



**Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting:** February 5, 2024

**To:** Park and Recreation Advisory Board  
**From:** Charlie Fredericks, Streets and Parks Manager  
**Subject:** Park Update

- **Babcock Park**
  - See progress photos 1 - 5. Construction has continued as expected, the interior finishes have starting to be installed. Plumbing and electrical finishes are still needed, as well as ceiling tiles, trim work and painting. Some of the windows and doors have been installed, with the remaining soon to follow. The exterior siding work is also in progress.
  - The old warming house was removed from the site and relocated by staff back to the Street Maintenance Facility. Staff repurposed the warming house for use as additional storage.
  - The expected completion date is currently May or early June, but pending weather or other challenges this could change.
- **Sechler Park**
  - As weather has allowed, staff have been preparing the ballfields and grounds at Sechler Park for the start of the season. We installed batting cage nets, ordered materials for various fencing repairs, and will address a few other grounds repairs in April.
  - The gates at Sechler will be opened for the year mid-April.
  - Staff have received a draft proposal for the work of creating a master plan for Sechler and hope to begin that work in the coming months.
- **Spring Creek Park**
  - Staff are preparing to assume maintenance responsibility of the soccer fields starting this year. Ordering addition materials, coordinating mowing and painting, as well as other grounds repairs that are needed.
- **General Parks**
  - See photo 6. Staff removed buckthorn and other invasives from over 1,000 feet of river edge in Riverside Lions Park, as well as across the river near the Fire Station. The area along the river in Riverside Lions Park was properly treated and is scheduled for a prescribed burn this year.
- **Community Engagement and Notification Process Update**
  - Staff surveyed other cities, most of which were comparable in size to Northfield, along with a couple larger/smaller municipalities. None of the cities contacted had a

formal policy or procedure for public notification or engagement regarding changes to a park's intended use or amenities.

- Despite the absence of formal policies, each city employed similar unofficial approaches. These included distributing flyers to surrounding neighbors within various distances (ranging from a radius of 300 feet to 0.5 miles) and hosting open houses or inviting neighbors to specific Park Board meetings to discuss proposed changes.
- Currently, staff is collaborating with the City's Communications Department to design yard signs for placement in parks prior to any changes, ensuring feedback from park users beyond the mailing area. These signs will feature a QR code linking to a webpage with additional information and contact details for feedback.
- Moving forward, staff will further develop these engagement approaches and clarify our strategy. We will also delineate when specific outreach methods are appropriate; for instance, an open house may be held when planning to reconstruct a playground, but deemed unnecessary for replacing a basketball hoop.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Charlie Fredericks, Streets & Parks Manager

Photo 1:



Photo 2:



**Photo 3:**



**Photo 4:**



**Photo 5:**



**Photo 6:**

