

**PARK BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2019**

Chair Craig Kittel called the Park Board meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, January 23, 2019

Members Present: Craig Kittel, Jon Hailey, Mandi Erickson, Frank Norton, Joe Ard, and Brian Schroeder

Others Present: Darian Blattner, Brad Altena, Reid Tate, Jim Zajkowski, Courtney Ballina, Nick Vivian, City Attorney, Mike Darrow, and Noah Wiedenfeld

Members Absent: Christine Melby

Jon Hailey moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Bryan Schroeder, motion carried.

Joe Ard moved to approve the minutes of November 14, 2018, with the correction of the spelling of Max Haeny seconded by Brian Schroeder, motion carried.

Public Business Items

None

Consent Agenda:

Project Updates, Legacy Bench Donation – In Memory of Sheli Jirik, Citizens Field Advertising Update, 2018 Hatfield Campground Review, and Fundraising Request. The fundraising authorization request for a donation from Westfields Hospital & Clinic should be for a future disc golf course, rather than the skate park. The Park Board has not approved any location for disc golf at this time. Jim Zajkowski explained that Karen Smallidge has been fundraising for this project, as she was part of the Community Action Plan Committee that identified this as a project that would support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Jon Hailey moved to approve the consent agenda with the change of the donation from Westfields Hospital & Clinic to be for disc golf (without a location), seconded by Joe Ard, motion carried.

Unfinished Business:

Mary Park Master Plan:

MSA Professional Services has been preparing a comprehensive long-range master plan for Mary Park. The first draft was shown at a public open house on January 23 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Civic Center. City staff also met with members of the Will's Playground Committee to get some initial feedback. Craig stated we are looking for feedback from citizens on what they would like to see in this park. A question was asked about why a splash pad was included on the master plan. A splash pad has been included in the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (Park Plan) for several years. MSA Professional Services developed the draft master plan by referencing the future amenities identified in the Park Plan for Mary Park.

Mary Park Boat Ramp Design:

In 2018, the City of New Richmond received a grant in the amount of \$37,602 towards the reconstruction of the boat ramp at Mary Park. The project was included in the 2019 Capital Improvement Plan. The Park Board issued a request for proposals for engineering services for the project, and selected MSA Professional Services. A public open house was held on January 23 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Civic Center for the public to provide feedback on the preliminary designs prepared by MSA Professional Services. City staff sent personal invitations to four local outdoors organizations and Warner's Dock.

City staff discussed the preliminary designs with the Park Board and shared a summary of the feedback collected from the public open house. The table to the right shows the proposed timeline for the project.

DATE	ACTION
Jan. 23, 2019	Public Open House
Jan. 23, 2019	Park Board Authorization to Seek Competitive Bids for the Project
Jan. 30, 2019	Class 2 Notice Publication #1
Feb. 6, 2019	Class 2 Notice Publication #2
Feb. 14, 2019	Opening of Bids
Feb. 27, 2019	Park Board Recommendation
Mar. 11, 2019	City Council Awards Contract
June 3, 2019	Construction Begins

The Park Board reviewed the preliminary design for the Mary Park boat ramp and the feedback received at the public open house. Jeremiah Wendt explained both boat ramp placement options in detail. Motion was made by Joe Ard to accept design 1 (angled approach), and receive bids on both types of docks, seconded by Jon Hailey, motion carried.

Park Facility Reservation Process:

Noah Wiedenfeld explained that for the past few years, the Park Board has discussed ways to improve our park facility reservation practices and policies. City staff examined our current practices, met individually with each Park Board member, and researched how other municipalities in Wisconsin and Minnesota manage their park facilities. Some themes that were developed include:

- “Local” organizations should have priority for facilities
- There needs to be greater consistency with how facilities are managed
- Reservation times should have reasonable limits so that facilities are not monopolized
- Steps should be taken to prevent over-use of facilities, while also ensuring that regular maintenance activities can be performed
- The significance of financial contributions should be clarified
- There needs to be improved communication between users who wish to reserve facilities and City staff who are responsible for administrative functions
- Fees need to be reasonable and justifiable

There was lengthy discussion on how the reservation system was going to work. Feedback was provided that the limits on the number of hours that a field can be reserved, and the number of athletic fields that can be reserved, should be increased. Comment was made that the soccer group stayed off the fields last fall to build the fields up, and an outside group came in and used the fields. The proposed policy would allow City staff to better manage the condition of the fields by allowing staff to retire fields from play, and to decline reservation requests based on field conditions or for scheduled maintenance. Comment was made that many of the local teams are responsible for cleaning up and emptying trash after their events. Mandi Erickson asked when the groups could start scheduling for tournaments and knowing they would have the fields before opening it up to the outside groups. Local groups should submit their tournament dates to City staff. No practices or regular games will be scheduled yet, but the City recognizes the importance of getting tournament dates scheduled. Craig Kittel asked Noah Wiedenfeld to explain the criteria for a local organization. In the draft policy document, an affiliated organization must be a non-profit organization with a governing board of directors; a minimum of 80% of the organization’s members or players must reside within the boundaries of the New Richmond School District, or be a student at a public or private school located within New Richmond city limits; and must complete an annual application including a security deposit and proof of insurance.

Consensus was to set up a work session on Wednesday, February 13th and invite local organizations together to come up with suggestions for improving the draft policy. The Park Board will make some revisions and make a recommendation at their February 27th meeting. The policy will then proceed to the City Council for consideration at their March 11th meeting.

New Business

Prescribed Burning by Applied Ecological Services:

Applied Ecological Services worked closely on the Doar Prairie Restoration from 2008 to 2011. Their services included prescribed burning treatments and herbicide applications, and the installation of native seeds, trees, and other plants. It has been about 5 years since the last prescribed burning, so City staff will be contacting Applied Ecological Services for consultation and pricing information. We may also get their opinion regarding the Paperjack Greenway to see if they would recommend any maintenance activities, which would be further discussed with the Heritage Center.

City staff will gather more information from Applied Ecological Services and bring forward a recommendation to the Park Board at a future meeting.

Freedom Park Master Plan:

The current master plan for Freedom Park was developed by Rettler Corporation in 2006. Over the years, the park has developed amenities including six irrigated athletic fields, a paved multi-use trail, two picnic shelters, and a gravel road/parking lot.

The City Council has allocated \$150,000 in 2019 for improvements to Freedom Park. In addition, there are several other projects have been discussed recently, including the VFW building project, disc golf course, restrooms, storage for youth athletics, completion of the multi-use trail, baseball diamonds, etc. With all this in mind, it would be worthwhile for the Park Board to consider getting community feedback and updating the Freedom Park Master Plan as needed.

Besides Freedom Park, there may be a need for planning services for other park projects as well (e.g. Fox Run Park, Monette Park, etc.) Rather than seeking proposals every time there is a need for a park master plan, it would be more efficient to have one firm designated as park planning consultant. This would be similar to how the City has handled engineering services. Motion was made by Mandi Erickson to get quotes for a park planning services, seconded by Brian Schroeder, motion carried.

Freedom Park Turf Management Services:

In 2018, the Park Board approved a contract with Fitzgerald Lawn Care for turf management services for Freedom Park. Payment was made from the annual parks operating budget. City staff have contacted Fitzgerald Lawn Care to provide a proposal for 2019. City staff will give an update at the next meeting.

Sport Fish Restoration Grant:

As was discussed previously with the Park Board, City staff intend to design a new fishing pier at Mary Park to replace the fishing dock that was damaged by ice in the spring of 2018. The Sport Fish Restoration Grant through the Wisconsin DNR would cover up to half the cost of the new fishing pier. If authorized, City staff would apply for grant funding by February 1 with assistance from MSA Professional Services, who is engineering the boat ramp reconstruction project and developing the master plan for Mary Park. Motion was made by Jon Hailey to authorize City staff to apply for the Sport Fish Restoration Grant, seconded by Joe Ard, motion carried.

Parks & Trails System Map:

Every two years, a revised parks and trails map is printed. Feedback is provided by City staff, the Park Board, and the Pathway Committee, which is incorporated into the final design. Printing costs are generously sponsored by Edward Jones Investments. Approximately 1,000 copies are printed and made available at the Heritage Center, Civic Center, Friday Memorial Library, New Richmond Area Chamber of Commerce, local hotels, etc.

GIS Analyst Kyle Wells has prepared an updated map, which was included in the agenda packet. The new maps will be printed in the spring of 2019. Craig asked if we should consider naming the County Road A Trail. The consensus from City staff was to wait until the full trail is constructed (tentatively scheduled for 2020-2021).

Nature Center Improvements:

Nature Center has a significant amount of invasive buckthorn. Buckthorn crowds out desirable native species, degrades wildlife habitat, serves as host to other pests, and spreads over time, as their berries contain seeds which can germinate for many years. Removal can be very time and labor intensive. Beyond occasional volunteer efforts to remove the invasive species, a multi-year buckthorn management plan has not been developed. In addition, several of the wooden boardwalks in Nature Center are showing their age and are in need of replacement. With the new canoe/kayak landing and the upcoming trail projects (CTH A and Nature Center Recreational Trail) the park may see increased use in the near future. In the 2017 NRRP survey responses, the community's natural areas were rated as being in the worst condition out of all recreation amenities.

There was discussion on the park not being used much in the summer time after heavy rainfall which can lead to mosquitoes, but the park seems to have an increasing amount of use in the winter months for snowshoeing and fat tire bikes. City staff will be gathering recommendations and cost estimates from ecological restoration companies as to how the buckthorn issue might be addressed. City staff will also prepare some cost estimates and options for replacement boardwalks. More information will be brought back to the Park Board at a future meeting for consideration.

Park Land Trust Report:

Park Land Trust Fund - \$177,695.33 as of 12/31/2018

Impact Fees Fund – \$28,049.25 as of 12/31/2018

Jon Hailey asked if the zero balance listed on the project sheet should be deleted from the sheet. Some of these zero balance items will be removed from the next report.

Announcements:

The dog park needs sand, as it is extremely slippery. Bag dispensers need to be filled at the dog park.

Noah announced Christine Melby resigned from the Park Board, as her family is building a house outside of city limits. We thank Christine for her three years of service to the community and to improving our parks and trails system. We will be accepting applications to fill the open position.

Joe Ard moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Brian Schroeder, motion carried.

The meeting of the Park Board adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes Submitted by
Marie Bannink
City Secretary