



118 Central Avenue North, New Prague, MN 56071
phone: 952-758-4401 fax: 952-758-1149

MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JOSHUA TETZLAFF, CITY ADMINISTRATOR
SUBJECT: POPS FACILITY
DATE: JANUARY 11, 2024

Back in November 2023, a group known as the POPS Committee (Praha Outdoor Performance Stage) came before the City Council to share a study it had done and to request use of a City park to build an outdoor performance stage for use by the community. I have attached that shared study again for your review along with the memo from Ken Ondich outlining the Park Boards stance. The request was also that the City would take over ownership and maintenance of the facility in perpetuity. No decisions were made on the facility that evening.

It has now been almost two months since the initial request, and it is my recommendation that the City Council provide a decision to the POPS Committee in one manner or another. If the City Council is alright with the facility being built on City property and is willing to take on maintenance of the facility in perpetuity, then I believe it should share that with the Committee so that they are able to continue fundraising efforts and moving it forward. If it is not, that decision should also be conveyed so that the POPS Committee is able to act accordingly.

Regarding the question of where the facility would fit best, it would be my recommendation to either place the facility at Memorial Park or at Sliding Hill Skate Park. While the lot known as City Center would have some advantages, namely its location to downtown, I believe the future value of the land, as well as the uncertainty as to what may happen to the land in the future, means that the other two locations far outweigh that site.

Reading through the study that was provided, I believe that Sliding Hill Skate Park is the best location. Many of the scoring areas where the site does not score as well could be directly linked to the fact that the Park is currently on the edge of town, though this will likely not always be the case. With the most distance from existing homes and the fact that Memorial Park has a number of existing facilities already, in my opinion Sliding Hill Skate Park would be the top Park to place the facility in. The Park is the most blank slate that could allow for a facility and future park development. Memorial Park would be second as it does have many amenities already and a good location for distance to other City attractions. As the study mentions, there are many mature trees in Memorial Park but many of them will need to come down. Strategic placement and then plantings would help to minimize impact and mitigate impact from what needed to be taken down.

I also believe the City should take on the maintenance of the facility. Yes, it would add another facility the City would be responsible for. Yes, there would be future costs, from time and supplies to possibly additional staff members. Until the final project is finished, the exact costs of future maintenance are tough to gauge. That being said, like other amenities such as the baseball stadium, aquatic center, and growing trail network, I believe that cities should provide a place for community arts to take place. With the POPS group taking a large part in fundraising for the project, it is my opinion that the City should not pass on this opportunity.

Recommendation

I recommend the City Council accept the POPS Committee donation to build an outdoor performance stage in Sliding Hill Skate Park, working hand in hand with the POPS Committee to design the facility. I also recommend the City Council accept responsibility for future ownership and maintenance in perpetuity.