

The Glen Ellyn Sun

Park district fine tunes referendum

As Glen Ellyn Park District officials continue to hash out the specifics of a revised fall referendum, voters have a clearer idea of how much they will be asked to pay for three Park District projects. On Nov. 7, voters must decide if they want to approve \$11.9 million for the district. Of that amount, \$7.4 million will go toward the construction of a new multi-purpose facility at Ackerman Park, \$2.5 million will be used for land acquisition, and \$2 million will be spent on renovating the Main Street Recreation Center.

By Ron Pazola
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The fall referendum is the second attempt by Park District officials to persuade Glen Ellyn residents that the projects are necessary and the price tags are justified. In March, voters shot down a referendum that asked them for \$12.5 million - \$7 million of which would go toward the demolition and construction of a new Main Street Recreation Center, \$4.5 million for land acquisition, \$800,000 to improve Lake Ellyn Boathouse and \$200,000 for work at Ackerman Park.

"I feel more optimistic that this referendum will pass," said Cory Atwell, executive director of the Glen Ellyn Park District. "We got a lot of feedback from the community, and we hope the referendum reflects that feedback."

If residents OK the referendum request, the tax rate would remain equivalent to what it's been since the 1999 bonds were purchased, but the payoff date would be rolled over to 2017. The owner of a \$300,000 house would pay about \$70 to the district next year.

Atwell noted that the referendum might be more favorable to residents because no school district projects will be on the November ballot and because area preservation groups don't object to any of the projects.

Last spring, more than 60 percent of the voters said no to the original referendum. Critics said some of the projects were unnecessary, and their taxes would be reduced if the referendum didn't pass.

One sticking point with many voters was the proposed tear down of the Main Street Recreation building and constructing a new one. Officials now plan to renovate the old building in a similar way the Spring Avenue Recreation Center was rehabilitated.

The Park District also is looking at open land they'd like to acquire. Although officials declined to say what property they want to purchase, they said that all parcels are contiguous to land owned by the district.

Officials also want to construct a 45,000-square-foot facility at Ackerman Park that would include a multi-purpose athletics area, a three-lane walking track, three full-sized basketball courts, a small meeting area and locker rooms.

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