

HF Sinclair Community Relations

Town of Saratoga--“Never Forget Park”

Project Description

The Town of Saratoga (pop. 1700) is creating a new landscaped park: "Never Forget Park". The park project began in 2008 after a local young man, Army SSgt. Tyler Pickett, was killed in action in Iraq and will be a tribute to all those who have sacrificed their precious lives for the sake of others.

Never Forget Park will include a memorial sculpture, open-air pavilion, ADA compliant benches, handicapped accessible restrooms and parking. Lush plantings of native species will provide shade to the open space. Light posts installed along the sidewalk will aid those using the park after dark. Flagpoles with each of the five armed forces flags will be installed and lit from dusk to dawn. Several gabion basket benches will be installed and will have veteran's memorial plates attached.

Volunteers will fill gabion baskets with river rock and use high-density composite decking for the seats. A work day will be organized for community members to complete this project. School children will work with the local conservation district to plant the trees and shrubs as part of their school curriculum.

Currently, the space is a patch of gravel and weeds and is used for overflow parking to the adjacent Veterans Island Park. The North Platte River flows around the island. This park is the location of numerous events such as family reunions, music festivals, and community picnics. It features a playground, walking path with connection to the free mineral hot springs, barbeque picnic shelter and a skate park. "Never Forget Park" is along a busy street that leads to premier lodging facilities and to Saratoga Lake and will be a source of pride for residents and visitors alike.

The Town of Saratoga's new, dedicated and focused park committee began its work in May 2021 and is comprised of private citizens, veterans and newly elected councilmen. The committee has collaborated with American Legion Post #54, Platte Valley Arts Council, Inc. and Order of the Eastern Star. This committee has developed the park design, created a website, worked with the family of Tyler Pickett, commissioned a memorial sculpture, and hired an engineering firm to create documents. The committee hopes to install curb and gutter, irrigation and plant trees and shrubs this spring. Light posts, benches, restrooms and asphalt will complete the park, hopefully by late summer 2023.

The community has been very clear: this park must be completed, out of respect for Tyler Pickett and his family. They have been very frustrated with the long process and delays. Completing "Never Forget Park" will be a respite and reflects the determination of Saratoga residents.

Project Timeline

June: Curb & gutter, sidewalks, flag poles, irrigation and hydro-seeding installed and completed

July: benches, plantings and lighting installed

August: park open to the public

September: asphalt and parking lot striping installed

October:

November: pavilion built and installed