



Construction contract awarded for Hazel Dell ball fields !

By Stephanie Rice
Columbian Staff Reporter

Clark County commissioners on Tuesday awarded a \$5.4 million contract to a Vancouver company to start construction on a sports field complex in Hazel Dell. The contract was awarded to Thompson Bros. Excavating, which had the lowest responsive bid among 11 applicants.

Work is expected to begin this month, said Matt Griswold, project manager for Clark County Public Works. The 20-acre site sits on the north side of Northeast 78th Street, next to King's Way Christian Schools.

In February, the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommended naming the complex "Luke Jensen Sports Park." Luke attended King's Way, where his father, Steve, serves as a principal. Luke died last year at the age of 9 following a two-year battle with leukemia. The recommendation was made after nearly 4,000 people voted on seven potential names culled from public suggestions. About 95 percent of the votes, which were cast online or by phone, were in favor of naming the park after Luke. County commissioners will have final say in naming the complex.

The sports park will include: two natural grass baseball/softball fields with dugouts and bullpens (Salmon Creek Little League will pay to install lighting and scoreboards); a small synthetic turf field for tee ball and peewee soccer; a large synthetic turf field with scoreboards, lights, dugouts, bullpens and batting cages; a restrooms/concessions building and a maintenance storage facility.

There will also be playground equipment, walking/biking trails, 16 picnic tables, 18 benches, ten bicycle racks and nine trash cans. A six-acre neighborhood park on the north side of the property will remain largely undeveloped.

The total cost is approximately \$9 million. Construction will be funded by the real estate excise tax, which is paid whenever property is sold.

The basic maintenance of the park will be funded by the Greater Clark Parks District, a special district approved by voters in the unincorporated urban area of Clark County in 2005.

Griswold said construction will be done primarily during daylight hours on weekdays, but the contractor will be allowed to work on weekends if necessary to complete the project on schedule.

The fields are expected to be game-ready by spring 2012.

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Griswold said neighbors should expect some noise and vibration from construction equipment as well as dust (when the weather is dry) and possible traffic delays on Northeast 78th Street when trucks and equipment are entering and exiting the site. The land is a federal Superfund site because of toxic compounds lying at least 50 feet beneath the surface. The Environmental Protection Agency said there's no danger of exposure from building the ball fields.

In a decision last summer, hearings examiner Dan Kearns said there's no credible evidence supporting the idea that contaminated groundwater will ever reach the surface. The county has placed conditions to mitigate significant environmental impact. Those include making sure field lights and the public-address system won't be used after 10 p.m. and properly planning for increased traffic.

In December, county commissioners approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the county, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department, Vancouver First Church of God and King's Way Christian Schools.

The 25-year agreement sets out the terms for shared use of parking and fields as well as maintenance.



The End . . .

