

Victoria Park washrooms approved, 2 councillors walk out

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Kitchener city councillors have approved a \$565,000 washroom facility to be built near David Street and Jubilee Drive in Victoria Park. (John Rieti/CBC)

Kitchener city council decided on Monday that washrooms will be built in Victoria Park after all, against the protest of two councillors.

Councillors John Gazzola and Zyg Janecki argued tenders for a set of washrooms near David Street and Jubilee Drive had already been rejected twice.

However, Mayor Carl Zehr insisted the original tender was never actually voted upon.

The two councillors walked out of the council meeting without casting their votes ahead of the eventual approval of the facility.

Cynthia Fletcher, director of facilities management, says the City will be meeting with contractor Dakon Construction immediately.

"We will begin the construction process as soon as we can get the permits and approvals in place," said Fletcher.

"We are still going to work towards the March 31st timeline. We will be challenged with some winter construction."

The Victoria Park washrooms plan has been mired in debate -- council had already rejected two plans presented in September.

In the first instance, council considered the lowest construction bid of \$565,000 to be too high. The city had budgeted only \$400,000 for the project, with \$200,000 coming from a federal grant.

Ward 9 Councillor Frank Etherington has said that federal money could be lost if construction does not start soon.

"There's a tight timeline in order to get that federal \$200,000. We have to start immediately and we have to have building under way by next March."

The overall budget for the approved washrooms is \$565,000.