

BAXTER LANDS NEW RESTAURANT

Posted Friday, April 14, 2017

By TERRI LIKENS

The festive mood at the Baxter Board of Aldermen meeting Thursday wasn't just because of the fine spring day.

Mayor John Martin announced that a new restaurant is coming — a Fiesta Cancun.

“It'll be big,” said Martin, who said the developers are considering the possibility of a two-story facility. The site is Old Maxwell Road south of the interstate.

He said the developers have bought enough land for other additions — possibly another restaurant and a donut shop.

The mayor took stock of other changes around town, including the 60-acre, three-phase 360-unit apartment complex underway at the Baxter Crossroads, the intersection of Hwys. 56 and 70.

At full occupation, the complex could increase the town's 1,600 population by nearly half. It also has a retail aspect.

Then there's the new park planned on the old Baxter Seminary grounds between Baxter Elementary and Cornerstone Middle schools.

“It's going to be bigger than Dogwood,” Martin said, referring to the popular city park in downtown Cookeville.

“Hopefully, in a year, we're going to look at an amphitheater. Weddings, concerts — whatever we want in the park,” he added.

“It will be good for everyone,” Martin declared.

Meanwhile, a new \$500,000 fire truck is under construction for the town and is expected to be ready next month.

“That's another big asset to our city,” Martin said. The city also plans to start replacing old police cruisers soon.

“I think this is only the beginning of what we're going to have for Baxter,” Martin said. “It's only going to get better.”

After listening to the list of improvements, Alderman Willie Allison said the credit goes to Martin and Alderman Jeff Herald, who often work together to recruit new business.

“Them two guys have worked their rear ends off,” Allison said.

BAXTER MAYOR HAS HIGH HOPES FOR NEW PARK

Posted Thursday, April 20, 2017

BY JIM HERRIN

Cookeville has Dogwood Park, Livingston will open its new Central Park next month and now Baxter Mayor John Martin is coordinating plans for a new green space in his town.

Baxter Seminary Park will lie between Cornerstone Middle and Baxter Primary schools.

“It's directly between those two, so it's going to be a park that the schools can use,” he said.



Lisa Bumbalough, director of the Putnam County Health Department, met with city and county officials in Baxter to award a \$10,000 Rural Access to Health and Healthy Active Environments grant from the Tennessee Department of Health. From left are Justin Hilliard and John Ross Albertson of the county Parks and Recreation Department, Bumbalough, Baxter Mayor John Martin and Putnam County Executive Randy Porter. Photo: Ty Kernea.

The land is owned by the Putnam County Board of Education, **and as the name indicates, is the site of the old Baxter Seminary. Martin said the park name is intended to pay tribute to that now-defunct school's alumni.**

The city is partnering with the Putnam County Parks and Recreation Department to create the park which, when combined with the existing Baxter City Park, will encompass approximately six acres. It's being funded initially with a \$10,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Health.

"We've already done a lot of work over there," he said. "We've got a lot of dirt moved. The first grant that we've got, the \$10,000 grant, is going toward walkways. We'll have walking trails all the way through the park."

Martin says there is no definite target date for completion of the park, but says work will be done as weather permits and as funding allows.

"There's a little stream that runs through it so we're going to enhance the stream and then we'll fix a bridge coming from Cornerstone where they can walk across and be in the park," Martin said.

The mayor says the city has been working with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to get all the appropriate permits.

"We just got the permits this week to go ahead and do more construction. We've got to get another permit for the stream," he said. "When we started this project, there were tires and metal and junk all in it so we've got all that out. We want to make the stream really look good."

Officials have been meeting on a regular basis to work out the details.

"We've got a meeting next week to try to figure how we're going to do our trails," he said. "After that, we can kind of see where we're at, where we want to put our swings, picnic tables and everything."

Martin says the longterm plans include construction of an amphitheater and inclusion of playground equipment — all of which he hopes to develop without the use of city tax dollars.

"We've got a good possibility of getting even more grants," he said. "There's quite a few park grants out there and we're pursuing all of those. We can make a really nice park with grant money."

*Read more about Baxter, Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>