

VILLA PARK INDEPENDENT

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 17

PUBLISHED BY ROCK VALLEY PUBLISHING LLC

APRIL 22, 2009

Village approves seed money for new skate park

Grant of \$5,000 will begin \$250,000 project

By Paul DelGuidice
For The Villa Park Independent

The Villa Park Board of Trustees voted on Monday, April 13 to allow \$5,000 to be reallocated towards development of the proposed Skate Park. The money was requested as 'seed money' to help raise the estimated \$250,000 needed to fund the facility.

"I'm greatly excited," said Paulina Jiminez, a local resident who has championed the

cause for a new skate park in Villa Park. "This money will help with printing and mailings. It will be used to prepare a professional presentation for fundraising purposes."

The goal for Jiminez and the Skate Park Committee is to raise the necessary funds to build the skate park from area businesses and residents. To this end, all available avenues are being pursued including corporate sponsorship, private

donations of money and services, and 'grass roots' fund raising such as candy and t-shirt sales and skate board demonstrations.

The old skate park, which was located next to Jefferson

School on the north side of Villa Park was a converted tennis court. Neighbors of the facility complained of noise, trash and gang activity at the somewhat secluded site. Skateboarders were fearful of gang activity and the park became an eyesore to the community. Despite increased police

patrols and efforts to cleanup the area, the decision to permanently close the site was made in October of 2008. The facility has since been razed by the Village.

"These kids still need a place to practice their sport," said Village Trustee John Davis.

★ See PARK page 3

★ PARK

from page 1

"They are out skating on sidewalks and parking lots, which can be hazardous. A nice skate park would give them a place to go as well as attract more kids to the sport."

Plans for a new skate park to be located west of the Iowa Community Center, just off of Ardmore Ave. and Vermont St. were drawn up over the winter. State-of-the-art ramps and safety equipment were considered essential from the beginning. Amenities such as seating, lighting and security cameras were included in the plan. The commission also sought government and private grant money, but ran into many roadblocks. Carrie Karl, superintendent of the Recreation Dept. said skate park grant money for municipalities was practically nonexistent. Karl and Jiminez went to the Village Board with a presentation in May, seeking the \$5,000 to begin fundraising for the park.

According to Karl, the cost of the new skate park will

be approximately \$250,000. This includes about \$150,000 for equipment and another \$100,000 in amenities and for construction. Labor costs will be cut through a combination of volunteers and using Villa Park staff. The \$5,000 will be reallocated to the skate park from the Recreation Dept. budget. No new money is being used.

"This will help get the word out," Karl said. "We plan on using this money to prepare a presentation geared toward key community leaders. We want this message to go to all the service clubs in Villa Park such as the Lions, Rotary and Kiwanis. Parents and school administrators are also an important (audience)."

The skate park plan calls for construction to begin in 2010, depending on the funds available. The pouring of a concrete slab is a major portion of the project. Procuring and placing the equipment along with fencing, lighting and other amenities would follow.