



City supports more funding for future Sports Park, associated Rotary Park upgrades !

Lake Havasu City, AZ - A slightly more costly Patrick Tinnell Memorial Sports Park and related Rotary Community Park improvements will be funded by the city, Lake Havasu City Council members informally agreed Tuesday.

No formal vote was taken, but council members and citizens mostly agreed that the project shouldn't be done in phases or only with existing funds. Most thought it was important to support the project — to offer the community's youth a state of the art facility — and to improve Rotary Park.

City staff is expected to come back potentially as soon as the next City Council meeting Jan. 8 to outline where the nearly \$1 million in added funding would come from. Also, at that meeting, the city may be ready to vote on approving the entire Sports Park project.

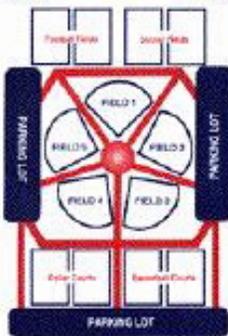
Originally, the Sports Park was estimated to cost \$1.1 million, with the city previously budgeted to chip in \$600,000 and a private fundraising effort covering the rest of that amount. The new estimate for the Sports Park is about \$1.6 million and the private fundraising effort will not cover as much as was originally hoped for, said Jeremy Abbott, project manager with the city's engineering division. The Sports Park alone needs an added \$734,000 in funding, he said.

In order to give Rotary Park a sprucing up to maintain it as a city jewel — in addition to accommodating the new Sports Park — a new southern entrance to the park, moving a building and grounds facility and added parking are needed, Abbott said. Those improvements are estimated to cost about \$245,500, he said. City Manager Charlie Cassens told council members that there are funds that can be used, including refuse fund, shoreline acquisition fund or even dipping into the city's contingency fund to get the project fully funded.

"I hate to spend money, but as I think about this park, we have built a soccer field, baseball fields and softball fields," said Mayor Mark Nexsen. The existing skate park is a small option for the community's youth to use, he said.

"I do look at (the Tinnell Memorial Sports Park) as an investment," Nexsen said. It's an investment that could draw cable network ESPN's coverage of possible Street League skateboarding events, he added. "We need to invest in our youth; we need to recognize Patrick Tinnell — even though we're tight on money," Nexsen said.






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Several community youths spoke about the importance of the project, with some acknowledging that they didn't skate, but that the city's youth needed a better place to gather. Councilman Don Callahan and other council members said they were encouraged by the youth who showed up and supported the project.

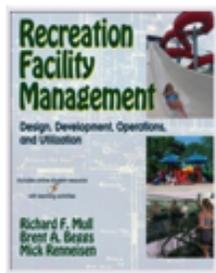
Callahan specifically questioned whether a general outline of a plan for added parking would be enough. Abbott told the city that construction of the new Sports Park would eliminate 56 spaces and between 100 and 140 spaces would be added with a general reconfiguring for the new park.

"(The new Sports Park) could be fantastic," Callahan said. But we need to look at the parking, saying he didn't think what was outlined would be sufficient enough for the Sports Park and other events. Councilwoman Crystal Alger said she was supportive of the project, but suggested it might be better if the project was done in phases. Fellow council members shot that idea down.

"We have to do this all at one time," said Councilman Dean Barlow. "We can't effectively piecemeal this thing."

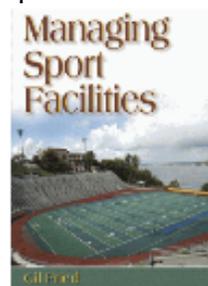
The Sports Park would take an estimated four (4) months to complete and officials close to the project say they want to finish the project before the weather gets too hot in May.

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