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## Potential Fairfield park expansion contingent on grant funding



Michael D. Pitman - Staff Writer

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FAIRFIELD — The city of Fairfield can move forward with purchasing a 33-acre parcel to expand the city's largest park.

Now officials need to secure the funding.

Fairfield City Council approved the \$411,000 purchase of land from Charles D. Baumann Sr. that's adjacent to Harbin Park. The park currently sits at around 200 acres. It would expand the property to the west as it sits on the east side of Gray Road and northwest of Park Place.

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However, the purchase is contingent on the city landing a Clean Ohio Grant that would pay for 75 percent of the cost. The city would pay \$102,750 out of pocket for the property. The grant application would be made this fall, said Fairfield Parks Director Jim Bell.

The grant would require the land remain passive, he said.

“We can extend pathways, trail heads, natural areas, but it has to remain passive,” Bell said. “Our intent is to put a trail head in there and a small parking lot to have access to the trail head.”

Fairfield City Manager Mark Wendling said the property “does ultimately fit our plan to provide pathways for walkers and cyclists, particularly along Gray Road.” The purchase was anticipated as it was allocated in the city’s capital improvement budget, he said.

Councilman Tim Abbott said “this is another one of those properties” in which staff can find grants to supplement the purchase of property “that become available in a very quick order.”

Mayor Steve Miller called the site “a valuable piece that we can add to the jewel that is Harbin Park.”

“There will be a lot of long-term uses,” he said. “And grants are a great way to find money and add property to our inventory that’s very useful in the future.”

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