



**Park & Recreation Commission
Sullivan Lake Park Open House
September 24, 2025**

MINUTES

City Engineer, Retired, Kevin Hansen welcomed attendees and informed the public that the purpose of the meeting is to hear what the community would like to see in Sullivan Lake Park so that an update can be prepared to the Sullivan Lake Park Master Plan. The current plan was created in 2008 when the park was redeveloped. This is the first public meeting and there will be other means for public feedback as plans are developed. Hansen indicated that the city does not make this type of effort independently, they do hire a consultant, landscape architect ISG. This company worked on Keyes Park most recently with the City. Hansen emphasized that the Park and Recreation Commission really wants to hear thoughts on the playset and what amenities are wanted within the rest of the park. The tennis courts were beyond repair and recently removed. Hansen stated that there have been many ideas from the public, some of which will not be shown on the planning boards from ISG. For example, there had been discussion on pickleball courts, but this would not be a good location due to proximity to the residential area due to the noise from the game. Are there other things that this neighborhood would like to see at Sullivan Park. Hansen asked people to raise their hand, and he would call on them for comments on what they are looking for in the park. Not every desire or need of each person will be met, but staff will try to develop a consensus and do the best that they can to meet what those needs are. Hansen indicated this will only be a discussion of the park and nothing regarding the Medtronic site development.

Comments and responses:

Q: How do you get on the mailing list?

-Postcards were mailed to residents around the park from 53rd over to 49th, and from Central over to 7th. You can email Public Works if you are not within that area and would like to get on it.

Q: The area around the lake is looking shaggy.

-When a master park plan is done we also consider landscape improvements. The Public Works department is present at the meeting so they can take the comment and work with staff. There have been some tree removals. It is important to note that there is a certain level in the lake itself that we cannot get below because it is controlled by the DNR. Above that area staff can do some clearing for visibility and improve the walking trail.

Q: Is there a chance of stocking the lake with bigger fish?

-Probably not because this lake experiences winter kill. It is a shallow lake and freezes. There is one lake in the city that is stocked, and that is Silver Lake. The DNR would only stock a lake if there is oxygen introduced into the lake so the introduced fish will survive.

C: The walking path and bike path is very overgrown. It needs to be cleared, and he would even help do the work. It isn't the trees that are overgrown but the lower growth that needs to be cut back. It would only take a day.

-David Cullen, Public Works Director, introduced himself. He stated the forestry department has done substantial tree trimming in the area, and that is usually done in the winter. It is safer and easier on the environment to bring heavy equipment in when the ground is frozen. He will bring the comments back to the forester.

Q: Is the walking trail included in the next construction phase?

-No, it is not. What is going to be done is the main park area. While the trail is part of the park it is not part of the improvements being considered at this time. Approximately 2 years ago we did apply for a separate grant for the trail that the city did not get approved for. Staff understand there are certain parts of the trail that need attention.

C: Pickleball courts are nightmare for neighbors. Hansen indicated there will not be a pickleball court at Sullivan Lake Park.

C: Try to keep the park as natural as possible.

Q: Is the wetland, marsh area on the north side of the park going to remain?

That land might be owned by Medtronic.

Q: Why can't some of these developments go in on the other side of the park? By the west path on Washington.

-The city does not own majority of that land area. We only own the small pathway that comes into the park. The Sullivan Shores Townhome HOA owns that area.

Q: What type of material will be under the playset? Sand is not preferred.

-One of the features in the new playset is that it will have designated play structures by age group. The previous set was a 2-5 year age. The new set will provide areas for more ages, age 2-5 and 5-12. Comments have been received regarding the playset being accessible and inclusive. Sand will not be used. Typically we use engineered wood fiber chips but will look at the costs for using other types of materials on the ground. In playground design, the height of any particular equipment, determines how thick the material below the structure needs to be. Staff would like to know if there is a need for a play structure to accommodate visually and/or sensory impaired individuals.

Q: What is the open side of the fitness court for?

-The north side has the exercise equipment and the south side is a court area for stretching or programmed activities such as yoga.

C: There are a lot of parties at the pavilion, and the playset should be close to where the adults are.

-The playset is required to be 150 feet away from the fitness court through the grant agreement requirements for the fitness court.

Q: Who decided on the placement of the fitness court? With the playground removed kids are on it and not using it properly.

-Staff did the application for the grant to obtain the fitness court. However, it is ultimately the decision of the city council to move forward with any implementation.

Q: Why wasn't this meeting held prior to the installation of the fitness court at this park?

-Staff felt that there would be a master planning process done for Sullivan Park, that is being done now. The siting for the fitness court was done through the Park & Recreation Commission and the city council.

C: The walking path is the number one activity at this park versus others, so they support every effort to improve the trail. Secondly, outside of the playground, leaving open space as they are.

Q: The tennis courts were beyond repair but there were still people using the court for volleyball. Were staff aware of that usage?

-Yes staff were aware of that usage even though it was being used not for what the area was initially intended. So the question from staff is, if there is an interest for possible volleyball courts? Many attendees responded no. On volleyball nights the street is filled with cars, people are gambling, drinking happens every night and late into the evenings. Since the court was removed there is a house across the street that has paved their backyard to now have volleyball in their yard. It pushes the water into the neighboring yards. They have lights up and play late into the evening. He has informed the City numerous times.

Q: What did the fitness court cost the city because no one will use it.

C: A resident stated there were three people using it currently.

-The installation of the equipment and artwork on the fitness court was grant funded. The City did pay for the equipment.

Q: Cattails are more prominent in the lake than a few years ago. They can quickly take over lakes. Is there a way to remove them?

-The city does not have a cattail removal program. We also cannot do any removal in a lake that is controlled by the DNR. The DNR has a policy on cattails that generally allows for removals when cattails occupy greater than 50% of the water surface area.

Q: Other than a volleyball court what are the ideas for the old tennis court area? There are young boys in this neighborhood that would love to have a basketball court.

-Staff asked is there an interest from the neighborhood on a basketball court or a tennis court?

Residents responded no, but basketball at a bigger park.

C: A resident stated that they feel encouraged by the discussion happening in this meeting and applauded everyone for coming out and talking about the park.

Q: There is a lot of duck and geese poop along the path. Is there some kind of barrier that could be placed along the path to deter them? Especially on the southeast side.

-It is a problem at almost every park trail that we have. There isn't a clear means to control it. The DNR recommends having a natural barrier between the body of water and any path. When there is an open area which provides a straight path to the lake it encourages the animals to walk up from the water.

Q: There is not going to be a soccer field?

-No there is not.

Q: During the winter could there be a warming house and a trail around the lake for skating?

-Staff will need to research to see if the lake could be used for skating. Staff did research this and due to insurance liability would not be likely.

Q: Kids should be close to where adults are. Who is watching the kids at the playground area?

-This is not unique to this park, and the same situation occurs at every park. For example, at Huset Park, that is a larger playset than what is being imagined for Sullivan Lake Park, it is expected that when parents bring children to a park that they watch their kids but there is no way to control that.

C: If the playset is close to the pavilion the adults are more likely to pay attention to them.

C: The spot where the tennis court was is pretty big.

-Staff would like to see how a playset lays out in that area, as a potential location.

Q: The picnic shelter used to be rented out, what is the future consideration in the new plan?

-The city used to have reservations on picnic shelters and it became problematic with staffing availability to clean the park prior to each reservation. Working with the Park & Recreation Commission we felt the best approach for the use of a pavilion is a first come, first served basis. This is not changing with this park plan. The first come, first serve enforces the idea of cleaning up after yourself.

C: Working with kids, there were some nice features at this park specifically for kids and would like to see more activities for working with their arms, bars to hang from, slides, ability to climb, upper arm strengthening. Swings are not preferred due to potential injuries, but if that is a desire of the majority to only have a few swings, especially for young children. A variety of activities to strengthen their whole body.

-Hansen responded that We do not like to have the exact same types of features in the playset at all of the parks. It is important to have different features/activities and that lend a unique experience at this park. We work with a vendor for the playset. It is really helpful if there are kids in this neighborhood for them to give feedback on what they see at other parks or new ideas for features of the playset.

-Staff indicated that there will be other avenues including a future meeting and social media to give comments as concept plans are developed. Staff encourages the neighborhood to continue to provide comments so that staff can develop the final master plan. Postcards will be sent out with details on where to find the plans and to provide additional feedback. Once concept plans are developed, and concepts are posted, staff would like feedback. This will be posted on the city website and interactive social media (Pinpoint). We would like to meet again with the neighborhood to review concepts so we can develop a final master plan that the Park & Recreation Commission can evaluate and recommend to the City Council for approval. This process will go on for the next couple of months.

Q: Is there a way to slow down traffic on 53rd Avenue?

C: Have parents bring their children to a meeting to see the plans and provide feedback on what they want to see in the park.

-We agree. When the examples are posted on the city website and social media, please show your kids and let

them give feedback. It is very important to get their opinions.

C: Between a volleyball court and a basketball court, volleyball players tend to have a nicer demeanor, and more conflicts arise with basketball because it is a contact sport. The type of volleyball that the Ecuadorians were playing uses a much higher net and putting in a court here will not attract the same people. A sand volleyball court will be a better option than basketball.

C: Neighbors are often picking up trash on Monday mornings, beer bottles, and garbage laying around. They don't see city staff cleaning.

C: As far as basketball is concerned, for the younger kids they just need one basket. Then the kids can just take turns, and it would not be full games.

Q: Who is going to keep cleaning the park?

-The city runs a program, Adopt a Park, and every park in the City is adopted. It really helps keep the parks clean. City staff does utilize a mini garbage truck to pick up trash from the garbage containers. When there are seasonal staff we do our best to maintain 15 city parks, but on a day to day basis there is not staff at each park.

Q: Why should there be another meeting when none of the questions have been answered?

-What hasn't been answered? This is a process to develop a park.

Q: When is the pathway going to be cleared?

-We are talking about two separate things. This meeting is for park planning and you are talking about park maintenance. The maintenance is different from the intent of tonight's meeting. We heard you and are going to figure out a plan to get the trail cut back.

Q: So what is the timeline?

-Staff used a brush mower to cut back approximately four feet of overgrowth along the northwest side of Sullivan Lake during the last week of September 2025. Pathway clearance around most of the trail is currently within acceptable standards. Overgrowth encroaching from the townhomes along the north side of the pathway onto City property is being addressed, with full resolution anticipated within the 2025 calendar year.

Q: Where will the outhouses be located? They are currently right outside their door.

-Within the park plan they will certainly look at other locations in the park to locate further away from the residential area.

C: Regarding volleyball, having sand would be terrible and all the geese would be in the sand.

Q: Do we need to have basketball in the park? People can have a hoop in their driveway. Instead, have some green space and a community garden.

-That is what we are trying to determine with this process. People who like it, people who don't, but getting a consensus of what the majority would like to see.

Q: Will there be flushable toilets in the future plan?

-The plan is not to have a building like what is there currently. The new lift station will be similar to what is at the Silver Lake boat landing.

Q: Can the outhouses be more attractive and not the bright blue ones?

-We can look into other options, but we are required to have restroom facilities.

-Thank you everyone for coming. Staff will get comments posted and a meeting will be planned at City Hall in 6 to 8 weeks. There are examples of concepts at the table for people to look at.

Other comments received:

Security cameras

Drinking water available

Handwashing station along with a dog station

Programming activities at the fitness court.