



Application for Public Park and Facility Naming

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Park Name: Mill Pond Commons

Explanation:

see attached sheet

Applications can be dropped off at City Hall
or e-mailed to the Community Development Department

kondich@ci.new-prague.mn.us

Questions? Contact City Staff at 952-758-4401

I SUGGEST NAMING NEW PRAGUE'S NEWEST PUBLIC PARK "MILL POND COMMONS"

The imposing buildings of International Milling continue to dominate the skyline of New Prague and remind us of the mills contribution to the development of New Prague and the **Mill Pond**.

The naming of the new public space is challenging considering its varied history.

The area in question was wet and marshy when Mathias Remes decided to dig a pond with horses to raise carp in the 1880's. The pond was dug too shallow and the carp froze out the first winter. The pond was never used again for raising carp.

Carp continue to be raised in ponds in Bohemia (Czech Republic) where many of New Prague's first families originated. The Bastyr, Kubes, Korbel, Remes, and Rybak families lived in villages along the carp ponds. Bastyr translates to "pond master" and Rybak is the name for "fisherman." Today, carp continues to be raised, seined, and sold in town markets. After a live carp is purchased it is taken home to swim in the family bathtub. The carp are eventually cleaned and prepared for a traditional Czech Christmas dinner.

The International Milling Company used water to cool its turbines and the excess water was pumped under Main Street via a duct to what became known as the **Mill Pond**. New Prague firemen took their fire wagons to the pond to soak the wheels and spokes in order to make them swell and remain operational. A natural spring on the mill property along with discharge from the creamery also emptied into to the pond. As a result, the larger **Mill Pond** rarely froze over in winter.

Eventually, a narrow walk path was created between two ponds. Children used the ponds for pranks by pushing one another into the water while walking to and from school when the water was low.

The walk path was gradually widened and became a gravel road before it was paved and became part of 2nd Avenue NW.

The **Mill Pond** became a community water feature that was used by adults and children for skating and boating. The pond on the east was eventually filled in and used as a skating rink with a warming house. The pond on the west was filled in and became a parking lot for grain trucks waiting to access the mill.

I recommend placing a plaque on the **The Mill Pond Commons Plaza** explaining the history of the area. A photograph of the Mill Pond taken from the top of the mill, is included in my "Reconnaissance Survey of Downtown New Prague." Additional photographs of the mill pond are in the collection of the New Prague Area Historical Society and the Minnesota State Historical Society.

The "**Mill Pond Commons**" is a great step forward in erasing a part of the city that has been begging for renewal. Even though the **Mill Pond** no longer exists, I was pleased to see a pond included in the current landscape design which reinforces the history of the area. Hopefully, the new public park will also spur a second look at the train depot and surrounding area which is historical and in need of consideration.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute. I am always open to assisting the City of New Prague in celebrating New Prague's colorful past and present history.



Dennis F. Dvorak



RESIDENCE STREET - NEW PRAGUE, MINN.