

# NISD to sell land for complex

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## *Property, improvements to revert back to district in 20 years*

By Tracy R. Mesler

Monday night the Nocona School Board agreed to sell 5 of the 100 acres of land the district owns between FM 1959 and The Old Boot Factory to the Nocona Sports Complex Committee for the construction of an indoor sports complex and technical school.

By law, Supt. Dr. David Waters informed his board Monday night, to sell property the district has to advertise for bids, but the district can draft whatever restrictions it likes in the bid documents including provisions that after 20 years the land, and all improvements, revert back to NISD, that it can only be purchased by a non-profit, and that it can only be used for a technical/sports facility.

The non-profit Nocona Sports Complex corporation was formed in 2018 by four Nocona residents – restaurateur Tony Dirker, former Montague County Veterans Service Officer and current city council candidate Randy Duckworth, former NISD School Board Member Brad Breeze, and Nocona Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Donna Culpepper. Dirker serves as president for the Sports Complex corporation, Duckworth vice-president, Breeze treasurer and Mrs. Culpepper as secretary.

NISD acquired the 100-

acre part of the old Dodson Ranch from the Robert Fenoglio family after two failed attempts to pass a school bond to build a new high school. Noting the district should have purchased property 209 years earlier, despite the defeat of the bond package, the board purchased the land which can have access off two highways.

Initially, the Sports Complex board proposed leasing 40 acres on the north end of the property to build a complex of baseball, softball and soccer/football fields to be used for youth sports tournaments 40 weekends a year.

Late last year, the group shifted their attention from the outdoor sports facilities to indoor sports and technical training approaching the Nocona School Board in July about purchasing the five acres.

"The Nocona Sports Complex Board wanted to focus on creating a school to enhance and enable residents to begin a career in nursing and EMT training while also focusing on fire safety and the necessary courses to meet those career goals."

Mrs. Culpepper has been involved in attempting to secure financing for the multi-million-dollar project as they evaluated the market for select sports facilities on the fringes of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

Last winter, the Sports Complex Board coordinated an EMT training school as in

cooperation with the Chicago School of Education and the Dallas Institute of Nursing in an effort to help with job skill development in the health care industry as its first endeavors in career training.

The proposed 384-foot by 161-foot building would consist of six combination basketball/volleyball courts, three 25-person classrooms, restrooms, concessions, food court and offices.

In its presentation to the school board in July, Mrs. Culpepper stated that the four of them, individually, would buy the property later being paid back from outside funds.

Additionally, they had lined up a \$2.65 million in funding, \$1 million in an 80-20 grant to which the Sports Complex Board would have to provide \$200,000, and a \$1.65-million loan spread over 20 years.

"So, what happens is 80 percent of that we don't have to pay back," Mrs. Culpepper told the school board in July.

During the July meeting NISD Board President and former NEDC board member Guy Hill asked, "If you fail to make a payment, what happens?"

"If we fall short of the funding each month, that's the leverage – the EDC sales tax will pick it up," Mrs. Culpepper told Hill and his board.

"It's guaranteed by the EDC sales tax?" Hill asked.

"It's guaranteed by the sales tax," Mrs. Culpepper assured him.

"Just a reminder," said Dirker, himself a member of the NEDC Type A Board, "what this EDC collateral is all about this company and the EDC is granted money by the city for economic devel-

opment projects. Taking all the money that we fund, we came up with that \$1.65-million – even with that coming in, we can fund all of the things that we do for rodeos and all the businesses of that nature."

Dr. Waters asked Dirker, Duckworth and Mrs. Culpepper, "Is there a piece of this that has to be approved by the city council?"

"No," Dirker stated, "unless the sale of the land."

The building would be built to the 2015 International Building, Fire, Energy, Mechanical and Plumbing Codes and the 2017 National Electric Code. Additionally, it would have a fire protection sprinkler system.

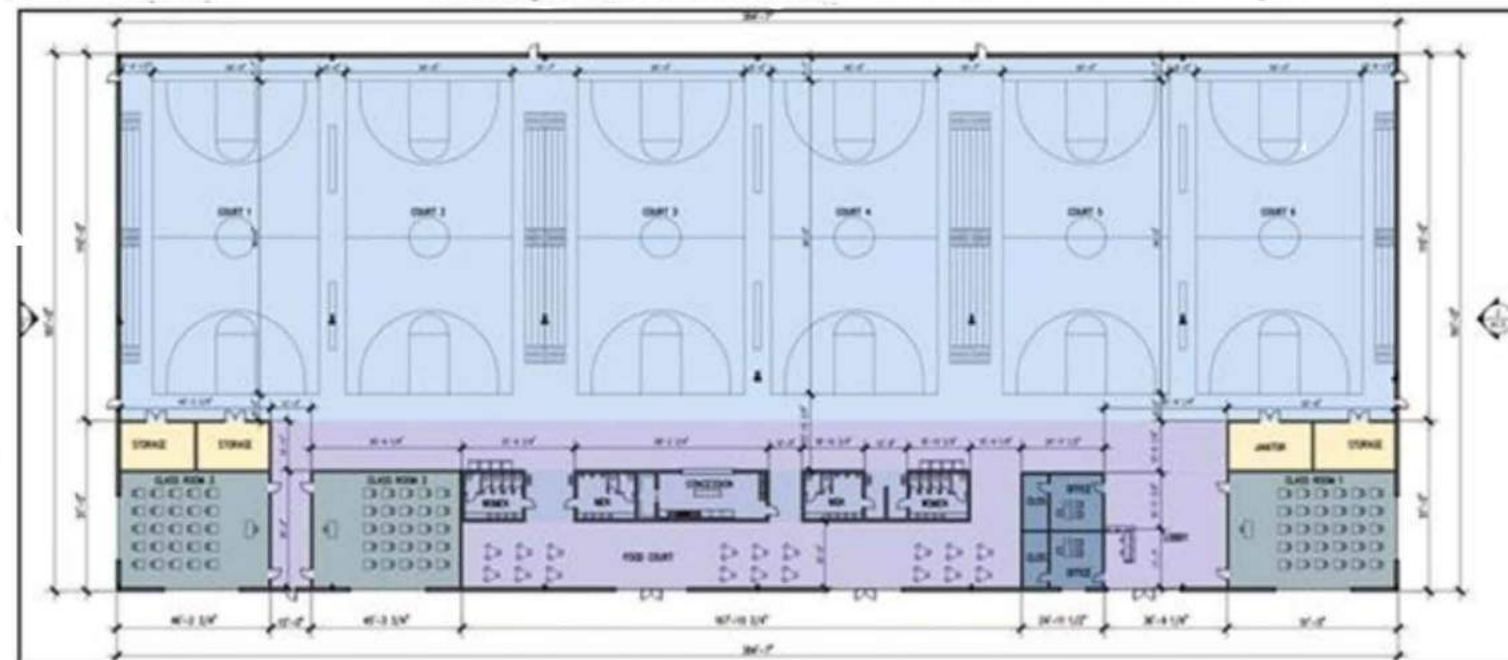
Dirker, Duckworth and Mrs. Culpepper told the school board they wished to purchase the five acres in the southwest corner of the school's property which would be at the intersection

of East Willow and Ninth Streets.

Dr. Waters told his board

would have the district's attorney draft the wording for the bid documents and then advertise for bids for the tract of land.

Dirker noted in July that once this Phase 1 project is up, they would revisit the plans for the outdoor sports complex.



-- Nocona Sports Complex website

Construction of a 61,000-square foot technology center and sports complex is the goal of the Nocona Sports Complex Corporation which received clearance to bid on 5 acres of land owned by the Nocona School District.