

GREENFIELD

New skate park complete

Residents have been
fundraising for
more than a decade

By **MARY BYRNE**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — More than a decade ago, Thomas Bullock bought a home on Hope Street, not too far from the site of the old skate park.

“I was very excited when I moved in that there was a skate park on my street,” Bullock recalled. “I found out shortly after that it was closing. Ever since then, we’ve been fundraising ... and throwing benefit concerts and all sorts of things to raise money [for a new park].”

Now, 13 years after the closure of the former 17,000-square-foot skate park on Olive Street, local skaters have something to celebrate. The long-awaited new park, located in the northern part of the municipal parking lot behind the former Wilson’s Department Store, between Davis and Chapman streets, officially opened for use on Friday. The fence keeping the public out of the skate park was removed Thursday.

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New skate park opens; some work remains

SKATE PARK FROM A1

“Everyone is very excited,” Bullock said. “It’s been a long time coming, and it’s been a lot of effort from the community.”

A formal grand opening celebration is being planned for Wednesday, June 21, coinciding with National Go Skateboarding Day. Recreation Director Christy Moore said the event will include music by a local band as well as food and skate vendors.

While the park is open for use, additional site work may continue in the weeks ahead, according to Moore. The park will be open daily from dawn until dusk. Skaters are asked to abide by all park rules, which will be posted.

Moore said there are still signs that need to be posted, but the majority of work left to complete is landscaping. She encouraged park users to enter and exit through designated entrances so as to not disturb growing grass areas.

“They have to make one adjustment to the curb, which will happen next week,” she said of the work left to do. “It’s substantially complete enough that we can literally tear down the fences and let people enjoy and experience.”

Construction on the \$980,000 skate park began in September 2022. Although costs increased by roughly \$200,000 from the original estimate, the difference was covered using \$200,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. In addition to ARPA funding, the park is supported by \$350,000 in capital funds, \$30,000 in community donations and a \$400,000 state Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant. In 2021,

a group of skaters organized a benefit at the Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center.

According to a city press release, the new park is designed for all ages and abilities and features many street-style elements including ramps, stairs, rails, hubbas, a pier seven, a flip bank and a vert wall that resembles Poet’s Seat Tower. The tower was painted by local artist Suzanne Gale with financial support from the Greenfield Cultural Council. Additional park elements include a shade structure, benches, a water fountain with a refill station, and a Lyra solar charging station.

“It’s been a long time coming,” Moore said on Thursday. “Today I’ve been over there pretty much all day, doing the final touches here and there. People are just raving at how beautiful it looks. It just makes me very happy to hear that. It’s been a labor of love to get this [park] built and usable.”

Kids in the neighborhood are excited about the opening.

“I think this is going to improve the community,” said Greenfield resident Jayden Boyer. “It will give kids and skaters somewhere to have fun.”

Bullock said although he won’t be able to make it to the skate park this weekend, “it’s definitely going to be worth the wait.”

“It’s really going to be a community asset,” he said. “It’s going to bring people in from out of town and gives kids something to do.”

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