



“New” Woodend Road Courts Ribboncutting Set for Thursday, November 17th

Rebuilt Courts Part of an Extensive Amount of Capital Work Now Underway in Town Thanks to CDBG Dollars

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Stratford—Mayor John A. Harkins will cut the ribbon officially opening the newly rebuilt Woodend Road George L. Force Courts to the public at a brief ceremony scheduled for Thursday, November 17th at 3:30 PM. This park, originally dedicated in 1992 in memory of George Lee Force, the first Afro-American police officer in Stratford, underwent a significant sprucing up as its two basketball courts were completely rebuilt with new posts, backboards, goals, player benches and bleachers. The handball courts were also resurfaced and relined. In addition, an existing drinking fountain was relocated to a more central location within the one-acre park and bicycle racks and other bleachers and benches were added.

“The improvements at the Woodend Road basketball courts are a welcomed addition to our town,” stated Mayor Harkins. “The work done at this location shows a larger commitment to making all of our town parks places for Stratford residents to enjoy.”

Stephanie Philips, the 2nd District Councilman and Chair of the Community Development Subcommittee of the Economic and Community Development Commission added, “I am very excited about this major renovation of the George Force Courts. I am sure George would be proud of the

basketball and handball courts knowing it would be the pride and joy of youth and adult leagues. I thank the neighborhood, who came together to make this effort successful, as well as Mayor Harkins and staff, the Town Council, and funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).”

Funding for the project, formally known as the Woodend Road Court Improvements Project, came from \$99,000 in federal CDBG funds and \$100,000 in bond sale proceeds contained in the Town of Stratford’s FY2011 Capital Improvement Plan. The Project Engineer was Stantec Consulting out of Hamden, Connecticut and New York City and the general contractor was G. Pic & Sons Construction Company of Bridgeport.

This ceremony will mark the completion of another part of a multi-year, multi-phase effort to bring Stratford’s South End athletic fields and facilities up to par with those of other neighborhoods around Stratford. The first phase of the Birdseye and Stratford Academy Field Improvements Project was completed in 2009 and the second phase of that project began in September. All three projects have been funded with significant percentages of bond sale proceeds supplemented with CDBG dollars. The CDBG Program, operated by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered locally by the Town of Stratford’s Office of Community Development, funds programs, projects, and activities designed to improve the quality of life in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

In addition to the completed Woodend Road Courts and the Stratford Academy field work now underway, CDBG dollars are active in other capital projects throughout Stratford this fall. The Baldwin Senior Center, 1000 West Broad Street, will soon have new automatic main entry doors installed thanks to CDBG. Sidewalk repairs are also underway in several neighborhoods around Stratford that qualify for CDBG funds. The total cost of all of these projects, including Woodend Road Courts, exceeds \$950,000 with CDBG contributing 38% of the total and 100% of the cost of the new Baldwin Center doors. Clearly, many of these worthwhile capital projects would not be possible without the added benefit of CDBG funding.

For more information about CDBG or the work of the Town of Stratford Office of Community Development, please contact C. Duncan Yetman, Jr., Community Development Administrator, at 203-385-4028 or email him at dyetman@townofstratford.com