

New Robinson Park playground to focus on accessibility



Left: A purple dinosaur peeks out at a green T-rex from the wood chips in the deconstructed playground area. Workers from Northwest Playground begin setting up new equipment Sept. 18.

Below: Employees from Olson Asphalt resurface the park's tennis courts Wednesday while fencing stands ready for a new walkway between ballfields, at right.

Photos by Cindy Yingst



The Columbia Press

The play equipment at Robinson Community Park was showing its age.

During an inspection earlier this year, a Public Works employee found it rusty in places, steps had separated from the frame and some parts were unsafe.

City Manager Linda Engbretson remembers its installation as one of the first events of her 22-year career with the city.

Earlier this month, city workers removed the old equipment to make way for a new playground, slated to go in next week.

Once safety of the old equipment was called into question, the city approached the Quincy & Bessie Robinson Trust board of directors and asked for funding assistance for new play equipment.

The board agreed and the replacement project was born.

Once the city starting looking at the options, it found as many opinions as options.

Engbretson suggested tak-

ing the project to the users: the community's children.

Five options and ballots were sent to the Warrenton-Hammond School District, which held a vote and the kids chose the Northwest Playground Equipment option.

In the past two decades, there have been new requirements for public playgrounds, primarily the need to make them accessible to those with disabilities.

The \$120,000 equipment, which includes installation, is made from a touch-friendly wood fiber. Several play pieces focus on children with disabilities.

The hanging "cocoon" is designed to provide a space for children with autism. It's a quiet spot for them to observe their surroundings while providing some motion. It has openings for parents to watch their kids.

There is a spinner, an updated version of a merry-go-round with seating for chil-

dren with mobility issues.

The seat is designed with a slight inward slope for stability and there is enough room for a parent or caregiver to sit with a child.

A swing seat and activity items throughout the equipment are designed for those with mobility issues.

A ramp is being added to the play area and access to the equipment will be gained through transfer stations set at the proper height for children with braces, using walkers or in a wheelchair.

There will be handicapped parking and a ramp from the parking area is being replaced.

Resurfacing the entire playground is estimated to be an additional \$100,000, so the city decided to do the playground project in phases, applying for a grant in the future to upgrade the surface to a product such as a soft tile.

Information on the city's Facebook page contributed to this report.

Extraordinary Living subject of age 50-plus conference

The 4th Annual Conference on Extraordinary Living for those age 50 and better is set for 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16, at Clatsop Community College.

College President Chris Breitmeyer will give the keynote address, followed by three breakout sessions. Lunch is provided by the Bandit Café. A \$10 donation is requested.

There will be three 45-minute sessions covering everything from medical marijuana for people and pets, disaster preparedness, the Ship Report, dancing for fitness, finances, travel, North Coast trails and making friends.

Free flu shots also will be available.

The conference is sponsored by the college, ENCORE, Columbia Memorial Hospital,

Providence Seaside Hospital, NW Senior/Disability Services and FamilyCare Health.

To register, call 503-338-2566.



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