

Observatory project ‘on track,’ according to tech director

Awaiting of funds from Wall Foundation for Educational Excellence

By Lianna Bass

WALL TOWNSHIP — The highly-anticipated Wall Township Public Schools observatory project is on track, according to Wall Township Public Schools Director of Technology Jeffrey Janover.

During Tuesday night’s board of education meeting, board member Ralph Addonizio asked for an update on the project.

According to Mr. Janover, the project has been funded to the tune of about \$20,000 so far by the Wall Foundation for Educational Excellence.

“Their original commitment was for \$40,000,” Mr. Janover said. “So far, we are moving along.”

Mr. Janover is currently trying to arrange a timeline with the Wall Foundation for Educational Excellence to determine when the project will be completed.



“I would say that we are pretty much on target,” he said. “I don’t, at this point, anticipate any problems, but if there are we’ll address them when they come up.”

According to Mr. Janover, a foundation has been poured and trenches have been dug for conduit electrical equipment that will run into the facility.

“I would say it is in the place it needs to be right now,” Mr. Janover said. “It took a great deal of time to have discussions with the townships and ensure that we had right location, so it’s a very time consuming process. So I wouldn’t say we are ahead or behind of schedule, we are pretty much moving right at pace.”

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The facility will consist of a 10-by-10-foot building, which, according to Mr. Janover, will comply with all municipal codes. The observatory will be built at the south corner of the Allenwood Elementary School property, beyond the track and backstop. This location was chosen because it is relatively free from extraneous lights, and has an excellent view of the sky.

According to Mr. Janover, the observatory will not require much electrical capacity.

The building will be comprised of an aluminum frame structure which will be covered with a heavy-grade ultraviolet [UV] stabilized polyethylene plastic. The structure itself is being built by PolyDome, a dome manufacturing company based in Litchfield, Minnesota. According to Mr. Janover, PolyDome employees will be installing the building once the foundation is in place.

Students will explore and investigate a wide range of cosmological objects and events while gaining hands-on experience in the use and maintenance of astronomical equipment. The observatory is meant to help students develop a broader and deeper understanding of their place in the universe and develop and enhance their self-guided learning skills.

Students will also be able to perform meaningful research while collaborating with experts in the field of astronomy and their peers at other schools. They will be able to present and publish their research through various forums.

The observatory is also meant to be a valuable tool for teachers, who will be able to guide their students in the application of the scientific method for research purposes. It will allow educators to reach out and collaborate with other educational institutions and colleagues from across the world.

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