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Sports, Parks and Recreation Receives \$1.4M to Restore Emile Griffith Park

Community Center / **Published On May 20, 2020 07:23 PM /**

Staff Consortium **May 20, 2020**

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The Emile Griffith Ballpark By. OFFICE OF DISASTER RECOVERY

The Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation (DSPR) was awarded \$1,412,908 to renovate a staple of the St. Thomas community, the Office of Disaster Recovery has announced. The funds to complete the repairs to the Emile Griffith Ballpark were obligated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through its Public Assistance Program (PA) and are earmarked to restore all the park's facilities, O.D.R. said.

The park, a namesake for professional boxer Emile Griffith, was significantly damaged during the 2017 hurricane season. It was partially refurbished in 2019 but has not functioned in its full capacity since the storms.

“For years, Emile Griffith Park has been the home to hundreds of sports enthusiasts, both participants and spectators. The field, which is primarily used for little league games, has housed numerous other sporting and athletic events,” said Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation Calvert White. “It will be exciting to see the park not just restored, but improved, so local and international tournaments can return. We are thankful for this recent obligation and look forward to continuing to work with local and federal stakeholders to move the Department’s initiatives forward.”

Identified funds will repair damaged components to include the basketball court, toddler playing area, ball field, concession stand, batting cage, office building, parking lot, and bathrooms, O.D.R. said. Its bleachers, playground surfaces, lighting, scoreboard, PA system, security gates, press box, pitching machine, and fencing will all be replaced, in addition to other elements to restore and maintain the community park.

“The Emile Griffith Ballpark is a meeting place for children, athletes, and sports enthusiasts,” said Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, O.D.R. director. “Ensuring that safe spaces like these are rebuilt to withstand future weather events is critical for the well-being of this and future generations.”

O.D.R. said DSPR is currently working to develop the solicitation to restore the Emile Griffith Park.