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Friday, June 05, 2009

MPRB approves revised schematic design for East Phillips Cultural Community Center *Construction could begin fall 2009*

Construction on the \$4.1 million East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center (EPPCCC) could begin as early as this fall following approval of the revised schematic at the June 3 meeting of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners (MPRB).

The revised schematic culminates an intensive three-year effort to realize a dream that dates back to the development of the park's master plan in 1997. Park features such as the playground and wading pool were constructed, however a community center did not get built due to lack of funding. In 2006, funds from the Minnesota Legislature were appropriated for construction of the EPPCCC.

Through ongoing meetings and discussions between the community, East Phillips design team and the Park Board, building plans were modified to meet the needs of the community.

The recently-approved design incorporates a high school-sized gym that will also accommodate events by having access to a kitchen. The building will include a teen space, computer facilities and programmable rooms. The building will be approximately 14,000 sq. ft. and costs \$4.1 million. The plan also identifies the potential expansion space for a large multi-purpose room, which can be added to the project should additional funds be obtained during the design and development stage.

"The facility is the dream of a very diverse community having a place to call its own so they can work on the things they care about," said Scott Vreeland, District 3 MPRB Commissioner. "We have always said it would be a great building and the schematic illustrates that."

"We have blended each other's strengths to bring success, and

we greatly appreciate the input and efforts that have gone into this project," said Jon Gurban, MPRB superintendent. "Together we have worked hard to develop a facility that will effectively meet the needs of many populations and interests."

Funding for the building is through \$3.5 million from the State Legislature, \$319,000 from the MPRB's 2008 Capital Improvement Program, \$180,000 from East Phillips Improvement Coalition (EPIC) and \$100,000 from Toyota Environmental Funds.

Related File: [East Phillips Cultural Community Center](#)

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Friday, July 16, 2010

East Phillips community center project receives \$571,000 for environmental remediation

The East Phillips Park Cultural and Community Center building project is moving ahead after the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) received \$571,328 in State and Hennepin County funds for removal and replacement of contaminated soil discovered at the site earlier this year.

The MPRB Board of Commissioners at its July 7 meeting recognized the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund (ERF) for funding provided for the cleanup.

Soil testing determined the presence of asbestos, lead and arsenic on the property due to land usage before the MPRB purchased the park in 1977, and not identified in previous environmental testing. The funding will remove and replace the contaminated soil.

"The Park Board appreciates the support this project has received from the State and County. So many people and organizations have worked hard to develop a facility that will effectively meet the needs of many populations and interests, and these funds ensure that the project maintains momentum," said John Erwin, MPRB Board President. "In particular, we would like to thank District 61A State Rep. Karen Clark and the State Legislature, County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin and the Hennepin County Board, Council Member Gary Schiff and the Minneapolis City Council, and Brad and Carol Pass with the East Phillips Improvement Coalition. Their efforts ensure the Phillips neighborhood has a clean, safe and vibrant cultural and community center to serve the needs of this diverse community."

The DEED appropriation is for \$300,000, which was initiated by Rep. Clark and Mr. and Mrs. Pass.

"We worked very hard in the final days of the legislative session to get funding from the Petroleum Tank Release Cleanup Fund to keep the project moving," said Rep. Karen Clark, who authored the legislation. "It's critically important in this

neighborhood where kids have already had exposure to numerous toxic chemicals that they have a safe place to play.”

The ERF funding, in the amount of \$271,328, was supported by Hennepin County District 4 Commissioner Peter McLaughlin and the entire County Board. ERF provides grants for environment assessment and cleanup of sites where activities have been hampered because of insufficient funding. Priority is placed on projects intended for public space, including green spaces.

“The bad practices of the past have left us many sites that cannot be reused until they are cleaned up. This is one of them. The coordinated cleanup funding from the State and Hennepin County ERF have allowed parks and county youth sports funds to be invested in the community center and playing fields. That’s great for the community and its young people,” said Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County Commissioner.

Construction of the \$4.1 million, 14,000 sq. ft. building continues. It is designed to serve the city’s most economically-challenged and ethnically-diverse community. The Phillips area also has the greatest density of children in Minneapolis. The facility will include a teen space, computer lab and programmable rooms, and incorporate a high school-sized gym that will also accommodate events by having access to a kitchen. Completion is scheduled for the end of 2010. It is the first neighborhood recreation center built by the MPRB since 2001, when the Bottineau recreation center was rebuilt.

The majority of the funding for the cultural and community center came from the State of Minnesota, which recognized the need for a facility to serve the diverse needs of the community. Construction of the cultural and community center culminates an intensive three-year community-wide effort to realize a dream that dates back to the development of the park’s master plan in 1997.

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