

Dear Friends of Essex Park & Recreation Department,

I am writing to provide an update on the Town of Essex Civic Campus Enhancement Project, a portion of which will replace the Park and Recreation Department's tennis courts and playscape at Grove Street Park. Hopefully, most of you have heard about this project in prior communications from the Town or have seen the ongoing construction at our Town Hall. The project was funded by a State of Connecticut STEAP grant awarded to the Town of Essex earlier this year. The project was designed by Lenard Engineering, Inc. and work is being performed by Xenelis Construction.

Grove Street Park Tennis Courts

The tennis court construction is a full rebuild of our courts. The asphalt of the old courts was pulled up and removed, the former sub surface materials that did not meet soil specifications were excavated and removed as well. Proper materials were hauled in to create the new sub base of the court, and a comprehensive drainage system has been installed. The contractor is continuing the compaction of the new base to meet the engineer's specifications.

The new courts will be installed as early in 2014 as weather conditions and the contractor's schedule permits. This past fall, our tennis court contractors informed us he would not apply the new acrylic court paint after October 1, 2013. Secondly, we could potentially have installed the new court asphalt at this time (mid-November, 2013), however it is very late in the season and we did not wish to rush the work or operate under less than ideal conditions. Therefore, we made the decision to wait until next spring for the courts to be finished. Additionally, new court fencing will be installed for this project as well which will add greatly to the project, including its aesthetics. The courts will be finished in the US Open Blue / US Open Green color scheme.

We apologize to our local tennis players for the closure of the courts this fall and early next year as well. However, we are excited to have fully rebuilt, brand new tennis courts that will be enjoyed by all for many years to come.

Grove Street Park Playscape

As noted above, this project allows us to replace the existing playground at our park with all new equipment. Our playground will be fully accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act; in fact it exceeds the required total of elevated components accessible by transfer and accessible ground level components. We chose the Landscape Structures product for our playground which I strongly feel is the top manufacturer of playground equipment. Our playscape will feature Nature-Inspired play, as it includes a realistic climbing boulder, log crawl tunnel, and log balance beam. We will have an ages 2-5 composite play structure and ages 5-12 composite play structure which is standard in playground design. The ages 5-12 "Playbooster" section will also include the Evos equipment which should be very exciting and challenging for the older children. Additional equipment includes a new swing set, Bobble Rider, and the Kompan Supernova. We were able to install a concrete playground border rather than wood which was a nice upgrade. The playground surface materials will be wood chips, same as our former playground. Our playground colors will be leaf green, limon green, tangerine, and dark blue.

The playground border, drainage, and site prep is complete as of today, November 15, and our Landscape Structures certified installer will begin installing the equipment the week of November 18. The playground should be completed around December 2 and open for use, and we look forward to the spring when it can be enjoyed in warmer weather! Additional site work around the perimeter of our new playground will continue in early 2014.

Again, I wanted to provide an update as best I could on this project. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you!

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