Martin Luther King Jr. Park

Park and Recreation Board...Did You Know?

February 23, 2016
The area where MLK Jr. Park exists today first developed as coal mines in the late 1800’s.
What was here before the park?
What was here before the park?
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Bringing the Park to Life

• In 1971:
  – Area properties were gradually taken by Polk County after failure to pay taxes.
  – The city paid $8,000 for the 5.8 acres.
  – The Logan Neighborhood Association petitioned the City of Des Moines for a new park.
Bringing the Park to Life
Bringing the Park to Life

See Park As Pride of East Side

By Richard Hatfield

The 5.6-acre site in East Des Moines once contained a number of dilapidated houses.

All but three of the houses have been demolished, but the vacant ground now is littered with trash, debris and junked cars.

- In the months ahead the site is to be transformed into a city park that's expected to be the pride of the neighborhood.

The park, named in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., has been in the planning stages for more than a year and work is scheduled to begin "very soon" now that federal funds have been authorized to help pay for the work.

The park will be bounded by Garfield and Cleveland Avenues and E. Seventeenth and McCormick Streets. The site is immediately south of the Cleveland Park low-rent housing development that was built on land purchased from the Des Moines Urban Renewal Board.

This map shows street boundaries and proposed development of the new Martin Luther King Park in East Des Moines. Sampson Street, which now cuts through the site, is to be closed between Garfield and Cleveland Avenues.
Bringing the Park to Life

• This was the first public facility in Des Moines to be named after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Evolution of MLK Jr. Park - 2002
Evolution of MLK Jr. Park - 2006
The Park Today

- Walking Trail
- Multi-use Practice Space
- Baseball Backstop
- Playground
- Full Basketball Court
- Rain Garden
- Splash Pool
- Enclosed Shelter
Enclosed Shelter

Rental Information:
Monday – Friday: 4:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Two hour minimum rental fee of $70
Additional hours are $20 each.
Walking Trail