

# Park improvements planned

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## Thom Casey

The children's playground at Veterans Memorial Park in Newport is getting a new beginning thanks to the efforts of hardworking volunteers.

Residents recently banded together to beautify the park's entrance, but there are bigger plans. They include replacing playground equipment, addressing safety issues and giving pavilions some much needed maintenance.

The project, "Grandma's Park Program," features a committee of 13. Committee members Ruth Ann Linn and Frank Campbell recently addressed Newport Borough Council on the program's status. They said the project won't require funds from the borough, but rather money will be solicited from the community.

Linn couldn't give an estimate for the project, but said the work at the entrance cost \$1,125 to replace mulch, flowers and other items.

"Interest has grown in favor of improving the children's playground area and the park in general," Linn said.

The committee—Linn and her husband, Dick Campbell, Sandy Knouse, Donald "Pete" Howell of the Little League, Bill Wilson, Jeremy Still of the Newport Softball Association, Jeff Mattern, Fred Wertz, Rick Koontz, Anita Kresge and borough council members Tom Fitzpatrick and Tami Halstead—met with a playground equipment salesman on May 5.

Work officially began May 7, when the borough labor force began digging up the playground. Linn said hopes are to have the work completed by next month.

Improvements include patching cement in the concession area, refurbishing swing sets, repairing and fixing rest rooms and repairing boards on benches. In short, the committee wants to make the park to be a place where parents can take their kids and not have to worry.

Billy Cox Field is in good shape thanks to the caretakers, but hopes are to install a more descriptive sign with information about Cox, a Major League baseball player.

The committee for the beautification of the park's entrance included the Linns, Kresge, Joe O'Toole and Knouse. In addition to replacing old and planting new shrubbery, the committee removed and replaced old mortar for the plaque and resealed stones on the walls.

"The committee achieved this improvement quickly because of the generosity of donors," Linn said.

Donations came from Newport Lions Club, Newport American Legion, Perry County Sailors Association, Newport Fire Company Auxiliary, Newport Civic Club, Oliver Grange, Perry Valley Grange and Newport Revitalization and Preservation Society.

Anyone wishing to volunteer time toward the effort is encouraged to call 567-3062 or e-mail Campbell at [fcampbell@camel-express.com](mailto:fcampbell@camel-express.com).

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