

Veterans Field in Edgewater on track for spring 2013 reopening

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[EDGEWATER](#) - Veterans Field remains on track for a spring 2013 reopening, even with recent changes to the park's cleanup and renovation project, the borough administrator said Tuesday.

[Edgewater's](#) premier park, a 27.6-acre field that's been closed for nearly a year, is undergoing a \$9.7 million overhaul to remove contaminated soil and to replace or add fields and other park amenities.

The borough council recently accepted a proposal to increase the Little League field's elevation by adding fill, and to replace an existing dugout and field house with new ones – worth an estimated \$2,000 to \$3,000 - at the contractor's expense.

"I didn't want to build a field and have an old structure," said prominent developer Fred Daibes, who owns Waterside Construction, the contractor for the project. Daibes has been awarded numerous contracts with the borough and is said to have developed at least half the major projects in town. He said work on Veterans Field is particularly meaningful for him.

"I actually played here when I was 9 years old. I have pictures of me playing football and baseball here," Daibes said. "I grew up in [Edgewater](#). This is where I want my legacy to be."

The council last week also approved design changes so that several mature trees to the right of the community center parking lot no longer need to be removed - a plan that initially had tree-lovers upset - and agreed to relocate the bathrooms in the south parking lot from one corner to another.

The changes come at no extra cost to [Edgewater](#), borough Administrator Greg Franz said.

As for the soil remediation, Franz said the work has been running smoothly.

Last September, officials learned of contaminants in the park's historic fill. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, were two to seven times greater than government standards in most cases, and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, were slightly above acceptable levels. Additional tests found PAH compounds throughout the park - in some cases, 10 times above standard levels.

Shortly before remediation began last month, the borough warned nearby residents that removing five soil "hot spots" might kick up extra dust and advised residents to keep their windows closed. But recent heavy rains have helped the situation, Franz said.

“From the start of the project, we’ve had the air monitoring equipment there on a daily basis,” he said. “Now that we’ve had some rain and the soil is relatively moist, it keeps the dust down.”

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