

LOCAL

## Stark Parks lands \$2.3M in grants to demolish historic Molly Stark Hospital



**Grace Springer**  
Canton Repository

Published 5:02 p.m. ET Dec. 4, 2024

### Key Points

- The Ohio Brownfield Grant will cover about 75% of the demolition project. The park district will look into local funding to cover the rest of the project.
- The park district decided to demolish the buildings because of asbestos contamination and safety concerns.
- Two Carroll County projects also received thousands in state brownfield grants.

NIMISHILLEN TWP. – Stark Parks has secured \$2.3 million in state grants for asbestos abatement and demolition of the former Molly Stark Hospital.

"We're just thrilled," director Dan Moeglin said. "The Molly Stark building has been an ongoing challenge for us."

The former hospital was built in 1929 and has been abandoned since 1995. The park district acquired it in 2009.

The Ohio Brownfield Grant will cover about 75% of the demolition project. Moeglin said the next step is to secure the rest of the funding. The total cost is an estimated \$3.1 million.

"We still have a pretty large nut to crack in terms of getting the full project funded, but we're pretty optimistic that we can come up with that through a variety of sources," he said, adding that the next step is to reach out to potential sources of local funding.

The park district wants to level the nearly 100-year-old structure because of safety concerns. The surrounding Molly Stark Park was closed in April after demolition plans were made public.

Asbestos contamination and unsafe conditions inside the building led it to be closed to the public for decades. The building also has a history of break-ins, which prompted the park district to construct a fence around the structure in 2015.

Sarah Buell, capital projects manager at Stark Parks, said they considered ways to redevelop the building or look at other options, but demolition remains the safest and most cost-effective option.

"A lot of people have ties to the building itself over at Molly Stark, and I'm sure they will miss it. We really looked at the different options for what that building could be," she said. "At this point, it's the best thing for everybody to remove it and get rid of the environmental issue that it poses and really focus on the green space that people were interested in having in their community."

Stark Parks does not have any solid plan yet for the future of the park besides creating more green space.

"The first and major priority, the big goal, has been get the buildings torn down and get the space restored to green space," Moeglin said. "Then we'll figure out what the highest and best use is for it."

### Carroll County secures brownfield grants for future county office building, fire district property

Two Carroll County projects also received state brownfield grants, according to a press release.

The first is \$336,000 for cleanup and remediation of a former school building on Moody Avenue in Carrollton. After asbestos abatement and waste removal, the building will be redeveloped into county office space for the Department of Job and Family Services and the Board of Elections.

The second project, to assess a former industrial site in Malvern, received \$256,000. The property is currently owned by the Great Trail Fire District. The environmental assessments will evaluate soil, groundwater and air quality to determine contamination levels and provide recommendations for future redevelopment or training purposes.

Reach Grace at 330-580-8364 or [gspringer@gannett.com](mailto:gspringer@gannett.com). Follow her on X @GraceSpringer16.