

Work on Westwood High School nearly done

By Brock Parker/ Daily News Staff
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WESTWOOD -- Could it be?

Three years after the new Westwood High School was scheduled to be completed, construction crews are putting the final touches on the \$46 million facility.

When asked yesterday if the new school will be done at the end of the month, Ned Richardson, chairman of the town's Permanent Building Committee, said "I believe it is."

"Hopefully it will wrap up real soon," Richardson said.

Construction crews from Vertex contractors are currently installing the new high school track, finishing up door and floor work inside the building, paving parking lots outside the school and doing the final work on the refurbished high school pool, Richardson said yesterday.

Before Vertex's contract with the town expires at the end of October, Richardson said he expects the company will complete everything at the school and complete the construction of the new running track in time for the grand opening ceremonies for the new multipurpose field on Oct. 13.

"I have a lot of concerns about the track," Richardson said. "I sure hope they can beat that bloody deadline on (Oct.) 13."

If Vertex does complete all of the high school work by the end of the month, it will mark the end of a long road for school and town officials, who were forced to fire former construction contractor Alexandra Construction in 2005 due to massive delays to the school project.

In addition to running way behind schedule, the costs of the high school project also ran \$2 million over the \$44 million price tag the town originally anticipated for the new school.

Richardson said that by the end of next week, the reconstruction of the high school pool, which has encountered several problems, should also be complete. Although two new water pumps for the pool were destroyed under the tenure of Alexandra Construction, Richardson said two new pumps have now been installed and construction crews are finishing up the lining of the pool.

"They should be able to fill it and have it inspected," Richardson said. "That should happen pretty shortly."

Problems with the heating and air conditioning at the school also seem to be fixed, Richardson said, but no one will be sure until Oct. 15 when the high school switches the system over from air conditioning to heat.

Although construction is expected to be complete by the end of the month, Richardson said new grass playing fields at the school will not be completed until the sod has time to take root and grow next spring.

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