

Parks and Recreation Committee

April 1, 2025 Workshop

Meeting minutes

City park future planning

Site planning and land use

The committee discussed the current city property and potential future developments. They reviewed a map showing existing city property, including City Hall, the Public Safety Building (PSB), and some undeveloped areas. The committee noted that there was a tax forfeit lot the city was looking to acquire to help fill out the area, though it was described as swampy.

The usable ground for potential park development was estimated to be approximately 4-5 acres, which was slightly less than initially thought. The committee discussed the topography of the area, noting that it was variable but generally suitable for development.

Master plan review

The committee reviewed the proposed improvements from the master plan. They discussed the need for a more detailed site plan and looked at examples from other cities, such as Cross Lake. The committee noted that Crosslake had hired Bolton and Mink, their city engineering firm, to create a concept plan for about \$9,000-\$10,000. This process included public engagement and phased planning.

The committee expressed interest in pursuing a similar approach for Breezy Point, recognizing that it would be beneficial for securing grants and general planning. They discussed the possibility of working with Widseth, their current engineering firm, to develop a site plan.

Future amenities and prioritization

The committee discussed various potential amenities for the park, including:

- Biographic signage
- Harmony Park instruments
- Community garden expansion
- Ice rink and warming house
- Trail pathway expansion
- Public restrooms
- Pickleball courts
- Dog park

They prioritized pickleball courts and public restrooms as the most immediate needs. The committee also discussed the potential for a community center in the future, though they recognized this as a long-term consideration.

The committee debated the need for a dog park, with some members questioning its necessity given the abundance of open space in the area. They agreed to keep it as a consideration for future planning.

Public engagement and next steps

The committee discussed the importance of public engagement in the planning process. They agreed to present their ideas to the City Council at the next meeting and seek approval to move forward with developing a more detailed site plan.

The committee also discussed the need for targeted outreach to potential pickleball players and nearby residents who might be affected by the development. They recognized the potential for noise concerns and the importance of addressing these issues early in the planning process.

The committee agreed to pursue grants and explore funding options, including the possibility of working with the Initiative Foundation to set up a 501(c)(3) for fundraising purposes.

Pickleball Courts

The committee discussed the implementation of pickleball courts as a priority for the park development. They considered starting with 4-6 courts, with the potential to expand to 8 in the future. The committee noted the popularity of pickleball in other communities and the enthusiasm expressed by some local residents.

They discussed the need to balance the desire for pickleball courts with potential concerns from nearby residents, particularly regarding noise. The committee agreed that proper placement and design would be crucial to address these concerns.

The committee also discussed the possibility of implementing a membership system for the courts, similar to the community garden. They debated the pros and cons of this approach, considering both accessibility and funding for maintenance.

Public Restrooms

The committee identified public restrooms as a high priority for the park development. They discussed the need for running water and drinking fountains, especially if located between the proposed pickleball courts and the community garden.

The committee considered various options for the restroom facilities, including the possibility of combining them with a picnic shelter or other amenities. They recognized the importance of proper placement and design to serve the needs of park users effectively.