



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Meeting Minutes - Final-revised Park & Recreation Advisory Board

Thursday, August 19, 2021

6:30 PM

City Hall 2nd Floor Training Room

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hollerung called the August 19, 2021 meeting of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) to order at 6:35 p.m. and took Roll Call.

Members Present: Daniel Hollerung, Nathan Knutson, Neil Lutsky, Peder Jothen, Ben Playter, Rebecca Peterson, Soren Richardson, Adam Wale

Also Present: Tim Behrendt, Streets & Parks Manager; Melissa Bernhardt, Community Education and Recreation, Recreation Coordinator; Northfield Residents: Bob Thacker, Dan Saxton, Kathy Schuurman, Marty Larson, Ben Witt; Randy Ernst; Judy Becker, Meeting Associate

Due to the number of individuals wishing to speak on Item #6, it was recommended that Item #6 on the Agenda - Consider Motion to approve Cash-in-lieu of Land for Park Dedication for the Kraewood Development - be moved after Item #3. Motion made by Board Member Peterson, second by Board Member Lutsky, to approve the Agenda for the August 19, 2021 meeting as amended. All in favor. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [21-477](#)

Attachments: [Meeting Minutes Jun-2021](#)

Motion by Board Member Lutsky, second by Board Member Jothen, to approve the June 17, 2021 PRAB Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor. Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

2. [21-478](#)

Oddfellows Park Bike/Walking Trail

Attachments: [1 - Aerial of Oddfellows.PNG](#)
[2 - Start of trail.jpg](#)
[3 - Existing Trail 1.jpg](#)
[4 - Appendix A-Oddfellows, Par-Meadow, Riverside Lions, Roosevelt, Sechlar.pdf](#)

Ben Witt and Marty Larson, members of Cannon River Offroad Cycling & Trails (CROCT), referenced attachments to the Agenda Packet regarding the Oddfellows Park Bike/Walking Trail. The trail is not well defined after it leaves the Park; therefore, CROCT is offering to build a trail, as described, to accommodate hiking and biking through the woods at Oddfellows Park. The finished trail would be approximately 3/4 of a

mile. Volunteers will work to establish the trail through the woods at Oddfellows Park at no cost to the City, will provide ongoing maintenance and signage at the trailhead. Building/clearing of the trail would start Fall of 2021.

Motion by Peterson, second by Jothan, to approve the proposal by CROCT to build and maintain a trail, adding to the existing trail from Oddfellows Park, to accommodate hiking and biking through the woods at Oddfellows Park. All in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

NEW BUSINESS

3. [21-479](#) East Cannon River Trail (ECRT) Donation

Attachments: [ECRT Donation.pdf](#)

Dr. Michael Strobbe and Aurora Pharmaceutical, represented by Randy Ernste, would like to donate a concrete pad with seating, bike racks and a bike repair station at the East Cannon River Trail (ECRT) to the City of Northfield. This area will be used by Aurora Pharmaceutical employees as well as ECRT users.

Motion by Board Member Lutsky, second by Board Member Playter, to accept the East Cannon River Trail donation by Dr. Michael and Aurora Pharmaceutical. All in favor. Motion carried.

6. [21-482](#) Consider Motion to approve Cash-in-lieu of Land for Park Dedication for the Kraewood Development

Attachments: [1 - 18171.01-KRAEWOOD-PRELIMINARY PLAT-6-22-2021](#)
[2 - Kraewood Parks within Half Mi](#)

Tim Behrendt, Streets & Parks Manager, defined Cash-in-lieu of Land for Park Dedication. Specific to the Kraewood Development, the developer is required to plan for .72 acres of parkland, which is valued at \$13,000. Given that there are five parks within one-half mile of the proposed development, it is reasonable for the City to accept Cash-in-lieu of Land.

Five citizens commented on this item:

**Kathy Schuurman, Ivanhoe Avenue, Northfield SHED member. Per materials previously provided to the City Council, this area should not be developed but be declared an Urban Forest Preserve, given the mature trees, flowers and the endangered bumblebee that exist in the area.*

**Bob Thacker, Ivanhoe Avenue, and Dan Saxton, Juniper Avenue, provided a handout. The area is unique as an Urban Forest and should be set aside as a preserve in recognition of this. Northfield SHED has been in conversation with the Paulsons and is proposing Northfield SHED purchase and assist in maintenance of the area, which could also be used as a Learning Center for Greenvale Park Elementary School students and the Early Learning Center. They believe that the West side of the community is lacking in park and recreational opportunities, especially without the former soccer fields, and also that the area does not need additional apartment complexes.*

**Ray DeVries, Plum Street. Does not believe that cash-in-lieu of land is adequate given the unique nature and resource to the City of this area; the Planning Commission and the PRAB need additional information about the value in urban forest areas; the City has a responsibility to represent the citizens of Northfield and hopefully realizes that developers*

can be told no.

**Philip Spensley, Lincoln Street. He previously submitted email comments, which should be referenced.*

- 1) Does not approve of cash-in-lieu of land payment;
- 2) There is more value in the property if left as is rather than having the majority of the Urban Forest removed and developed into housing; the request for TIF financing for the development should also be considered in the value of recognizing the property as Urban Forest;
- 3) Over 600 citizens have signed a petition to recognize the property as Urban Forest, especially considering the existence of an endangered species in the area, and also recognize the existing traffic concerns given the number of apartments in the area and relative to the safety of the children in the school district;
- 4) Consider what the Friends of Lashbrook Park achieved in preserving the twelve-acre woodland and wetland area developed by volunteers and donors;
- 5) Request that the Planning and Zoning Department and the City Council have an environmental assessment conducted.

Board members strongly felt that it was important to identify the area to be defined as a park in the proposed development if the City were to require park land for this development.

Discussion followed.

Motion by Board Member Knutson, second by Board Member Jothen to recommend that the City Council not accept Cash-in-lieu of land at this time.

Additional discussion followed. Board members felt the park area needs to be defined before the Board can make an informed decision on this matter. It is the job of the Park Board to re-imagine parks for the benefit of the residents of the City; however, it would difficult to achieve in this situation without knowing what part of the proposed development would be dedicated park land. Cash-in-lieu is a one-time payment; park land would be a much longer investment.

Motion by Board Member Knutson, second by Board Member Lutsky to amend the Motion to read: The PRAB hereby recommends that the City Council not accept Cash-in-lieu of land at this time until

- 1) The Developer identifies what parcel of the proposed development would be dedicated as park land; and,
 - 2) The PRAB recommends that the City Council take this opportunity to consider what area of the development would most benefit the public should the designated amount park land be developed.
- All in favor. Amended motion carried.**

4. [21-480](#) Consider potential interest in the MNDOT property at 510 Woodley Street

Attachments: [1 - 2019-0125 location photo](#)
[2 - MNDOT Normal Conveyance Process](#)
[3 - MNDOT Property Area Info Council Intro](#)
[4 - MTTTrailhead DogPark Concept](#)

The Northfield Park and Recreation Advisory Board is asked to consider a motion to express interest to potentially acquire property at 510 Woodley Street:

(choose one)

- a. *City has interest in ownership*, for City/public use to be determined such as recreation*

or parks related, public art gateway (If City ownership interest is for public use, the State may be able to transfer without first establishing a fair market value sale price.); or
b. City has interest in temporary ownership*, with intent to market and pursue re-development (If City ownership interest is with the intent to market and pursue re-development, the State will need to complete a property appraisal and establish a sale price); or
c. City not interested in property.

If the City has interest in the property, a letter from a City representative to MNDOT staff would be prepared and submitted. There is not an immediate need to submit a letter, though this step should occur by fall in order to be able to move forward with steps to prepare for a transfer of ownership in early 2023, as the State anticipates being done with their use of the property by early 2023.

Motion by Board Member Knutson, second by Board Member Peterson, that the PRAB recommends the City Council express to the State that the City has interest in ownership of the MNDOT property at 510 Woodley Street for City/public use to be determined. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. [21-481](#) Consider Motion to approve Request for Qualifications for the Park, Recreation, and Trails Capital Investment Plan

Attachments: [1 - Draft RFQ Northfield Park & Recreation Capital Investment Plan](#)

The City of Northfield 2021-2024 Strategic Plan has a strategic priority of Quality Facilities for the residents and visitors of Northfield. A target of the strategic plan is to have all parks and recreation facilities judged satisfactory or above and exceeding community expectations. The City has a 2008 Park, Open Space, and Trail system plan in which numerous park improvements were identified for the community; however, only a couple projects have been completed over the last 13 years. The City is hearing from the public relating to unmet needs in the community and it's deteriorating park infrastructure. In addition, the City wants to identify ways in which it can support quality of life for all ages and meeting the City's Diversity and Equity and Inclusion goals. The 2021 Budget includes \$75,000 in funds for this work. The Northfield Park and Recreation Advisory Board is asked to consider a motion to approve a Request for Qualification for the Park, Recreation, and Trail Capital Investment Plan.

Board members felt that City staff have information necessary to update the 2008 Park, Open Space, and Trail System Plan as to current park improvement needs. There was also a comprehensive survey recently sent to residents to help determine what needs the public sees in park and facilities improvements and what new amenities are needed to meet the needs of the community and its visitors. Information from this survey should be provided to any firm engaged for this purpose. Board Members also believe the most important concern of this process is to identify sources of funding to be able to address existing and future needs.

Motion by Board Member Jothan, second by Board Member Peterson, to amend the Request for Qualification to prioritize the identification of funding sources for park improvements, upgrades and additions and to use the information already collected from community members. All in favor. Motion carried.

STAFF UPDATES

7. [21-483](#) Staff Reports

Attachments: [August Park Report.pdf](#)
[PRAB Aug 2021.pdf](#)

Behrendt provided park updates on:

**Sechler and Babcock Parks*

**Lacrosse Fields*

**Bridge Square*

**City-wide Parks*

**Park Projects*

**Mill Towns State Trail*

Tom Spooner provided updates on:

**Arena*

**Pool*

Melissa Bernhardt, Northfield Community Education and Recreation, indicated most summer activities are over and the Fall Brochure is now out to the public. A couple of upcoming events are the All Comers Track Meet and the Hometown Hoedown & Horseshoe Hunt.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Knutson, second by Lutsky, to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. All in favor. Motion carried.