

\$1.2M plan to renovate park OK'd

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Once the renovation is completed, the park will be renamed in honor of the Middletown police officer killed in the line of duty last year.

The Middletown supervisors at their Monday night meeting unanimously voted to move forward on an estimated \$1.2 million renovation to Beechwood Park at Beechwood and Maple avenues.

Supervisors Tom Gallagher, Robert McMonagle, George Leonhauser, Drew Kreiling and Patrick Mallon voted to advertise for bids on the project, which is being financed through a \$10 million bond issue approved in 2008 and a \$180,000 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Parks and Recreation Director Debby Lamanna said she hoped work can start in late July and be mostly completed by the end of the year. She described the project as a virtual rebuild of the entire park, which will be closed during construction.

Work will include rebuilding the softball field at a different location within the park, putting in paved walking trails, installing a playground, putting in drainage improvements and other items.

When work is completed, the park will be renamed Detective Christopher Jones Memorial Park in honor of the Middletown police officer killed in the line of duty last year. Jones was a patrol officer at the time of his death but had met all the requirements for detective and was posthumously promoted.

A local Boy Scout vying for Eagle rank will construct a memorial area for Jones near the park's entrance.

"It will be lovely, a real focal point as you drive into the park," said Lamanna of the proposed memorial area.

The township recently reopened Lance Cpl. Harry J. Simmons Jr. Memorial Park on Brownsville Road after a \$1.2 million renovation.

Chris English can be reached at 215-949-4193 or cenglish@phillyBurbs.com.

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