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“Veterans Memorial Park-Expected Changes”



Progress many times take patience. That may very well be the case this summer and fall as the Veterans Memorial Field is undergoing vast improvements and will require some adjustments and patience from park goers.

With work on the turf football field expected to be ready by the first football game in August, the parking lots at the park will be not completely updated by then. According to Pat Mrsny, City of Norfolk Park Superintendent, a portion of the parking lot south of the Bluff Avenue entrance and north of the National Guard Armory might possibly be ready for this fall's football season.

Construction for the aquatics facility will be underway in the northwest corner of the park with a completion goal date of summer 2012.

"People will probably want to plan on carpooling this fall to the football games. They will want to be prepared to walk from their cars parked in the area neighborhoods or drop off passengers and park elsewhere," Mrsny said.

The Bluff Avenue entrance to the park off of First Street will not be available this fall. Instead, entrance and exits to and from the park will be off of Grove Avenue at the current National Guard Armory entrance.

With the restroom facilities underneath the football grandstands removed and the baseball grandstands gone, the only restroom facilities available will be porta potties. The new locker rooms and rest rooms will not be finished until summer 2012. "Teams have not been using the locker rooms facilities in the last few years anyway," Mrsny said.

Spectators coming to the park this fall may also want to pack their own water and snacks as the concessions building will be torn down and there will be limited space for a temporary concessions area.

The construction will impact traffic flow and parking at Memorial Swimming Pool this summer. Mrsny suggests that residents allow additional time for dropping off and picking up kids in swimming lessons. Drivers may want to park in a nearby neighborhood and walk to the pool as the only entrance and exit will be Blaine Street and parking will

be limited. Adults also may want to stress to kids the importance of keeping out of the construction zones at the park.

“There are going to be a lot of heavy construction equipment operating in the areas adjacent to the swimming pool. We want to make sure the public is safe by keeping their children and vehicles away from the construction areas,” Mrsny said.

Mrsny said that park renovations are coming along on schedule. He noted that the turf from the football field was removed and given to area homeowners. In all, 74 pallets of turf was taken off of the field and recycled for other uses.

He added that new energy efficient lighting will be installed at the football field by the first game. Home and visitor bleacher modifications are underway so that the bleachers will be more compliant with the American Disabilities Act.

He cautioned that the actual parking situation for football games this fall won't be known until August or later.

“Progress on the construction at the park depends on what type of weather we have this summer and on change orders that may be required. With parking availability, we're going to hope for the best but plan for the worst. We know right now that there won't be the space this year that we've had in the past,” Mrsny said.

For pictures and progress reports at the park, go to the City of Norfolk website at <http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/parks/VeteransMemorialParkImprovements.htm>