



City of Northfield

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft Park & Recreation Advisory Board

Monday, November 7, 2022

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Also Present: Adam Olson, Advisory Member; Cora McBroom, Non-Voting Youth Representative; Melissa Bernhard, Recreation Coordinator of Northfield Community Education; Tim Behrendt, Streets and Parks Manager (joined via phone conference); Alisha Hayes, Meeting Associate; David Delong, presenter; Bruce Jacobson, presenter; Pam Anderson, presenter, and Rhonda Powell, Mayor. Other Northfield residents attended but no public comment received after being presented by Chair Playter, so there was no formal attendance taken.

Chair Playter called the November 7th, 2022 Meeting of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) to order at 6:03pm.

- Present:** 5 - Board Member Nathan Knutson, Board Member Peder Jothen, Board Member Ben Playter, Board Member Rebecca Peterson and Board Member Emma Waldemar
- Absent:** 3 - Board Member Neil Lutsky, Board Member Stacy Longwich Kleis and Board Member Sebastian Burset

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Board Member Peterson, seconded by Board Member Knutson, to approve the November 7th, 2022 Agenda. All in favor. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Board Member Knutson, seconded by Board Member Jothen, to approve the October 3rd, 2022 PRAB Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor. Motion carried.

1. [22-719](#) PRAB October 3rd, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [10-5-22 Minutes Draft](#)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Playter opened the floor for Public Comment. There were no Public Comments provided at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

2. [22-721](#) Report on how Northfield Parks faired on being Age Friendly

Attachments: [1- Age-friendly Northfield Park Audit2022.pdf](#)

Presenter, David DeLong, provided information to PRAB Members and Members of the Public in both an oral and visual presentation. The following are some highlights and suggestions provided, but certainly not limited to these: mileage markers, parking and accessibility, curb cuts, share the path signage for multi-path use, fit lots that emphasize safety in numbers and visibility, and increased demand for pickle ball courts throughout the community.

The following is a brief summary of feedback given by PRAB members: Every park should be accessible to community members but not all parks are suitable for parking lots, multi-generational use of parks vs. designing specifically for seniors, inquiries about 'larger' vision for the parks from the perspective of the senior population---David DeLong provided examples of; nice restrooms, mature trees, centrally located (for example, park(s) by City Hall), finding a good balance of kid friendly parks vs. senior friendly parks. As quoted by David, "seniors want to be separated but not isolated. It's a comfort thing."

David DeLong ended his presentation at 6:30pm.

3. [22-722](#) Update on the Riverfront Enhancement Action Plan and the Bridge Square Renovation Project

Attachments: [NORTHFIELD PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MTG 11072022.pdf](#)

Bruce Jacobson introduced himself, along with his partners (Theresa, focused on community engagement process. She was present in the audience) and Bob Close (not present) as wanting to increase the level of engagement with the PRAB members. Bruce stated that he and Bob meet at City Hall every Wednesday to discuss project plans and would like to get into a "rhythm" of sharing information and collaborating with PRAB every month if possible or at least more frequently than yearly as the framework for this project is rapidly emerging. Bruce shared some ideas of that framework that they have been working towards in the planning phases: update of the Archer House, redevelopment with City buying several properties on 5th St; three studies conducted: Mobility, Arts Master Plan, and Economic Evaluation; keeping the history of Water St. including the celebration and layout of DJJD's days, safe pedestrian zones, lighting effects, and recreational river vs. natural river and how that is perceived by the public.

Update: plan approved by City Council, concepts are building and progressing, but moving forward there will be a lot of opportunity for input. Bruce is hoping that the relationship with PRAB members can be less of him presenting information but more of exchanging ideas and "work shopping".

Feedback/questions from PRAB Members: How many parking spots will be eliminated with this design? "None in Phase 1". Are you talking with downtown businesses? "Most, yes" Will traffic patterns remain the same? "Yes". An idea presented of changing the Bridge Square fountain to zero entry if that could be done with a safe design concept in mind. Also discussed but not limited to: increase of restrooms, Water Street closed (only to be used for special events) and paving to run through--conversation about whether 'more green space is needed' but input that "green doesn't always mean more accessibility---mobility with strollers, senior population, and food trucks as some prime examples.

The presentation concluded at 7:04pm with Bruce emphasizing the need to meet more often and find the right forums to discuss these items in a collaborative manner.

4. [22-720](#) Park and Recreation Capital Investment Plan Public Engagement Survey Results

Attachments: [2022-11-03 Community Engagement Summary Northfield CIP](#)

Pam presented on CIP (last presentation on the public engagement process, which has been approximately 8-9 months) with an oral and visual presentation on data and survey results. Pam stated that they received 942 surveys and that Northfield residents appear to be active, engaged, and vocal participants.

The following are some highlights of data received during the in-person/virtual meetings held: more parks needed on the North side, a multi-use indoor arena, lights at the skate park, updated playground equipment, indoor recreation needs, splash pad, and more trails for biking and hiking.

The following are some highlights of data received from the online surveys: need for year round recreation, more paved off street trails, updated restrooms and more restrooms, natural areas, multi-generational parks, and new ice arena.

Pam stated that overall the surveys presented positive comments and engagement on the current state of Parks and Recreation but room for growth and improvement. Pam added that there was a high percentage of support for sales tax increases and bonds when it came to funding this project, but less support for an increase in property tax.

Questions and/or comments from Board Members included, but not limited to the following: wanting more information on the demographics of residents who took the survey, indoor recreation seeming like a higher priority than the parks, and seeking more information from Fifty North to have a better understanding of usage and how indoor recreation can be better utilized and offered in Northfield.

Pam's presentation ended at 7:40pm.

STAFF UPDATES

5. [22-723](#) Staff Reports.

Attachments: [1- November Park Report.pdf](#)

[2- November Rec Report.pdf](#)

[3- November Comm Ed.pdf](#)

Note

Several residents attended the PRAB meeting but no public comments were shared during the open forum for public comments. However, once the presentations concluded and the meeting was wrapping up there were several individuals that asked to verbalize some concerns they had regarding the City of Northfield Skate Park. Some of the concerns verbalized included, but not limited to; maintenance, square footage, built with expansion in mind, 1/3 of the size it could be for Phase two, dimensions of features are 'unsafe', and funding for continued growth.

PRAB members encouraged these residents to engage in further conversation with the Board by formally joining the agenda at the next PRAB meeting in December.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Board Member Knutson, seconded by Board Member Peterson, to adjourn meeting at 8:00pm. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Board Member Knutson, Board Member Jothen, Board Member Playter, Board Member Peterson and Board Member Waldemar