

MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Wednesday, May 3, 2017

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Approval of the April 5, 2017 Minutes**
3. **Director's report**
4. **Begin discussion on Comprehensive Outdoor Park Plan (consultant Brad Hentschel from SEH)**
5. **Adjournment**

1. **Roll Call**

Present: Freckmann, Hall, Kirsch, Ald. McComb (6:30 pm), McDonald, Ald. Oberstadt, Okonek, Smith,
Excused: Glodosky, Ald. Slowinski, Sorenson
Also Present: Director Tom Schrader, Betty Bruski Mallek, Ald. Kneebone, Ald. Phillips, Ald. Shorr, Brad Hentschel, SEH;

2. **Approval of the April 5, 2017 Minutes**

Motion by Smith, seconded by McDonald, to approve the April 5, 2017 minutes and place them on file.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

3. **Director's report**

Director Schrader reported:

- Parks officially opened May 1st
- 2 Arbor Day plantings were held this year, one with a third grade class from Washington Elementary School and the other with Mayor Wiza and Portage Co. Executive Patty Drier in the downtown area
- Schulfers Landscaping is planting trees along Sixth Avenue and McKay Landscaping is replacing ash trees removed throughout the City. MidState Technical College forestry students will replant 10 trees along Pfiffner Park. City Forestry personnel replanted resident requests and other tree replacements. Tree planting should be completed next week
- The Green Ribbon Campaign was partnered again this year with the Forestry Department, Golden Sands RC&D and UWSP forestry students to raise awareness of the emerald ash borer.
- The drawings on the table show the proposal prepared by Rettler Corporation for the Mead Park Shelter in honor of Jeff Bahling at Mead Park. As you are aware Jeff Bahling was employed by Rettler Corporation and was a member of the Parks Commission at the time of his death. Jeff was working on the Mead Park bathroom design for us and we'll be dedicating it to him in fall. The proposed drawings show the landscape work around the building with the stamped concrete walkway leading up to it and the large boulders that people will be able to sit on. On one side of building a stone charcoal grill will be placed in honor of Jeff Bahling because he was known for his grilling. Rettler Corporation will do fundraising to complete the project.

4. **Begin discussion on Comprehensive Outdoor Park Plan (consultant Brad Hentschel from SEH)**

Director Schrader introduced Brad Hentschel from SEH who is assisting the City with the full comprehensive plan and the parks department with our outdoor park plan.

Director Schrader reviewed the results of the survey. Surveys were mailed randomly to 30 voters in each of the 11 districts in the City. Out of the 330 mailed surveys about 100 were returned by mail. The other 355 were done on line. The important thing to remember is that the 100 returned by mail were really random and of the 355 on line surveys many could say that these were park supporters.

The first question asked: I think it is important for the City of Stevens Point to.....provide large parks, provide small neighborhood parks, preserve open space, provide sports fields, provide walking, hiking, biking, provide natural areas, provide waterfront parks and beach areas, provide indoor sports and recreation facilities, provide outdoor neighborhood swimming pools, splash pads. If you look at the results the "strongly agree" and "agree" range from 97% to 83%. Breaking it down further you can see that 82% want the walking, hiking, biking and nature trails, while 73% want to preserve open space and 72% want large parks.

The second question asks which four of the statements from the list in Question 1 are the most important services/facilities for the City to provide for you and members of your household. The most important was provide walking, hiking, biking and nature trails with 87%, Number 2 was provide large parks that serve residents throughout the city with 85%. Number 3 of importance was preserve open space and the environment with 72%. Number 4 was a tie with 67 % for providing small neighborhood parks and providing natural areas.

The third question asked survey takers to indicate if you or any members of your household has a need for each of the parks and recreational facilities listed in question #2 by circling yes or no and then the percentages that your needs have been met at 100%, 75%, 50%, 25% or 0% or no, I don't need the facilities. The responses no, I don't need the facilities is an interesting question to see the results of. These seem to be the special interest groups that don't need diamond fields, rectangular fields for soccer, football, skate parks, splash pads, wading pools, tennis courts, disc golf courses, sand volleyball courts and basketball courts.

Question #4 asked which of the parks and facilities listed in Question #3 are most important for the City to provide to your household. Walking/hiking/cycling on hard surfaces, walking/hiking/cycling on soft surfaces, small neighborhood parks, large neighborhood parks and natural areas were most important.

Question #5 was the \$1000.00 question. It asked if you had a budget of \$1000.00 for improving the City Park system how would you allocate the funding among the following categories: repair and improve existing parks, repair and improve existing sports facilities, develop new passive recreational facilities (trails, picnicking areas), develop new active recreational facilities (sports fields, aquatics) or acquire additional parkland or open spaces. The top 2 important items to fund were repair and improve existing parks, trails, natural areas and repair and improve existing sporting facilities, community centers, and swimming/aquatic facilities.

Question #6 listed four types of actions that could help to resolve unfunded deferred maintenance and repair issues for existing outdoor and indoor parks, trails and other related cultural and recreation facilities. 51% responded that we should develop partnerships with for-profit and non-profit agencies to support operational and financing the system and 39% were in favor of increasing tax and fee revenues from various sources to help pay for deferred maintenance and repair issues. Only 13 responses out of the 455 selected that we should reduce the size of the City park system to match current available funding.

Question #7 asked of all of the parks in the City which do you and/or your family visit? Parks visited the most are Bukolt, Goerke, Green Circle Trail, Iverson, Mead and Pffnner Pioneer Park. In the other category the Sculpture Park was listed. People consider it a park.

Question #8 asked how many times to you visit the parks and/or trails in a year. 75% responded they visit the parks more than 11+ times a year and 67% responded that they visit the trails more than 11+ times per year.

Question #9 asked how many days do you usually attend Riverfront Rendezvous. 37% responded 1 day and 31% responded 2 days. It drops down to 13% for 3 or more days so this tells us that a 2 ½ day celebration is what we should be doing because 68 % of the people attending only go for 1 or 2 days.

Question #10 asked what do you like most about Riverfront Rendezvous. Fireworks came in with 38% and music was second with 35%. Food and children activities came in considerably less.

The question asking the age of the person completing the survey shows that 37% were between the ages of 20-36, 39% were between the age of 37-52 and 20% were between the ages of 53-71. 64% of the surveys were completed by women and 33% were completed by men.

The 2 questions asking to list improvements, needs, opportunities and/or problems as they relate to the quality of parks, recreation and forestry system and then to list some of the positives you've experienced regarding our parks, recreation and forestry system are listed separately from the survey. The positives fill 8 or 9 pages while not as many for the negatives or improvements needed.

Brad Hentschel asked the Commissioners what they thought of the survey.

- A lot of positive feedback and a good response rate to the survey
- Surprising that residents feel we could raise taxes to pay for park services
- Happy to see that many mentioned how courteous employees of the park system are and how clean the facilities are
- Many of the major parks have a lot of support because users are mobile and can get around but the smaller parks are equally important to users who can't get to the bigger parks as readily as someone else.
- Comments focused on developing small neighborhood parks and acquisition of property when it becomes available for park development. Land acquisition money had been in the budget for years and has been removed because of budget problems. The \$100,000.00 amount would roll over into the next year's budget and then it was cut to \$50,000.00 and then down to 0. Now it's not even listed in the City budget.

Brad stated he'll be reviewing everything but of particular interest to him would be question #3 looking at the responses to the question asking what percentage of their needs have been met at the 25% or 0% because that shows us where future development can take place. Brad distributed a map of the city showing the existing parks and the Green Trail highlighted on the map. There is a yellow circle around each park showing a ¼ mile buffer for each park which generally is used to reflect a 10 minute walk to the park. So the map shows the number of properties, residences within a 10 minute walk to the park.

Director Schrader prepared a map showing the problem areas that would prevent nice easy walks like the railroad tracks and crossing highways. Director Schrader stated what these maps show is no parks in the inner parts of the City and the only way to put parks in the inner city would be to purchase properties which could be very expensive.

Brad asked the Commissioners to list items where the city is doing well or what is working well for the parks department (what do we want to maintain into the future):

- Green Circle
- Major parks- Bukolt, Piffner, Mead, Iverson
- Specialized facilities
- Non-owned city facilities
- Parks easily accessible
- Partnerships with Schools

Threats

- Encroachment on parks- fight and resist losing parkland
- Urban sprawl
- Vandalism to park playground equipment, etc.
- Fee structure for non-city activities
- Gaps in area for trails, can't cross I-39 or the Plover River. There is talk about building a bridge to cross the Plover River
- Feeding of ducks and geese in parks
- Invasive species
- EAB
- Room Tax changes

Opportunities

- Non city owned specialized facilities like Schmeeckle Reserve, ball diamonds, skate park and disc golf parks
- Partnership expansion with other municipalities- Town of Hull and Village of Plover
- Partnerships with community and civic organizations
- Obtain Sponsors
- Year round maintenance/plowing of Green Circle Trail
- Volunteers/Master gardeners to maintain plants
- Partnerships with the schools – use of their facilities after school hours and summers—use park employees to staff the pools, etc.
- Empty lot usage
- Local business opportunities/sponsorships—free swims at the pool
- More cooperation between businesses like Discovery Center at Jackson School, the city bought the playground equipment and had it installed and now the school district maintains it
- Boat launch fees and improvements
- More education regarding feeding of geese
- More/better info on the web/social media
- Keep fees affordable or find alternative resources to pay fees

Expansion Areas:

- Emerson Park
- Larger beaches (expand and maintain Bukolt, Iverson and Mead), add life guards—increase budget for the parks
- Establish agreements for empty lots owned by the Paper mill, clean and add picnic tables, obtain easements
- Trails across I/39
- Bridge over Plover River
- More Green Circle signage
- Eastside
- Indoor sports facility

Capital Needs/Stretch goals (5 year plan):

- Upgrade/restore beaches
- Splash pad in the underserved part of the City
- Playground equipment—most has reached its life
- Playground equipment have businesses adopt a set of playground equipment and maintain/replace when necessary. Add rubberized surfaces for playground equipment. Hard for the City to maintain 24 sets of playground equipment in the City.
- Upgrade bathrooms at Iverson Park
- Splash pads in the City, at Mead Park with the KASH playground
- Improve signage for Green Circle and plow the Green Circle in Pfiffner
- More signage in parks, trails showing history of parks, trails
- Bike racks in parks (Parkdale)
- Upgrade City website with more park information

Operations and Maintenance:

- Dog waste receptacles on trails or in parks
- Snowplowing of trails
- Loss of personnel
- More affordable fees: (swimming, softball, baseball, soccer)
- Willett Arena staffing and maintenance
- Alternative Revenue Sources-- new structure of the room tax committee (tourism commission) caused loss of money to the parks

Commissioners were given the homework to review the survey results again and Section 6 and 7 of our current plan to make sure we aren't missing anything. The Public hearing on our proposed plan will be scheduled for Wednesday, June 7th, 2017 at a site to be determined.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Ald. Oberstadt, seconded by Hall, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Ayes all; Nays none; Motion carried.

Dear Resident,

The Stevens Point Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is in the process of updating our current Comprehensive Outdoor Plan for the City of Stevens Point. Below is a short questionnaire we would like to have you and/or your family complete and return in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Your input will help us improve and develop our parks system into the future.

1. In an effort to better understand how much you agree as to the importance of services the City provides as it relates to parks, Recreation and Forestry, please circle the corresponding number as it relates to the statement service below:

“I think it is important for the City of Stevens Point to.....”

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Provide large parks that serve residents throughout the city with a variety of experiences	4	3	2	1
2.	Provide small neighborhood parks (playgrounds, etc.)	4	3	2	1
3.	Preserve open space and the environment	4	3	2	1
4.	Provide outdoor youth and adult sports fields for baseball, softball, soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.	4	3	2	1
5.	Provide walking, hiking, biking and nature trails	4	3	2	1
6.	Provide natural areas, including forests, prairies, marshes, lagoons, grassland, etc.	4	3	2	1
7.	Provide waterfront parks and beach areas, with facilities for boating, fishing and open space	4	3	2	1
8.	Provide indoor sports and recreation facilities (community centers, indoor pools, indoor sports fields and courts)	4	3	2	1
9.	Provide outdoor neighborhood swimming pools, splash pads, etc.	4	3	2	1

2. Which **FOUR** of the statements from the list in Question #1 are the **MOST IMPORTANT** services/facilities for the City **to provide for you and members of your household?** [Using the numbers in Question #1 above, please write in the numbers below for your 1st through 4th choices]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ 4th: _____

3. Please indicate if **YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD** has a need for each of the parks and recreational **FACILITIES** listed below (regardless of the provider) by circling **YES** or **NO**.

Type of Facility		Do You Have a Need for this Facility?		If YES You Have a Need. How Well Are Your Needs Being Met?				
		Yes	No	100% Met	75% Met	50% Met	25% Met	0% Met
1.	Walking/hiking/cycling trails (hard surface)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
2.	Walking/hiking/cycling trails (soft-surface)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
3.	Mountain bike trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
4.	Rec Center (gym, workout rooms, etc.)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
5.	Diamond fields (baseball, softball, etc.)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
6.	Rectangular fields (football, soccer, etc.)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
7.	Skate park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
8.	Small neighborhood parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
9.	Large regional parks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
10.	Dog park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
11.	Splash pads and spray grounds	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
12.	Marina and boat launches	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Swimming beaches	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Playgrounds	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
15.	Natural areas	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
16.	Outdoor swimming pools	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
17.	Wading pools	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
18.	Tennis courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
19.	Disc golf courses	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
20.	Sand volleyball courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
21.	Pavilion and picnic area rentals	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
22.	Ice skating rinks	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
23.	Cross-country skiing trails	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
24.	Basketball courts (full and half)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Winter Sports Area (toboggan, sledding)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

4. Which **Five** of the parks and recreation FACILITIES from the list in Question #3 **are most important for the City** to provide to your household?

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ 3rd: _____ 4th: _____ 5th: _____

5. If you had a budget of \$1000 for improving the City Parks system how would you allocate the funding among the categories listed below? [Please be sure that your allocation adds up to \$1000.

\$ _____ Repair and improve existing parks, trails, natural areas, etc.

\$ _____ Repair and improve existing sports facilities, community centers, swimming / aquatic facilities, etc.

\$ _____ Develop new passive recreation facilities (trails, picnicking areas, etc.)

\$ _____ Develop new active recreation facilities (sports fields, aquatics, etc.)

\$ _____ Acquire additional parkland or open space

\$ **1000** **TOTAL**

6. Listed below are four types of actions that could help to resolve unfunded deferred maintenance and repair issues for **existing** outdoor and indoor parks, trails, and other related cultural and recreation facilities. Please indicate the **ONE** action that you most prefer.

_____ (1) Reduce the size of the City park system to match current available funding

_____ (2) Increase tax and fee revenues from various sources to help pay for deferred maintenance and repair issues

_____ (3) Develop partnerships with for-profit and non-profit agencies to support operations and \ financing of the system

_____ (4) Be part of a Friends Group that raises funds

_____ (5) Not sure

7. There is a section in the plan that deals with problems, needs, opportunities and improvements as they relate to improving the quality of our parks, recreation, and forestry system. Please comment, on the last page if you need more space on any of these two areas.

a.) Please list any improvements, needs, opportunities and/or problems as they relate to the quality of our parks, recreation and forestry systems.

b.) Please list some positives you've experienced regarding our parks, recreation and forestry system.

8. Which of the Stevens Point parks do you or your family visit?
 (Please check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bukolt Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Pfiffner Pioneer Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goerke Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Plover Hills 1 & 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iverson Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Green Circle Trail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mead Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Plover River Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atwell Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Rice Street |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hein Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Riverwoods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morton Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Kozickowski Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slomann Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Zenoff Park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran's Memorial Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Parkwood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Texas Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Conifer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> McGlachlin Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify online below) |
-

9. How often do you or your family visit: (Please circle the best answer)

Parks

Once a year 2-5 times per year 6-10 times per year More than 10 times Never

Trails

Once a year 2-5 times per year 6-10 times per year More than 10 times Never

10. Our department hosts Riverfront Rendezvous and would how many days you attend: _____ day(s)

Please rank what you like most about the festival (1 to 4 with #1 best being the best):

Activities (Kids Day, Carp Classic, etc.) ___ Food ___ Fireworks ___ Music ___

DEMOGRAPHICS:

11. Counting yourself, how many people are in your household?

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Under age 5 _____ | Ages 20-24 _____ | Ages 55-64 _____ |
| Ages 5-9 _____ | Ages 25-34 _____ | Ages 65-74 _____ |
| Ages 10-14 _____ | Ages 35-44 _____ | Ages 75+ _____ |
| Ages 15-19 _____ | Ages 45-54 _____ | |

12. What is your age? _____

13. How many years have you lived in Stevens Point? _____ years

14. Your Gender? _____ Male _____ Female _____ prefer not to answer

15. Closest intersection to residence? _____

(example: Michigan Avenue and Sims Avenue)

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely
 Stevens Point Board of Park Commissioners