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Sunland Park skate park awaits council approval to move forward

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by ABC-7 Reporter/Anchor Celina Avila

SUNLAND PARK, N.M. -- Sunland Park City Council has postponed several meetings recently and some are concerned that the state's weak economy may threaten funding for a multi-million dollar sports complex.

The state of New Mexico has already approved millions for the Sunland Park Sports Complex.

The city has even purchased the land, now all they need is approval from council to begin construction.

"Our thing is...hey, please move the project forward," said Paul Zimmerman, president of the El Paso Skate Park Association. He says the new Sunland Park Sports Complex would be a welcome addition, and not only to all of the regulars of the Carolina Skate Park.

"We did attendance surveys out here in 2007 and we had 50 to 100 kids on any given night during summer of 2007. That makes it one of the most used recreational facilities on a daily basis," said Zimmerman.

The first phase includes soccer and football fields, basketball and volleyball courts, a pool and a skate plaza designed by Rob Dyrdek of MTV's "Rob & Big."

"Sunland Park is soo fortunate to have the opportunity to have this place. It would be the only Dyrdek plaza between Shreveport, Louisiana, and Los Angeles, California," said Zimmerman.

The state has already approved over four million dollars in grant funding.

One delay has been archaeological ruins were found in the land purchased where the complex would be built.

But about two months ago, a historic preservation agency said the city could begin construction.

"We're hoping to actually start putting out bids for grating of the land either this week or next week."

Zimmerman says that's a good idea since a recent executive memo from Governor Bill Richardson calls for de-authorization of unused funding in light of the recent economy.

"The biggest obstacle in building a skate park facility is getting the funding. They have the funding. They have all of the elements to make this happen right now," said Zimmerman.

The final vote on the first phase and location is expected at the meeting that was rescheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17.



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