



R.J. Marx

Broadway Field: ‘The school district has a desire to do this’

Continued from Page A1

Office for Civil Rights to provide more equity between girls and boys sports facilities, a result of a 2021 decision. The school district has until June 2023 to complete the project.

In February, the school board voted to focus on Wahanna as the top candidate for the new facility. This led to a land survey, geologic testing and wetlands delineation study.

When geotechnical studies revealed poor drainage and unsuitable soil, the school district returned to the idea of reconsidering Broadway Field.

Agreement

The school district, park district and city are partners in an intergovernmental agreement originally signed in July 2012, at the field’s debut. According to terms, the city and school district may use the field, which is managed by the park district. The city owns the land and is responsible for litter control and custodial services for permanent restrooms.

The agreement calls for the park district to establish a field replacement fund to receive

money from user fees to help replace the fields.

“We do have a Broadway Field fund and have over the past few years transferred money from the general fund to that fund for the purpose of potential field replacement,” Archibald said after the meeting. “However, the funds that were expected from user fees have not been realized so the Broadway Field fund is not as robust as ideal.”

In her letter to the park district, Penrod proposed improved softball facility, construction of a new storage building, a netting along the northern property line to protect adjacent homes from foul balls, and possible synthetic turf replacement for the baseball and football fields.

Archibald said this may be the time to move forward with the turf replacement as Broadway Field exceeds its life expectancy.

“The school district has a desire to do this,” Archibald said. “Maybe this is a good opportunity for us to invest in capital funds and repair or update the locker rooms to make sure we have equitable space in there for boys and girls sports teams.”

Board member Erika Hamer

Marshall said she hoped the school district would bear its fair share of the costs. ““I feel they’re making assumptions that we’re just going to go ahead with whatever plans they present. They need to step up and be a better partner with us. They may need to buy property from us.”

Even with cooperation and financing, Archibald said he fears the upgrades made necessary by the Civil Rights decision might not be doable in the time frame demanded by the federal decision.

“It’s pretty worrisome that they’re supposed to have the plan in place by June 2023,” Archibald said. “They’re supposed to have a plan presented in December in some way. Even in the best circumstances, it’s a really tight timeline considering that there’s action on that field everyday right now, and there’ll be action out there until November at the earliest.”

Archibald said the three parties meet consistently and this remains a topic for discussion. “My hope is that once the softball field location is determined we can move forward on adjusting the current agreement to the satisfaction of the parties in the IGA.”

Rec center: District looks to future goals

Continued from Page A1

Consultants provided an overview of the market and existing facilities, developed preliminary program space allocations, forecasted financial performance in facility operations, as well as economic impact and made recommendations for the center’s next steps.

The report describes existing space as administration, early childhood, gyms, locker rooms, and community recreation space. Education and child care areas feature a dedicated entry and program space for preschool and early education, including rooms for infants and toddlers. Space for arts, music and dance programming will take place in the performing arts room. Flexible classrooms can be used as additional arts space.

Access through the community recreation entry will allow access to the fitness areas, as well as the gymnasiums and locker rooms, without disturbing child care or tenants. Special events will be presented in an area adjacent to the kitchen — the current cafeteria — and will allow private events uninterrupted space as a result of a closable glass wall that will isolate the area from adjacent spaces.

Leased space will include areas for business related tenants that share complementary missions and interests as the park district. Tenant areas are secured from the park district program spaces with a dedicated entry.

To meet financial goals, the report recommends a funding plan to cover the cost of renovation. A long-term plan must be developed to cover long-term capital improvement and replacement costs.

Revenue forecasts, based on existing programs and new programs, show steady increases as sports tournaments, education, arts and fitness programs increase. Building rentals and vending also add to the financial revenue forecast.

Programs such as the child care, fitness membership, and tenant rental spaces are important to the overall performance

of the model, consultants wrote. “These spaces have an opportunity to contribute to the overall profitability of the center, however additional program and rental revenue may be needed to address the anticipated annual operational subsidy of approximately \$500,000.”

Rental tournaments could allow the district to capitalize further partnerships with existing service providers.

“I feel the projections are reasonable,” Archibald said. “However, they come as projections and different circumstances present may alter the projections. The main point I have from the projections is that the building can be operated sustainably and offer a large amount of programs and services in the future.”

As for a name, the building’s two gyms and the center are up for ideas.

Sunset Recreation Center will remain the building name for now, although sponsorship may be an option.

“I’m all for some big company coming in and throwing in a whole bunch of money and we call it — whatever — Nike,” board president Katharine Parker said.

Hamer Marshall suggested honoring Stubby Lyons, the former Seaside High School coach and city councilor who died in late 2020.

“We chose to label it the Sunset Recreation Center to help pivot the building in the minds of our community to its new owners and uses,” Archibald said. “The name wasn’t necessarily intended to be permanent but is working adequately now. I think we’d be open to a discussion about naming rights/sponsors, etc — but we haven’t invested any resources into pursuing that.”

The district paid \$62,000 for the report with an additional \$3,000 in travel expenses.

The report will be used for the strategic plan and posted on the city website, board president Katharine Parker said. “Then we’ll start having meetings for an overarching strategic plan for the district.”



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