

Playgrounds to be replaced



By Jimmy LaRoue

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Two public housing communities will be getting new playgrounds following approval Tuesday from the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority's board of commissioners.

Hoffler Apartments on East Washington Street and Colander Bishop Apartments on Brook Avenue, whose current playgrounds are each about 10 years old, will be replaced at a total cost of \$111,000 to be paid for through the authority's capital fund program.

The vote was 7-0, with Commissioner Michael McBride absent from the meeting.

SRHA Executive Director Tracey Snipes said the playgrounds are popular with the community's younger residents, as the two communities serve a combined 160 families.

"We're replacing playgrounds that are already in place at both of the communities," said Snipes said. "Basically, their shelf-life is over, so they're getting brand new playgrounds put in."

Playground Specialist Inc., a recreation company out of Thurmont, Md., will perform the work to remove the old playgrounds and install the new ones. The company has experience installing playgrounds in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., including a playground in the Benn's Grant area of Smithfield and two others in Norfolk at Munson Park and Granby Elementary School.

A start date has yet to be announced for the replacement of the two playgrounds.

The city last year opened an inclusive playground at Lake Meade Park.

In other board news:

- Quinton Franklin, who had been its vice chairman, has been appointed as the board's new chairman to replace Ben Fitzgerald, with Clementine Cone to take Franklin's spot after Commissioner Deborah Hudson declined after being nominated by Commissioner Jeffrey Robertson. The votes were unanimous, except that both Franklin and Cone abstained when the votes came on their own nominations.
- Snipes updated the board on its Christmas is for Kids toy drive for their public housing and Section 8 participants. She said that while the drive was successful and served more than 500 requests, it did not produce as many donations as in past years.
- Crenshaw, Ware and Martin was the only respondent to a request for proposal for general legal services, so as of Jan. 1, its attorney, Darius Davenport, will be representing the authority, Snipes said.