

Park district takes first step for major repairs at H-F Ice Arena

BY MARILYN THOMAS
mthomas@hfchronicle.com

The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District board of commissioners approved a \$19,775 pre-construction contract for W.B. Olson, Inc. of Northbrook to begin work for repairs at the H-F Ice Arena.

The vote on Tuesday, Jan. 4, sets in motion the months-long process of taking out the current ice refrigerant system and replacing it with a new system.

The park district was forced to shut down the ice arena Nov. 21 after soft spots were discovered in the main rink. Efforts to find leaks in the ice making system failed, so the park district closed the facility.

The plan is for the entire refrigeration system to be removed and updated. The ice arena currently has a system of pipes that fill with the chemical R-22 to freeze the water that makes the ice rink.

John Emser of W.B. Olson told commissioners he would speak immediately with an architect "to kick-start the project" and he anticipated over the next three to four weeks he would be working with H-F parks staff to get all the necessary documents and plans together so the park district can begin soliciting firms for the work.

"We appreciate that you recognize we've got a sense of urgency on this. We want to get this back up and running for our community as quickly as we can," said board president Brent Bachus. "It's great that we're four days into January and we're ready to get this show on the road."

Parks Executive Director Debbie Kopas said she spoke with a representative of the Glenview Ice Center who gave a great review for the company after working with Olson on a major renovation project.

The park commissioners have been discussing updates to the ice arena since 2017, knowing that the refrigeration system was outdated. R-22 is being phased out because it is believed the coolant is one of the substances causing depletion of the ozone layer.

The building also needs updates, including a new roof, a new HVAC system and a new dehumidification system. The facility first opened in 1974, and last went through a major update in 1995.

Emser said he couldn't give a cost estimate until the scope of the work is outlined. The firm will give commissioners a few budget options to help with their decision making, including a concept budget, a schematic budget and full scale design development budget, "so when we go out to bid we'll have a really good feel cost wise," Emser explained.

He recommended the board consider including additional parts of the project, outside of the refrigerant system, as alternates to the bid process so the board can make a decision on how to move forward.

He said the project will get a full-time job superintendent, and he recommended the park district consider that he would be available to supervise some of the additional work.

The board tried for a state grant for updates at the ice arena in 2021 but didn't make the cut. Commissioners said they would re-apply for the grant if it is available in 2022.

Kopas said she will be working with Spear Financial to determine the borrowing power the park district has if it sells bonds to cover the repairs. Spear Financial recently helped the park district refinance its outstanding debt for a lower interest rate.

Personal trainer sessions now available at H-F Racquet & Fitness Club

BY CHRONICLE STAFF

The H-F Racquet & Fitness Club, 2920 W. 183rd St. in Homewood, is offering non-members a chance to work with a personal trainer.

The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District board of commissioners approved a 55-minute personal training session for non-members. One session is \$54, and two sessions are \$90.

Mike Loszach, the club's assistant manager, told the board some of those interacting with a personal trainer will

be good with one or two lessons, but others may choose to continue with a personal trainer for the motivational help.

The club has eight personal trainers on its roster, Loszach said.

He said those buying a membership package will see the personal trainer rates drop from the introductory rate. A 10-session program for resident members is \$420 for 55-minute sessions and \$270 for 30-minutes.

Details are at hfparks.com or 708-957-0300.

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