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# Sebastopol hires firm for laguna draft

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SEBASTOPOL — Efforts to establish a park and preserve on the Laguna de Santa Rosa inched forward Tuesday night when the City Council hired a Point Richmond environmental engineering firm to draft a park plan.

The Sebastopol council voted 5-0 to pay Questa Engineering \$78,000 to prepare an implementation plan for the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve.

The firm will develop plans for restoring portions of the laguna currently owned by the city and representing the city's eastern boundary. But the park planning will be carried out with visions of a very much larger 13-mile-long laguna park Sebastopol hopes to build in coming years.

The council action moves along a longtime park project that picked up speed late last year when members of the Ghilotti Construction family of Sonoma County donated a \$330,000, 8.4-acre piece of laguna property east of Palm Drive Hospital for park development. Then in February a retired builder, Emmett Blincoe, donated \$200,000 toward the project.

Now, Questa Engineering will get the job under way.

The firm is well known in Sonoma County. It is currently working on a large, multi-year stream restoration project along

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Adobe Creek and the Petaluma River. Also working with Questa will be a Mill Valley landscape company and Occidental biological company. Both companies helped develop a trails plan for Santa Rosa.

The implementation planning is scheduled to take nine months, which will include development of small, short-term park developments and establishment of public and technical advisory mechanisms for the long-range planning.

The City Council also agreed to

apply for \$39,000 in park development funds through the David and Lucile Packard Foundation which earmarks money for conservation and restoration planning.

Actions moving the park project along came only two weeks after Santa Rosa backed away from a potential contentious proposal for development of a municipal golf course immediately east of the proposed laguna parkland.

Supporters of the laguna plan made it clear that they would not lose that potential wetlands property to golfers, and Santa Rosa decided to look elsewhere for new city courses.