



# City of Northfield

City Hall  
801 Washington Street  
Northfield, MN 55057  
northfieldmn.gov

## Meeting Minutes - Final Park & Recreation Advisory Board

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Monday, September 9, 2024

2nd Floor Training Room

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### 6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

*Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Cindy Stock took Roll Call.*

*Present: Chair Peterson, Vice Chair, Lauer, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jothen, Board Member Miller, Ex-Officio Members Bohar and Holmes (non-voting) and Hollis Holden, Youth Representative (voting member since Isaac Rich is absent)*

*Absent: Melissa Bernard, Recreation Coordinator, Northfield Community Education; Board Member Olson, Isaac Rich, Youth Representative (voting member) and Charlie Fredericks, Staff Liason and Streets and Parks Manager.*

*Also present: Dennis Clark, Streets & Parks Supervisor; Jayson Dwelle, Facilities Manager; Ray Gainey, Northfield local Pickleball Committee, Bruce Jacobson, Bruce Jacobson Landscape Architect LLC; CC Linstroth, Co-Chair Community Member of Age-friendly Northfield Steering Committee; Mayor Rhonda Pownell, Bill Seeberg, Northfield local Pickleball Committee, Bryce Shearen, Bolton & Menk, Inc.; Tom Spooner, Pool & Ice Arena Supervisor; Anna Springer, Bolton & Menk, Inc.; Cindy Stock, Administrative Associate*

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**A motion was made by Board Member Anderson, seconded by Youth Representative Holden, to approve the agenda. The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**YES: 5 – Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Lauer, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jothen, Board Member Miller and Hollis Holden, Youth Representative.**

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**A motion was made by Board Member Anderson, seconded by Board Member Miller, to approve the August Minutes. The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**YES: 5 – Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Lauer, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jothen, Board Member Miller and Hollis Holden, Youth Representative**

1. [24-541](#) August 5th, 2024 PRAB Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [1 - August 5, 2024 PRAB Meeting Minutes](#)

## OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

*No public comment was made*

## REGULAR AGENDA

3. [24-543](#) Update and Feedback on Sechler Park Long-Range Plan Concept Designs

**Attachments:** [2024-09-09 Sechler Park Long-Range Plan Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting.pdf](#)

*Bolton & Menk, Inc. presented the initial concept designs for the long-range plans drafted from information gathered from the community. This included the project purpose, goals, timeline, review of the online survey, the community pop-up meetings and the stakeholder meetings (all stakeholders attended). The concept development was developed by coordinating with City staff and conducting a design with a project team and coordinating with site staff to review and refine the concept plans.*

**PRAB DISCUSSION**

- 1. Incorporate very high baseball field netting/fencing for safety of cars, pedestrians from high flying balls.*
- 2. When PRAB goes to Council, should bring data with numbers showing what group/sport is growing and what group needs more*
- 3. Holmes stated also when going to Council to be sure to bring the completed phasing and priorities list. Jacobson stated it is not possible to get ALL concepts in at Sechler. Will lean toward the larger population.*
- 4. Springer stated to first do scope, then the Preferred Concept. The Final Report will include all priorities and costs.*
- 5. Jochen concerned about moving State Trail away from the road, ballfields, congestion of children and bicyclists for safety concerns. Springer stated this aspect will be reviewed more closely. A member has concern the Mountain Bike Skills Area & Pump Track seems old and not used. Jacobson suggested better lighting and parking for that area to make it more welcoming as currently it is under-used.*

*Chair Peterson opened the floor up for more specific questions/comments for the consultant:*

- 1. Miller – need a communication campaign tool to inform the community what funding we have, and what we can get. The community will be concerned whether this is affordable and if their taxes will increase. Make list of where grant opportunities are and funding mechanisms.*
  - Jacobson – reach out to philanthropist and/or community if they can invest more in their town.*
  - Springer – “front-load” this item at the Open House.*
- 2. Anderson – concern of plenty stormwater*
- 3. “Connectivity” – plenty of bike path to meet and connect to bridges, not just lots of cars*

**A motion was made by Board Member Miller, seconded by Board Member Anderson, for the committee to take a 10-minute break. The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**YES: 5 – Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Lauer, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jochen, Board Member Miller and Hollis Holden, Youth Representative.**

**Chair Peterson called the meeting back to order at 7:03 p.m.**

**A motion was made by Youth Representative Holden, seconded by Board Member Jochen, to extend the length of the meeting. The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**YES: 5 – Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Lauer, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jothen, Board Member Miller and Hollis Holden, Youth Representative.**

2. [24-542](#) Informational Presentation by Local Pickleball Player Group

**Attachments:** [Pickleball Group Intro and Survey Report.pdf](#)

*Ray Gainey, Northfield resident, introduced himself explaining his involvement in the sport of pickleball, the local pickleball committee and Community Education. Along with Bill Seeberg they represent a local group of pickleball players who have created a committee. They presented the pickleball organization history and the survey they conducted with the Northfield pickleball community. Information presented includes but not limited to:*

- 1.Data compiled from the survey. Players travel out of Northfield to play pickleball.*
- 2.Data showing the growth of pickleball nationwide (13 million in 2023); 3,500,000 players in 2017 to 14,000,000 players in 2023.*
- 3.Data from an extensive study comparing the amount of pickleball courts available in Northfield to like-sized Minnesota cities, showing Northfield is lacking in court locations.*
- 4.Data from “activities analysis” showing much more park activities need to be geared to the aging population overage of 50 versus geared more for the younger population.*
- 5.Data showing the health benefits of pickleball and exercise for seniors in the areas of balance/agility, cardiovascular health, cognitive function, joint health/flexibility/mental health, muscular strength/endurance and social engagement.*
- 6.Criteria list as to why Sechler Park would be the best location in Northfield for pickleball courts.*

**PRAB DISCUSSION:**

- 1.There are not many tennis courts in Northfield, and some being used for pickleball. Pickleball should have its own courts/location.*
- 2.How do we communicate the schedules to the public etc.? Jayson Dwelle stated new software is currently being utilized at the swimming pool. There are calendar slots on Northfield websites, and through Community Education.*
- 3.Use Heritage basketball courts that are not being used – needs resurfacing, is in middle of neighborhood (might not want).*
- 4.Collaborate with the YMCA, for mostly inside courts*
- 5.Expand the courts at Riverside – need better lighting, more parking spaces especially for tournaments*
- 6.The Northfield Age-friendly Group completely supports what is being suggested for expanding pickleball by the City and PRAB and working hard to reach as many Northfield residents as possible.*
- 7.Keep in mind all ages, not just a sport for one age group.*

4. [24-544](#)

## Pool and Ice Arena Updates and Summary

*Pool Updates Spooner and Dwelle:*

1. *Dates of operation – at the 1st of the year*
2. *Rates – at the 1st of the year. Try to stay very competitive with surrounding cities*
3. *March-May hiring process begins – start applications earlier each year*
4. *Training/In-Services*
5. *Attendance/concessions at front*
6. *Lifeguards – ideally 25-28 is good. We had about 19, very low. 50/50% high school and college. Local colleges are not interested. YMCA employs many kids – Northfield kids pull shifts at YMCA.*
7. *Pool hours – this summer reduced pool hours lack of staff. July 4th week/2nd week August difficult to staff*
8. *High # of rain days this summer*
9. *Season 2025 new scheduling software – all admissions can do online (passes, punch cards). Pre-season sold 95 passes, 14 punch cards. Regular Season: 9 Birthday Parties, 6,000 admissions, 149 regular season passes, \$86,000 in sales and concessions \$22,000 revenue*
10. *Anderson – has concerns with Safety Break time. The average time is getting longer and longer, which then kids don't want to go back into pool. Once, the Safety Break time was 20 minutes – too long. Staff need to follow policy better. Dwelle stated break did get a bit longer during COVID. Now it shouldn't be occurring.*
11. *Bohar – in recruiting more staff, are managers and lifeguards completing surveys? Is there a referral bonus for returning staff? Dwelle stated this has not been built into the budget. Shorten the work days not shorten the work week?*

*Ice Arena Updates Spooner and Dwelle:*

1. *Summer operations done August 9th and ice out*
2. *Roofs have been repaired*
3. *Opening day September 30th - 1 week chilling building, 1 week making ice*

**STAFF UPDATES**5. [24-545](#)

## Staff Reports.

**Attachments:** [1 - September 2024 Park Report.pdf](#)  
[2 - September 2024 Rec Report.pdf](#)

*Clark – almost completion of cleaning up after DJJD. Preparing for fall leaves and winter snow.*

**BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

*None*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Board Member Miller, seconded by Youth Representative Holden, to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m. The motion was carried by the following vote:**

**YES: 5 – Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Lauer, Board Member Anderson, Board Member Jothen, Board Member Miller and Hollis Holden, Youth Representative.**