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**Moultrie-Colquitt County Parks & Rec Secures $1.8M Grant for Improvements
to William Bryant Park Complex in Northwest Moultrie**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 19, 2023 – (MOULTRIE, GA) – The Moultrie Colquitt County Parks and Recreation Authority (MCCPRA) was awarded a $1.8 million grant by Governor Brian P. Kemp on Thursday. The “Improving Neighborhood Outcomes in Disproportionately Impacted Communities” grant funding is designed to improve recreational facilities in Qualified Census Tracts (QCT) across the state, which are defined as areas with a poverty rate of 25 percent or more.

In Northwest Moultrie, William Bryant Park, Shaw Gymnasium and Aquatics Center, R. D. Smith Youth Center, Ryce Community Center and Drew Field lie within QTC 9703, and according to the latest census information, 4184 citizens also reside in Tract 9703.

MCCPRA took over the William Bryant Park complex facilities, located at 735 5th Avenue NW, in 2017 when the Authority was formed and began managing all parks and recreation in the county. The William Bryant Park complex, with some facilities like Ryce Community Center, Shaw Gymnasium, the Aquatics Center, and R.D. Smith Youth Center clocking in over 60 years old. The rehabilitation of these aged facilities is critically needed in order to provide opportunities for improved health and safety in the surrounding neighborhood.

“The facilities at the William Bryant Park complex all provide alternative activities for the youth in our neighborhoods. The potential for these spaces to be even better utilized by adding safety and security features and basic upgrades is enormous,” wrote Moultrie chief of police Sean Ladson in a letter of support for the grant.

Also issuing formal letters of support for the project were City of Moultrie Mayor William McIntosh, Colquitt County Administrator Chas Cannon, and Boys & Girls Club of Moultrie Colquitt County Executive Director, Joel Jenkins,

Local match funds from T-SPLOST, SPLOST, MCCPRA’s capital improvements fund, and MCCPRA’s general fund will supplement the project.

**What to Expect**

At William Bryant Park, plans include playground enhancements and landscaping, including the addition of shade elements, fencing, maintenance to the basketball courts, and a new mini-pitch soccer court. Plans also include a small pavilion with restrooms and water fountains, a feature the park is currently lacking due to removal decades ago.

In the gym and adjacent aquatics area, renovations have already begun. The full plan includes gym floor resurfacing, exterior paint, swimming pool improvements for both the kiddie pool and lap pool, parking lot renovations, and replacement of the air conditioning system. Windows and exterior doors will also be replaced. R.D. Smith Youth Center will have air units replaced and an outdoor classroom will be created. At Drew Field, drainage issues will be addressed to make the field fully usable.

State-of-the-art video surveillance will be installed throughout the complex, as well.

**What Happens Next**

“We have seen MCCPRA grow and develop over the years, and we are pleased with the current leadership team, board, and their efforts to improve public recreational facilities at the neighborhood level,” writes Mayor McIntosh. “The MCCPRA staff has proven to be capable of managing large-scale improvement projects, including a three-million-dollar upgrade to swimming and diving facilities. We have full confidence in both the team and the transparent collaboration between our organization and theirs.”

MCCPRA Executive Director, Maggie Davidson, can’t wait to get started. In fact, the Authority completed the Shaw Gym flooring in April and Pool resurfacing. Now that the rest of the funding has been secured, the other components of the project will break ground quickly, with an anticipated completion date of December 2024.

“This funding is a big deal for Moultrie,” says Davidson. “Safe, modern, comprehensive recreational facilities keep people in communities, attract new people to communities, and create a sense of neighborhood pride. We feel like this just marks the beginning of some really great things in store for Colquitt County.”

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*MCCPRA is a Municipal Authority supported taxpayer funds from Moultrie and Colquitt County residents, program fees, rental fees, and grants. A board of directors composed of both Colquitt County and Moultrie representatives manages the Authority. MCCPRA operates and maintains parks and recreational facilities in Colquitt County, as well as sports, aquatics, and other community wellness programs.*

IMAGE CAPTIONS:

**MCCPRA Kiddie Pool** – Installers completed the marcite refinishing of the Northwest kiddie pool in March. The pool is open for summer with a daily fee of $3 for adults and $2 for children. Swimming lessons are also offered.

**MCCPRA Courts** – View of the current basketball courts at the park, which is situated in the middle of a residential neighborhood and adjacent to the Boys & Girls Club (pictured left).

**MCCPRA Rendering** – A landscape and architectural rendering of the future plans for William Bryant Park. MCCPRA was awarded a $1.8 million grant from the Governor’s Office to help fund the project. | Artist: Jonathan Vines