

GREENFIELD

Planning Board approves skate park design

Conditions include adding bicycle racks, crosswalks

By **JULIAN MENDOZA**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — The Planning Board approved the design of the skate park set to be constructed in the northern portion of the parking lot between Chapman and Davis streets during its Thursday meeting, with the condition that bicycle racks and crosswalks be added.

The skate park is being designed by Pillar Design Studios, which has been involved in similar projects in Turners Falls, Springfield and Worcester, according to Brad Siedlecki, president of the landscape architecture firm.

Siedlecki initially shared a virtual rendering of the roughly 11,000-square-foot skate park, which includes four entry points — three of which are handicap accessible — a shade structure, benches, a solar charging station for electronics and water bottle refill stations, on April 26.

Construction is slated to begin on July 1, with a targeted completion date in June 2023, Recreation Director Christy Moore said Thursday.

“It’s been a long time coming, as many of you know, and we are very excited for this,” Moore said.

The \$780,000 skate park would replace the former 17,000-square-foot skate park at the back of what is now the Olive Street Apartments. The project is being funded by \$350,000 in capital funds, \$30,000 in donations from the community and a \$400,000 state Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant.

While the Planning Board didn’t express concerns regarding existing design elements, members quickly recognized the absence of bicycle

racks as an issue.

“I think bike racks are just an essential part of life,” Chair Charles Roberts said.

Moore explained that while bike racks were considered during the design process, they were deemed “a waste of money” because skate park visitors typically use their skateboards as a means of transportation to the park.

“If it does show a need, that is definitely something

we could purchase and add later,” she said during Thursday’s discussion.

Planning Board Clerk Emily Eash reasoned that parents and other spectators who may want to come to the park might use bike racks. Vice Chair George

“It’s been a long time coming, as many of you know, and we are very excited for this.”

CHRISTY MOORE
Greenfield recreation director

Touloumtzis argued that the presence of bike racks would suit Greenfield’s embrace of diverse transportation methods.

“I really think, because of our commitment to multi-modality,” he said, “we shouldn’t have any facility without a bike rack.”

The Planning Board’s request for crosswalks connected to surrounding streets recognized Greenfield’s welcoming of foot traffic.

“I think the location is great because it’s so adjacent to, and involved with, the downtown area,” Moore agreed.

In response to community inquiries about lighting — in particular from residents who hoped to see stadium lighting — Moore previously reminded people to be cognizant of light pollution. She added Thursday that the park would be open from dawn to dusk, and wouldn’t need lights because she doesn’t anticipate skating to be permitted past sundown.

Reach Julian Mendoza at 413-772-0261, ext. 261 or jmendoza@recorder.com.