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SCAN HERE

District eyes \$30M bond referendum

School Board planning to take Phase 1 of high school renovation project to a public vote in November

By Travis Fischer
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The Charles City Community School Board plans to pursue a \$30 million bond referendum to fund Phase 1 of its proposed renovation of the high school building.

During the board's regular meeting on Monday, June 30, members met with Tim Oswald, a managing director of public finance with Piper Sandler, who walked them through the details of

the general obligation bonding process, from when the bonds could be sold to which fiscal years would be affected by the tax levy, and how the district paying down the Middle School in 2031 would impact the payment schedule.

With an estimated levy of 2.7%, Oswald also discussed how the state's property tax exemptions and rollbacks apply to residential, commercial, and agricultural property owners.

A \$150,000 residential property with

a homestead credit and a senior exemption would see an additional annual tax of \$161.46, while agricultural property would see an additional tax of between \$3.19 and \$4.19 per acre.

Using some of his own agricultural property as an example, Board President Bruce Koebrick calculated that the bond levy would cost approximately \$280 annually.

Under this plan, the levy would pay for Phase 1 of the project, leaving the

eventual Phase 2 to be paid with revenue from the district's share of the the state one-cent sales tax.

"SAVE funding would pay for Phase 2. No referendum required," said Oswald.

Following the presentation from Oswald, the board heard from FEH Design's Matthew Basye about how to pare the plan's initial cost estimate of \$34.2 million down to the district's \$30 million bond capacity.

"We're trying to check off has many boxes as we can to come down," said Basye.

By scaling back on some aspects of the renovation, or moving them to Phase 2, Basye said he was confident that a viable proposal could be developed for a vote in November, and emphasized the importance of getting started sooner rather than later.

BONDING, turn to page 11



Press photo by Travis Fischer

Dave Davidson and Drew Martin work to get the Dean Treats outdoor seating "parklet" ready by the holiday weekend.

Parklet hurries to completion

Treat shop's sectioned-off outdoor seating hoped to be ready for the holiday

By Travis Fischer
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Downtown may have some extra seating for this weekend's Independence Day activities as Dave Davidson nears the completion of a new parklet outside of his Dean Treats ice cream shop.

"We're shooting for the 4th of July," said Davidson, who has been working on developing the outdoor seating area

since opening his shop last year.

After working out a lease agreement with the city, Davidson has been getting everything in place for the 80-foot parklet to run alongside his business on Kelly Street. Concrete blocks have been lined along the perimeter and the floor and seating is coming in as Davidson, along with enlisted help from family and friends, works on

finishing the project.

"The rain set us back a little bit, but we're hoping to really get after it," said Davidson.

Planning on nine tables with 27 chairs plus bench seating, the parklet will have plenty of places to sit to enjoy a summer ice cream cone. Eventually, Davidson intends to be able to serve drinks and hot food as well, but for the upcoming weekend the new menu may be

a work in progress.

"We're not going to have beer and wine, but we hope to have some food items," said Davidson about initial additional offerings.

Likewise, Davidson said he plans to continue to build up the parklet, adding decorative plants and lights once the necessities are in.

"It will be cool when it's done," said Davidson.

Parks board has hands on planning draft

'Master park plan' expected to guide direction and decisions into the future

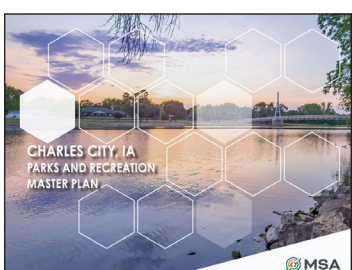
By Bob Steenson
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Charles City's Parks and Recreation Board members are reviewing a draft of a comprehensive master parks plan that lays out a long-term vision for the city's parks, trails and recreational spaces.

The document, developed with MSA Professional Services, suggests wide-ranging improvements intended to elevate quality of life and support future development.

The plan, which was sent electronically to Parks & Rec Board members and others last week, as well as to the Press, includes recommendations for every city-owned park and emphasizes system-wide goals such as improved accessibility, inclusive play features, updated facilities and stronger connections between parks via trail expansion.

Among the suggested upgrades are renovated restrooms, enhanced lighting, expanded trail access, splash pads, new pickleball courts and modernization of aging facilities such



Cover of the draft Charles City Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as developed so far by MSA Professional Services

as the Wildwood Golf Course clubhouse and the area around the Lions Field swimming pool.

Specifically, according to an introduction to the proposed plan, the document provides:

- Information regarding demographic trends.
- An inventory of existing park and recreational facilities.
- An analysis of parkland and recreational needs and demands.
- General policy direction regarding park, recreation, open space, bicycle and pedestrian facility planning and maintenance.

PARKS, turn to page 14

Arts Center hosting July 4th reception for featured artist

By Travis Fischer
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A new exhibit is ready for viewing at the Charles City Arts Center.

Julie Hughes is the featured artist of the month, bringing in 63 pieces of abstract paintings to be displayed. An Iowa-based artist with work on display in Cedar Falls, Grundy Center, and Aplington, Hughes had a

featured exhibit three years ago and has expanded on her collection of layered works since.

"They're really beautiful," said Arts Center Director Emily Kiewel. "We're very happy to have her back."

The featured exhibit will be on display until the annual Art-A-Fest is held on Aug. 16.

Hughes will be on hand to discuss her work during

an opening reception at the Charles City Arts Center on Friday, July 4, from 5 to 7 p.m.

The Arts Center will also have another reception next Friday, July 11, to introduce artist Ken "Phybr" Dushane III, who will be painting the city's next Town of Colors outdoor mural this month, the long-planned "Charles City Postcard" on the YMCA building.



Press photo by Travis Fischer

Charles City Arts Center Director Emily Kiewel looks at abstract paintings from this month's featured artist, Julie Hughes. The artist's opening reception will be 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, July 4.

This issue of the Press is being published Thursday, because of the Friday, July 4th, postal holiday.



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