

Compliant playground approved for Atchison

(KAIR)--With the projected assistance of grant monies if tobacco use is banned near playgrounds in Atchison parks, and with the support of ADA funding and other possible grants, the City of Atchison moves forward with the goal of installing an inclusive playground at Jackson Park.

Public Works Director Clinton McNemee addressed the plan, four years in the making, to the Atchison City Commission Monday evening, outlining the strategy moving forward, following the denial last year of an application for a state Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. “We're working with Live Well [Live Atchison] on a Pathways grant, we're hoping that will be around \$30,000. That's contingent upon a tobacco free ordinance that we hopefully will be looking at, maybe next month. The ADA Advisory Board unanimously voted to use their \$25,000 of 2018 funding for ADA improvements to use toward this project. We are also applying for a Courtney S. Turner Trust donation, or grant, of up to \$15,000, in addition to another \$15,000 grant from the Reeve Foundation. We had initially applied for a Reeve Foundation grant on the first version of this, and it wasn't successful. They didn't state the reason, I believe that it was because of the lack of wheelchair accessibility, because that group is particularly interested in paralysis issues.”

McNemee told the Commission that lack of accessibility has been addressed in the design plan. “Now that we didn't get that first round funding, we thought, let's go back, and see what else we can do. It's basically the same design that everybody picked, except for we swapped out the composite structures for something that has wheelchair accessible decking.”

The more than \$100,000 project will feature a playground with equipment designed for use by children of various physical, cognitive, social, sensory, and communicative abilities.

The Commission, following McNemee's detailed outline of the project agreed to move forward, voting to hire the firm of AB Creative to make the project a reality at a cost of more than \$151,000.

Ten proposals were received from five vendors, with a selection panel, comprised of City staff and advisory board members, scoring and ranking each proposal. That resulted in what McNemee calls “a clear consensus to select AB Creative's Option #1 proposal.”

Cost of the playground is included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

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