CITY COMMISSION

MCC one step closer to building first gymnasium

Bryan Richardson
brichardson@themercury.com

After nearly 70 years of athletics, Manhattan Christian College is closer to having its own gymnasium.

The Manhattan City Commission unanimously passed on Tuesday the first reading of an amendment to the college’s development plan that adds a multi-purpose gymnasium. The gym would be funded through a $3 million campaign that also would fund courtyard enhancements, a new parking lot, and technology and security improvements.

The college has raised $928,325 toward the improvements through its Next Generation Campaign.

Manhattan Christian College has hosted athletic programs for 68 years without its own facilities. The college relies on renting city facilities including the City (Peace Memorial) Auditorium as a gym.

“It would be so cool as a student to have a place to call our own,” said Leigh Anne Maurath, MCC student body president.

The Student Life Center would go in the vacant area of campus along North 14th Street. It would include a full-size basketball/volleyball court with seating for up to 250 people, locker rooms, a weight room, an athletic training room, concession stand, office space and a conference room.

The amendment replaces the previously proposed 500-seat chapel/music hall. Instead, the college will build a 39-stall parking lot north of Laramie Street, where the chapel would have gone.

According to the campus master plan, the parking lot has a 2015-2016 construction timeline, and the gym has a 2016-2017 timeline. The associated projects include water and sewer lines on 14th Street for the Student Life Center this summer, and landscaping and lighting improvements.

Lori Jo Stanfield, MCC vice president for business affairs, said the project has been on the horizon for several years.

“We are very excited to be back and on the edge of moving forward,” she said.

MCC athletic director Shawn Condra said the college has been blessed to use the auditorium, but the needs have grown for the college and the city.

“We’re finding it more difficult to be able to utilize city facilities because of the needs of the city,” he said.

Condra said a consistent practice schedule for the athletes will be one of the benefits of the college having its own gym.

Mayor Karen McCulloh said she emailed MCC President Kevin Ingram about consideration of using the space beyond the college’s needs.

“I hope that perhaps if we need to borrow that space in some way that’s capacitive with you are doing, it might be a public facility too, and he agreed,” she said.

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