

Meeting Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

December 6, 2006 Index of these Minutes:

1. Roll Call
 2. Approval of the October 4, 2006 Minutes
 3. Request to Construct Skate Board Park in Goerke Park (Skate Board Sub-Committee)
 4. Request to Develop Sculpture Park on Former Jelich Property (Portage County Arts Alliance)
 5. Approval of 2007 Fee Structure
 6. Update on Bike/Ped Plan: Proposed bike routes
 7. Director's Report
 8. Adjournment
1. Roll Call

Present: Barber, Curtis, Freckmann, Glodosky, Hall, McDonald, Robinson, Sevenich, Sorenson

Excused: Bahling, Okonek

Also Present: Director Schrader, Jami Gebert, Mark Strojny, Chris Diehm, Andrew Halverson, George Hanson, Scott Winn, Trina Higgins, Hans Walther, Jerry Moore, Christie Moore, Keven Streveler, Marge Molski, Joe Clark, Caroline Clark, Marcy Kirsch, Dan Coble, Suzanne Pavlik, Steve Pavlik, Mike Wiza, Roger Trzebiatowski, George Gand, Sasha Vieth, Lt. Ron Carlson, Tom Omernik, Sandi Omernik, John Pearson, Fritz Kollmann, Mike Olson, Jeff Decker, Ross Loehn, Pete Matthi, Charles Stanley, Bill Schierl, Peggy Rentz

2. Approval of the October 4, 2006 Minutes

Motion was made by Curtis, seconded by Hall to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2006 meeting and place them on file.

Ayes - all; Nays - none. Motion Carried.

3. Request to Construct Skate Board Park in Goerke Park (Skate Board Sub-Committee)

C.J. Robinson referred to the attached Stevens Point Skate Park Committee Proposal which outlines how the committee came to be and the statistics that led to the request before the Board. He said they are asking for approval to construct the skate board park in Goerke Park at the corner of Minnesota and Main, he said this is not approving a design, just the location.

Lt. Ron Carlson, of the Stevens Point Police Department said that skate boarding has been around for a long time and is growing in popularity. He said there are few areas that skateboarding is allowed and at this time there is no alternative for skateboarders and the committee has worked with students and parents to find a solution. He said the location in Goerke Park was ideal from a law enforcement point of view because it is so visible; it is in a natural observation area, which is the best crime prevention. He said the location is already in a park and this will enhance the park, we are trying to fill the need.

Sasha Vieth introduced the committee members present and read several e-mails she had received from teachers and parents that basically said there is a need for such a park with a central location, and also Goerke is ideal because there are activities that can occupy different age groups of children in the same family.

Robinson added that he had heard a statement that sums up the skateboard situation and that is - If your community doesn't have a skateboard park, your community is a skateboard park.

Residents affected by the location of the proposed skateboard park were heard and the points of concern were as follows: Vandalism, the area becoming a hangout, skateboarding late in the evening based on that presently ice skating goes on past the time the lights are turned off, aesthetics, traffic, parking, safety for children, noise and many felt they hadn't been informed early enough to have adequate input. The idea of Mead Park being a better location was brought up.

Walther said that while most residents were supportive of having a skate board park, they appeared to feel this would make Goerke overused and he felt the concerns were legitimate and ought to be addressed. He also asked about the liability to the City and Director Schrader said by statute if no admission is charged, people do this at their own risk, they can sue but would probably not win. He said this is the statute that applies to all parks. No admission, no liability.

Several coaches for various sports said they supported the idea of a skateboard park but they expressed concern about safety, that while some sporting events were in progress it would be difficult to guarantee safety. Other concerns were that it might increase vandalism to their equipment, and the added patronage in the park might interfere with practice.

The issue of stereotyping skateboarders was addressed, that it was disrespectful to indicate that skateboarders are more likely to cause trouble. The point was brought up that it appears there is already vandalism, noise and other problems going on now without the skateboarders, there is no reason to believe skateboarders will make it worse.

Trzebiatowski felt there were valid concerns and Wiza said he agreed but disagreed with the concept that skateboarders were more likely to cause trouble. He felt the committee has done a good job but there might be more work needed on safety, parking, and hours of operation. He asked Lt. Carlson to check on how much vandalism has been reported in the area.

The question of how the site was chosen arose and committee members referred to the attached proposal and Robinson said one of the main reasons for the selection was that the Police Department felt the visibility was a huge advantage. He said while Mead Park was considered it was not chosen because the new handicap playground equipment has ramps, and they felt that would be too much of a temptation by being in such close proximity. He also said it appears this is an issue that the majority agrees they need a skateboard park in Stevens Point but not in "my" backyard.

Jami Gebert said they evaluated many sites, they did their homework to come up with this selection. She said she has an excellent, informative study on skateboard parks and if anyone wants a copy they can contact Director Schrader.

Liz McDonald said originally she didn't feel this was the best location but she changed her mind as she learned more about these parks. She said there is no way tonight to cover the months of work that went into the location choice and she said that is what is before the board tonight. Specifics such as aesthetics and lighting will be worked out later. We are asking to approve the concept of the park at this location and to move

ahead with the details.

Robinson said we need to set the location so we can get to the fundraising, we will work with the neighbors and coaches.

Director Schrader said the two Board members not present, Bahling and Okonek, asked him to forward their comments and they had voiced pretty much the same concerns as everyone here.

Curtis asked how many people would be able to use this park at one time.

Chris Diehm said the park could actually accommodate several dozen users but it would be unlikely there would be that many at one time.

Barber asked why the old WPS site wasn't chosen and Director Schrader said mostly because we don't own it yet, we have an offer to purchase but we are waiting to find out if we will be liable for the required contamination cleanup.

Barber said he didn't feel this was the right location, there are many other things going on in the park, and safety was his main concern. He said we need a skateboard park, these are great kids and we should support their sport.

Hall agreed that these kids are great and it is a wonderful sport, but she too felt safety was the biggest issue.

Robinson addressed some of the concerns that were brought up saying the community is growing and that in itself will increase vandalism, he said this is the site the law enforcement felt was the best because of the visibility. He said this is an area where there is already a middle school with drop off areas and traffic lights with pedestrian crossing visuals, so safety measures are already in place. He said studies show parking isn't a big issue for a skateboard park. He also said they can work with the coaches.

Glodosky said he understood the concerns but felt they had been addressed by the committee, and it could be made to be very pleasing aesthetically. He said it is the right thing to do for the kids.

Sevenich said Goerke Park is a multi family used park. She said more input is needed from the neighbors and coaches and that more work is needed before choosing an area. She asked if we could find out how often the Police actually drive by the area.

Freckmann said he felt the committee worked very hard on this and he respected their effort. He called for a voice on the motion.

Motion was made by Robinson, seconded by Glodosky to approve the concept of developing a skate board park in Goerke Park as presented with site plans to be approved at a later time.

Ayes: Curtis, Freckmann, Glodosky, McDonald, Robinson; Nays: Barber, Hall, Sevenich, Sorenson; Motion carried.

Freckmann said this will go to the Common Council at their December meeting which is the third Monday of the month.

4. Request to Develop Sculpture Park on Former Jelich Property (Portage County Arts Alliance)

The map in the packet was referred to along with the proposal for the Sculpture Park and the request is to hold the City owned property for 12 months to gather information to develop a sculpture park in the City.

Bill Schierl said they would keep the committee informed and bring the ideas back to the City. Hanson asked how many acres and how much of it would be used. Schierl said there are 20-acres and about 10-acres would be needed.

Director Schrader said two areas had been looked at but this one has facilities that are already there. He said when the land was purchased in the 80's, several ideas were tossed around to create an attraction.

Motion was made by Barber, seconded by Hall to approve the concept of holding the land for 12 months to allow the Alliance to investigate the potential of a Sculpture Park as presented.

Ayes - all; Nays - none. Motion Carried.

5. Approval of 2007 Fee Structure

Director Schrader said this is a yearly approval, and it is only for the 2007 prices. The rest of the projections are guidelines. He said corrections are needed on the 2010 Open Hockey, should be \$11 instead of \$100, the 2010 Individual passes from \$145 to \$90.00 and also the Lodge Rental for the Girl Scout Lodge should be \$85 instead of \$95 for 2007.

Glodosky asked why skating went from \$6 to \$10 and Director Schrader said that was to keep it in line with other areas.

Glodosky questioned the pool 0-5 admission, and Director Schrader said it hasn't been raised a lot over the years.

Robinson asked if the increase will deter usage and if there had been changes from the 04 projection. Director Schrader said he didn't think usage will be deterred and as for changes, he said some changed, none up.

Director Schrader said the increase in the Bukolt/Mon.-Fri. is to cover the cost to prepare the ball diamonds, the cost offsets the increase in wages, benefits, etc. He added if the users have their own facilities, they need to cover our cost.

Motion was made by Glodosky, seconded by Hall to approve the 2007 fee structure.

Ayes - all; Nays - none. Motion Carried.

6. Update on Bike/Ped Plan: Proposed bike routes

Director Schrader said this plan was to be approved yearly and the recommendation will be going to the Board of Public Works. He said the bike

routes will be identified at the intersections with signs and stickers on poles in between, the reason being the cost, stickers on posts are about \$3.20 as opposed to signs, which are \$30-\$40.

Discussion took place on larger sidewalks in the downtown and Director Schrader said that will be a DPW question. Additional discussion took place on bike paths to the eastern portion of the City and that there is a path now, but only on one side which creates a hazard when motorists expect bikes to be on that path and don't always look for them on the other side.

Director Schrader said there will be a bike path on Patch Street but people will still bike where it's convenient for them.

7. Director's Report

Director Schrader reported the KASH Playground Grand Opening will be on June 9th, the same weekend as Special Olympics. He said the problems that have been reported so far at the new playground are that people are allowing their dogs on the rubberized surface and not cleaning up after them, they are also disposing of their smoking materials. He said they will try signage not allowing pets or smoking on the rubberized surface and if that doesn't work we may have to adopt an ordinance.

He said the Room Tax Committee met and plan to solicit applications for use of the money and we hope to have that at the April Park Board meeting.

He reported on the 2006 Special Events and Arts grant funds allocated to different organizations.

He went on to report we are in the final stages of preparing the contract for Nature Treks LLC to operate a Canoe/Kayak and bike rental facility out of the Nature Center Building in Iverson Park. The City Attorney is reviewing the contract.

8. Adjournment

Motion was made by Barber, seconded by Robinson to adjourn the December 2006 Board of Park Commissioners Meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Ayes - all; Nays - none. Motion Carried.

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Bottom of Form