



A Kasson city employee tipped over the top half of the fireplace chimney in Veterans Memorial Park Wednesday. The fireplace was removed to make way for a new 40' x 80' park shelter.

The Kasson Alliance for Restoration (KARE) won one battle and may have lost another. They were able to delay demolition of the former elementary school, but were unable to prevent the 1939 stone fireplace from being removed from Veterans Memorial Park to make way for a park shelter.

The fireplace was removed to make way for a new 40' x 80' park shelter that will run parallel with the modular playground equipment. The city park and rec department has budgeted \$35,000 for the project which includes removal of the old shelter that was built in 1965.



The chimney was knocked over and dismantled with the greatest share of the stone being stored at the wastewater treatment plant. Park & Rec Director Ron Unger said there are some good sized pieces that are in one piece so a portion of the fireplace could be rebuilt.

KARE did get bids on tuckpointing and repairing the damaged chimney and bids came in around \$7,000. They offered to fund the project, but the park board determined the chimney was still a safety hazard and made a recommendation to the council that the fireplace be taken down. They came to the conclusion the fireplace should be removed and make the park more usable with a larger shelter.

Mayor Tim Tjosaas offered KARE a challenge by stating the city would be willing to compromise and save as much of the stone as possible so it could be recreated in another location. He suggested people/volunteers come up with a plan for rebuilding and financing the former WPA project and said the council would give them one year to do so.

The challenge of rebuilding the fireplace in another location is the fact the center of the fireplace had been filled with cement. The chimney was filled with cement because the fireplace was attracting vandals who would purposely start fires.

The stone front entrance and swimming pool were also WPA (Works Projects Administration) projects done in Kasson. The WPA was created in 1935 by presidential orders as part of the New Deal, providing jobs for millions of unemployed blue collar workers. The government action to create new jobs came during the Great Depression.