Jr., president of Richard I. Hart Insurance Agency, Reading, a part of the Keystone Insurers Group, delivered the check to the Amity Township Board of Supervisors at their April 18 meeting.

Hart said it is the fifth annual dividend check he has delivered to Amity Township, a result of their “excellent management and focus in risk management.”

He credited Lyon and Amity Township Police Chief Kent A. Shuebrook with the best practices management, particularly during one of the worst loss ratio periods experienced by PSATS since 2001 - in Pennsylvania and nationwide.

“The township is rate neutral, which is incredible,” said Hart. “I credit that to them all working together and they do a great loss prevention and safety and that’s what it’s all about and the results speak for themselves.”

The Amity Township Fire Department will hold its annual carnival on May 1 to 5 at the fire department on Pine Forge Road.

In other business:

The board reviewed the map for the proposed new Village Commercial/Rural Village area at Weavertown and Old Swede roads, and added the property that contains the Amity Primary Center (APC).

Board members said the APC was added in the event that the Daniel Boone School District ever closes the school.

The Planning Commission added Blacksmith Pointe subdivision to the new zone at its April 11 meeting.

Weller noted without that addition, the zone wasn’t contiguous.

The commission will begin developing definitions and permitted uses of a VC/RV zone.