

GREENFIELD

Skate park secures funding, site decisions from council

City approves borrowing for cost of park, with \$400K covered by grant, and designates Chapman Street lot for recreational purposes

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GREENFIELD — With the City Council's approval of two related resolutions Wednesday, the skate park project can continue to move forward.

The first resolution sought to dedicate the Chapman Street parking lot permanently as land for park, playground or recreation purposes. The second resolution, meanwhile, asked councilors to approve borrowing up to \$780,000 — the total estimated cost of the project, and a necessary step following the city's recent award of a \$400,000 Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for

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Communities (PARC) grant. At-Large Councilor Christine Forgey, who chairs the Ways and Means Committee, clarified to councilors that while they authorized \$350,000 toward the project earlier this year, that initial authorization was a necessary step to apply for the PARC grant, given that the city had to prove it could support its contribution of \$350,000.

“The grant will come in at \$400,000,” Forgey said. “To get this done by the end of December ... we had to go ahead and vote on the total sum of money with the expectation that in January the original authorization of the \$350,000 will be rescinded. So that authorization will go away. The authorization we’re voting on tonight is for \$780,000, \$400,000 of which will be reimbursed through the grant.”

In effect, once the original authorization is rescinded next month, the city’s contribution toward the project will remain \$350,000.

Recreation Director Christy Moore called it a “Catch-22” situation.

“To apply for the grant, we had to show we had our percentage of the grant, which was \$350,000,” she said. “It’s taken me very long to get this funding; I don’t want to have anything jeopardize this, and I appreciate your support in moving forward with this.”

She added that the rest of the cost will be supported through donations and fundraising. Moore previously said as much as \$30,000 had already been raised.

After asking a few clarifying questions, particularly with respect to financing, councilors voted unanimously in support of both resolutions.

“I’m thrilled to see this,” said Precinct 5 Councilor Tim Dolan. “I remember

avidly ... putting this on my campaign flyer four years ago, so I’m happy to see it come through. I know there was a lot more than four years of work put into it by a really dedicated team. I think we have a great site and a great project, and I’m happy to vote ‘yes’ at my last meeting.”

The new skate park, which has an estimated completion

date of June 2023, will be built in the upper section of the parking lot between Chapman and Davis streets, replacing the former 17,000-square-foot skate park at the back of what is now Olive Street Apartments.

At-Large Councilor Ashli Stempel-Rae said she is supportive of providing activities to the youths.

“I can’t imagine this skate park wouldn’t be used all the time by kids of all ages,” she said.

City Council President Penny Ricketts added that the project itself has been “a long time coming.”

“We just need as much as we can for the youth,” Ricketts said. “I’m very excited to see this moving forward.”