

GREENFIELD

Mayor requests \$350K for skate park

By ANITA FRITZ
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Construction could begin in 2023; city will seek 70% of project cost from state

GREENFIELD — If the City Council approves \$350,000 the mayor has included in her capital budget, Greenfield could have a skate park once again in a few years.

Mayor Roxann Wedegartner said she is committed to building the long-awaited skate park. The city had one at the back of what is now Olive Street Apartments, but it was dismantled in 2010 to make way for that project. Though Mark Zaccheo renovated the building and built a

parking lot where the skate park once stood, he and his wife have been avid supporters of building a new skate park.

The Recreation Department is working with Wedegartner on the project and will provide updates and information as it becomes available.

“I haven’t been that involved in the effort,” Precinct 5 City Councilor Timothy Dolan said, “but it’s something I really support. People have been working on finding a place and

building a more modern skate park for many years.”

Dolan said his concern as a resident and city councilor of Greenfield is that there aren’t a lot of entertainment options for teenagers.

“There’s a whole portion of the population we’re not serving,” he said. “We have playgrounds and parks and a senior center, but not a lot for teens, especially because of COVID. There was a time when there was a lot to do for teens. You

just have to look at how successful the Montague skate park has been — it’s the hub of the community. It’s heartwarming to see something for teens that’s in town and walkable to get to.”

Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore said the project is in the preliminary stage. The city has been looking for an alternative for almost a dozen years, she said.

“It’s going to be contingent on getting the \$350,000 from the city and a

PARC (Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities) grant from the state that we’ll apply for when the application process opens,” Moore explained. “If the city is awarded the grant, the state would pay 70 percent of the project and the city would pay 30 percent.”

Moore said there is no estimate yet on what a skate park would cost to build, because there are no plans or designs — that will come if the project gets the initial funding it needs.

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“We also have to finalize a location,” Moore said. “We’ve looked at places, including the city-owned property on Riddell Street, but that won’t work because of the (hazardous waste) cleanup needed there.”

The city had also looked at that site for its new fire station, but decided against it for the same reason.

Moore said she feels comfortable that the Recreation Department could work with the \$350,000 the mayor has requested in her capital budget. The City Council will eventually discuss the matter, hold a public hearing and then vote whether to approve the funding.

She said the first thing the Recreation Department and others who are involved with the skate park proposal will do if the money comes through is hire a design firm.

“Once we have designs, we’ll have a better idea about total cost,” she said. “We want a 12,000-square-foot concrete structure with all of the things a skate park includes like walls, ledges, railings and more.”

Moore said the vision is that it will be a “cool place” to go skateboarding. The old skate park on Olive Street was used by many, she said, and for that time it was a nice park, but it was wooden with steel ramps, which meant it was loud and not as modern as parks like the one in Turners Falls.

“The new structure as we propose it would last forever and require little maintenance by the city,” she said. “The sound coming

from the boards will also be minimal on concrete.”

Moore said if the project moves forward, the city would choose a location where there would be a site analysis done and designs would be drawn.

“We’d have public meetings to make sure everyone who wanted could speak about their concerns and ask questions,” she said. “Once we see it through the design and development stage, we’d get cost estimates and hire a contractor to build it.”

Moore said the Recreation Department and Friends of Greenfield Recreation will do as much fundraising as possible to offset costs.

“It’s difficult to ask for money until we have more concrete information, though,” she said. “I’m optimistic. Unfortunately, we’ve lost a whole generation of skateboarders with this delay.”

Moore said there are

youths now whose parents once skated at the park on Olive Street, so maybe they’ll carry on the tradition if the plans all work out. She anticipates applying for the state PARC grant in June or July, and receiving word about an award in December. If City Council approves the \$350,000 and the city receives the state grant, the design phase would take about six months, from January through June 2022.

“We could be starting construction as early as 2023 if it all works out,” she said.

The Recreation Department is accepting donations for the planned skate park online at bit.ly/3b9DzUL or by mail at Greenfield Recreation Department, 20 Sanderson St., Greenfield MA 01301. Donations may also be dropped off at the Sanderson Street offices.

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