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### **Second phase of Price Fields Project to get underway this month**

The citizen-driven Price Fields Renovation Project will move forward this month with work scheduled to start soon on the second phase of the project, thanks to a unanimous vote of the Bartlesville City Council on Sept. 6.

The council voted 5-0 to approve a contract for Phase 2 of the renovation, which involves the construction of a new quadrant of youth baseball/softball fields in the northwest corner of the complex, located on Tuxedo Boulevard near Silver Lake Road.

In addition to the fields, Phase 2 of the project also includes:

- The construction of an asphalt parking lot along the east side of the complex directly south of the Phase 1 quadrant of fields, which were completed in 2013
- The relocation of existing pre-cast concrete restrooms to accommodate the new fields
- Re-working two of the Phase 1 fields to be used for softball
- Address drainage issues from the Phase 1 quad
- Minor utility relocation

The need for quality baseball/softball sports fields has long been identified as important in the development of community recreational facilities, whether that is achieved through the renovation of Price Fields or by construction of a new facility, said Community Development/Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Beeman.

“In 2004, recognizing potential synergies between the various sports fields that already existed along the Caney River corridor, a plan for the development of a recreation district within this area was prepared, which included the first master plan for the renovation of Price Fields. The estimated cost of the project at that time was \$6.5 million,” Beeman said.

Beeman said community and stakeholder input has played an important role in planning for the best possible design and use of the Price Fields complex, beginning with the first layout in 2004.

“After voters denied funding for the complete renovation of the fields in a 2007 election, the plan was modified in 2008, again by a stakeholder committee, so that renovation of the Price Fields complex could be completed in phases over a period of time as funding was approved,” she said.

“The phased renovation of Price Fields began with the construction of the first quad, completed in 2013 with \$1 million of voter approved funding. In 2015, prior to moving forward with Phase II renovation, the stakeholder committee was pulled together again to ensure that the 2008 master plan remained relevant. Modifications as recommended by the stakeholders were made, resulting in the most current master plan for the Price Fields Renovation Project.”

Vice Mayor Dale Copeland earlier this week noted the extensive oversight of the renovation plan, saying the delays have ensured the project is “the best it can be.”

“It is something that has been underway for many years, and was pushed back several times with the sole intention of making it the best it can be,” he said.

The Price Fields baseball/softball complex, located on a 50-acre tract previously owned by Washington County, was built over many years “by the good will and funding made available by user groups, parents, volunteers, community groups and local businesses,” Beeman said.

“It appeared that the renovation of the complex to meet the needs of the community would require the use of public funds, and if such funds were to come from the City, the property would have to be owned by the City,” she said. “With voter approval of the 2008 Capital Improvement Projects sales tax renewal, which included funding for Price Fields Phase I renovations, four new youth fields, the City exercised its option with Washington County to purchase the 50-acre recreational baseball/softball complex, for \$1.

“The first quad was built shortly thereafter,” said Beeman.

According to Beeman, the City’s vision, as expressed in the 2009 Park and Recreation Development Plan, “is to rebuild Price Fields in phases to achieve a quality baseball/softball community sports complex.”

“We are now starting on the construction of Phase II, the second quad, and will then later move forward with additional phases to complete the build-out envisioned in the 2015 master plan as funding is approved by the voters,” she said.

The 2015 Price Fields Renovation Master Plan identifies two additional phases of construction with primary access coming from Tuxedo Boulevard rather than Young Avenue. Phase 3 would consist of five 300-foot fields with two practice infields immediately south of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 quadrants, and Phase 4 of three 350-foot fields and one practice infield just south of that.

Beeman said future phases would include three playgrounds centrally located to each phase, batting cages, storage buildings, restrooms and concessions. The construction of Phases 3 and 4 are estimated at \$8.8 million, when calculated using 2015 costs.

During a regularly scheduled meeting on Sept. 6, the City Council voted to approve a contract for work on the second phase of the project to McAnaw Construction of Bartlesville, which submitted the lowest of six bids received on the project, at \$1,538,066. The total budget allocated for the design and construction of Phase 2 is \$1.75 million, approved by the voters in 2013.

The contract includes two of the bid alternates included in the bid package — funding for lighting and a drainage system for the Phase 2 fields. Additional funds needed for the lighting and drainage components will come from the Pathfinder Extension Project, which cannot be completed at this time due to uncertainties with development of the Eastland Shopping Center property, according to Director of Engineering Micah Siemers.

“An easement is needed through the Eastland property to complete the Pathfinder trail,” Siemers said, noting that the relocation of Atwood’s from the shopping center to U.S. Highway 75 South could result in changes at the center in the near future.

“We anticipate replacing that funding and proceeding with the Pathfinder Extension Project during the 2017-18 fiscal year,” he said.

Additionally, unallocated funds from the half-cent Capital Improvement Projects sales tax will be used to cover the remaining deficit, Siemers said.

Siemers said construction of Phase 2 is set to begin before the end of this month and is expected to be completed by next spring — in time for baseball season.