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Bryce land purchase approved by University of Alabama board of trustees

By Ed Enoch

Staff Writer / The Associated Press

Published: Friday, September 13, 2013 at 11:00 p.m.

University of Alabama System trustees on Friday authorized purchasing an additional 26 acres of the old Bryce Hospital grounds and approved the next steps for a host of construction projects at UA, including a freestanding Fresh Food Co. location and a new storm shelter.



Michelle Lepianka Carter / Tuscaloosa News
The main building at Bryce Hospital is pictured in this Nov. 18, 2011 file photo.

The trustees approved a purchase agreement for 26.02 acres of the old Bryce Hospital grounds from the Alabama Department of Mental Health for \$1.13 million. The wooded area across McFarland Drive from the east side of campus will be used for stormwater retention, a communications tower for University Police and a recreation area.

In 2010, UA paid \$77 million for the 160-acre Bryce Hospital property that is now part of the northeastern corner of campus.

The board also granted approval for the university staff to continue preliminary planning for the stabilization of the main Bryce Hospital building, renovation of the old Women's Admissions Center and infrastructure work on the grounds.

Tim Leopard, assistant vice president for construction, said the university is still considering which of the other buildings on the property should be saved or demolished.

The board voted to authorize contracts with Price Construction Co. Inc. of Peterson for site development and Amason and Associates Inc. for construction for a freestanding location for the Fresh Food Co. The current budget for the project is about \$15.59 million. The university hopes to complete the two-story structure by summer of 2014. The dining facility is now in Ferguson Center.

The board also gave its approval for the university to begin preliminary work on a 5,200-square-foot freestanding building on the east side of campus that would be capable of sheltering 725 people during a tornado. The shelter would be near the Child Development Research Center and is estimated to cost \$1.68 million, about half of which would be funded by Federal Emergency Management Agency grant money.

The board approved four resolutions for projects involving UA's Greek community.

The board approved a contract with low bidder Kyser Construction LLC of Northport for \$3.95 million in renovations and additions to the Delta Chi fraternity house. The project will be funded by \$50,000 in chapter funds and a \$3.9 million loan to the fraternity from UA.

The board approved using Holmes and Holmes Architects of Mobile for the design

work on a new \$13.5 million Phi Mu sorority house on Colonial Drive. The construction will be paid for by chapter money and a \$10.5 million loan from UA to the sorority.

Approval was also granted for Kappa Alpha and Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternities to purchase each others' existing chapter house as part of a plan for Sigma Phi Epsilon to move into the current Kappa Alpha house. Kappa Alpha would demolish the existing Sigma Phi Epsilon house to build a new 22,500-square-foot house. Kappa Alpha will receive a \$5.8 million loan from UA and Sigma Phi Epsilon will get \$1 million loan for the project.

The trustees authorized a construction contract with J.T. Harrison Construction Co. of Tuscaloosa for the renovation of the second floor of Russell Hall, part of Phase 2 of work on the building. The company was the low bidder for the work with a base bid of \$1.74 million. The total project budget for the building's renovation is about \$18.27 million.

The board approved a preliminary budget of \$20.5 million for the renovation of the Biology Building and approved beginning negotiations for architectural services. The project is to be paid for by future revenue bonds.

Trustees approved a budget of \$15.6 million for renovation of Houser Hall and negotiations for architectural services.

The board authorized an agreement with architecture firm Evan Terry Associates for design work on a 750-space parking deck that is planned between Barnwell Hall and Martha Parham Hall. The cost of the project, to be paid for by future revenue bonds, is estimated at \$16.9 million.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosaneews.com or 205-722-0209.

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