



Sports Complex Addition Makes OSLAD Grant Cut

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BETHALTO, IL – A grant proposal seeking \$400,000 to assist in the completion of Phase 2 of the Bethalto Sports Complex has cleared its first hurdle in Springfield.

The village has been informed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that its grant proposal to the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program (OSLAD), which includes six multi-purpose ball diamonds, a soccer field, football field, spectator bleachers, rest rooms, concession stand, infrastructure, parking areas and green space, has been accepted for consideration and will move on to the presentation phase of the grant award process.

“The future of any community lies in its youth, projects like this provide the necessary space and infrastructure for young people to seek their dreams and goals in life,” Mayor Steve Bryant said. “Projects like this attract new families to our community and school district. In most cases communities that show growth and success have a great park and recreation system.”

The OSLAD Program is a state-financed grant program that provides funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space. The program is managed in Illinois by the Department of Natural Resources.

Projects vary from small neighborhood parks or tot lots to large community and county parks and nature areas. The state program is financed by a percentage of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax. The federal program is financed nationally by revenue from OSOD leases. Under the program, funding assistance up to 50 percent of approved project costs can be obtained. Grant awards up to \$750,000 are available for acquisition projects,

while development or renovation projects are limited to a \$400,000 grant maximum. The village's proposal falls under development projects.

The village currently has four multi-use ball fields at South Side Park and one field at the Sports Complex. The Sports Complex also houses junior varsity and varsity baseball and softball fields and two regulation soccer fields. Four smaller ball fields are available near the Bethalto Boys & Girls Club, but they are only suitable for T-ball and the youngest participants. The additional fields at the Sports Complex would ease congestion of the current fields used by youths in the Bethalto Boys & Girls Club recreational softball, baseball and soccer programs, Bethalto Little Eagles Football Club, and several select club teams from Bethalto and surrounding communities. The project would include a new east/west road coming off of Stadium Drive that would lead to the new park. The estimated total cost for the entire project is \$1.5 million.

The village submitted its proposal in June and received a site visit by DNR grant managers in July. Village officials will now present their proposal to the DNR grant award panel in Springfield in October.