

Aquatics center gets a diamond setting

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Shared existing parking lots and proximity to public utility lines are key factors in locating the \$5 million Linn-Mar aquatics center just east of the football stadium, school board members were told at their regular meeting Monday night.

The stand-alone facility, which will include a competition-sized pool and proposed seating for 400, will be built on the site of the current baseball field.

Accelerated plans call for construction to begin late this summer with completion by August of 2013.

The pool will be used for practice and meets by Linn-Mar swimming teams as well as for classes and recreational activities by students from throughout the school district, according to Superintendent Katie Mulholland.

She said the site is the only location available on the main Linn-Mar campus. It's about 600 feet southeast of the high school.

Architects had previously said it is not structurally advisable to connect the complex to the school building.

Representatives of Hall and Hall Engineers of Hiawatha reported to the board Monday that a feasibility study indicated that the preferred site makes sense from a number of standpoints.

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Landscape architect Loren Hoffman said construction costs will be minimized by utilizing 550 parking spaces at both the nearby school and the stadium. Also, he said, water and sewer hook-up is close to the adjacent Tower Terrace Road proposed extension.

Hall and Hall engineer Dick Ransom said both the soil and the topography of the site are suitable for construction of the complex. He estimated that it will cost about \$300,000 for grading and excavation.

Ransom also pointed out that green space north of the aquatics center will be used for discus and shot put field competition during track events at the stadium.

The proposed \$5 million building (to be funded by available sales tax revenues) will sit about 480 feet west of Indian Creek and 13 feet above the 100-year flood plain.

Design of the facility is being done by Novak Design Group of Cedar Rapids, which was awarded the contract last month.

The pool itself will be designed by Water Technology, Inc., of Beaver Dam, Wis. Ransom said his firm will serve as a consultant on the overall project.

In a related matter at Monday's school board meeting, Assistant Superintendent Rick Ironside reported that progress is on schedule for the new baseball/softball complex being built at Oak Ridge Middle School. The diamonds are expected to be in use by the summer of 2013.