



222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022

Phone (715)425-0900
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AGENDA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
5:15PM

The meeting will be held virtually and there will not be an in-person attendance option. The public can attend via the call-in phone number below.

Or call in (audio only)

+1 651-432-4611,,497253813# United States, St. Paul
Phone Conference ID: 497 253 813#

5:15 p.m. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Minutes of December 16, 2020 Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Related Topic

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. Sterling Ponds Hill Update-Sam Wessel**
- 2. Creation of Tree Advisory Board-Mike Noreen**

OLD BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

*Council members may be in attendance for informational purposes only.
No official Council action will be taken.*



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PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 5:15 p.m.
Virtual meeting (public via weblink or call-in as listed on agenda)

Members Present: Patricia LaRue (Chair), Sean Downing (Council Rep), Brandon Dobbertin, Brenda Gaulke, Jim Nordgren, Melissa Pedrini, and Susan Reese.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Cindi Danke-*Recreation Manager*; Mike Stifter-*Operation Director* and Amy White-*City Clerk*.

Others Present: Matt Janquart and Eric Wanta - *Local Citizens*

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 5:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MSC Nordgren/Downing to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2020 Recreation Advisory Board Meeting Park, with the amended portion for the Sterling Ponds disc golf added. Carried 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Matt Janquart introduced himself and will be appointed by the Mayor at the January 12th, 2021 City Council Meeting to replace Susan Reese on Park and Recreation Advisory Board. Eric Wanta, local citizen approached the Park Board regarding the River Falls Dog Park. He would like to create a list of volunteers to help improve the dog park. He also asked for City Staff to leave shovels, pails to encourage the users to pick up and leave the park cleaner. City filled some holes that he marked with orange cones. Some items that would be nice to add to the park: signboard or kiosk, trail map, build a small wind/rain shelter, consider lighting at park entrance and future dog agility equipment. Board recommended he use the River Falls Information and Events Facebook page to help him create a list of volunteers and thanked him for trying to coordinate volunteers to help with maintenance issues at the Dog Park. At this present time no city funds are available to do any new improvements.

OLD BUSINESS

Sterling Ponds Hill Disc Golf update:

Currently no new updates from DNR on the Sterling Hill improvements. Andrew Reese has made some progress with removing buckthorn as he gets the area for trails or disc golf. Slide

show of area can be seen at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w8SNRTG_sTZuOFvwTD1AWUQfnx8W6oPT/view

Sam Wessel, City Planner/GIS will bring to Park Board updates in the new year.

NEW BUSINESS

Recognition of Susan Reese for years of service as Park and Recreation Advisory Board 2005-2020 and Plan Committee member 2006-2019. Park Board thanks her greatly for her service to this community and all the hard work in developing a great Park and Recreation system.

ADJOURNMENT

MSC Reese/Gaulke to adjourn the meeting at 6:05p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindi Danke, Recreation Manager

DRAFT



MEMORANDUM

TO: Park and Recreation Advisory Board

FROM: Sam Wessel, Planner

DATE: February 17, 2021

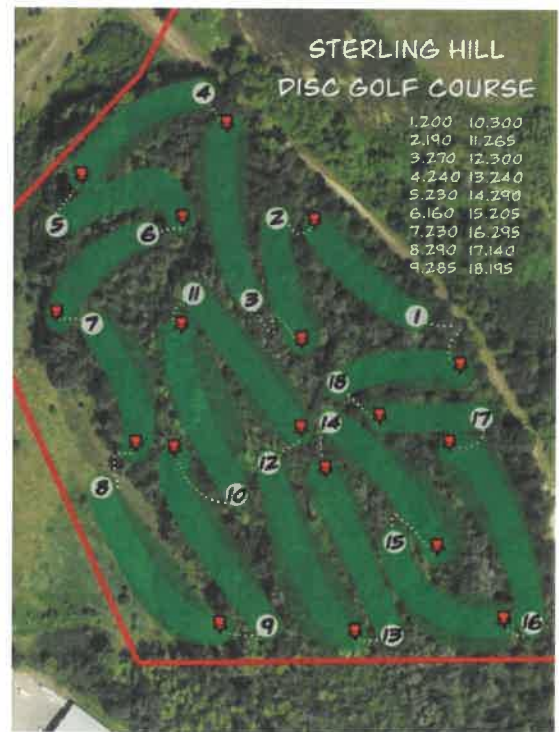
TITLE: Update on Disc Golf in Sterling Ponds

SUMMARY

This memo discusses the background of disc golf in River Falls and next steps to develop a new disc golf course in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood.

BACKGROUND

Disc Golf has been discussed in River Falls since at least 1999, leading to the approval of the course in Hoffman Park in 2007, followed by requests for an additional course at another location in the City. At one time, disc golf was recommended near County Highway FF next to where the River Falls Dog Park is located, but more recently, the City has been approached by Andrew Reese and the River Falls Disc Golf Club with the idea to build a course on Sterling Hill. The Club received an endorsement from the Park and Recreation Advisory Board to construct the 18-hole disc golf course (right) on Sterling Hill at the September 16, 2020 Board meeting.

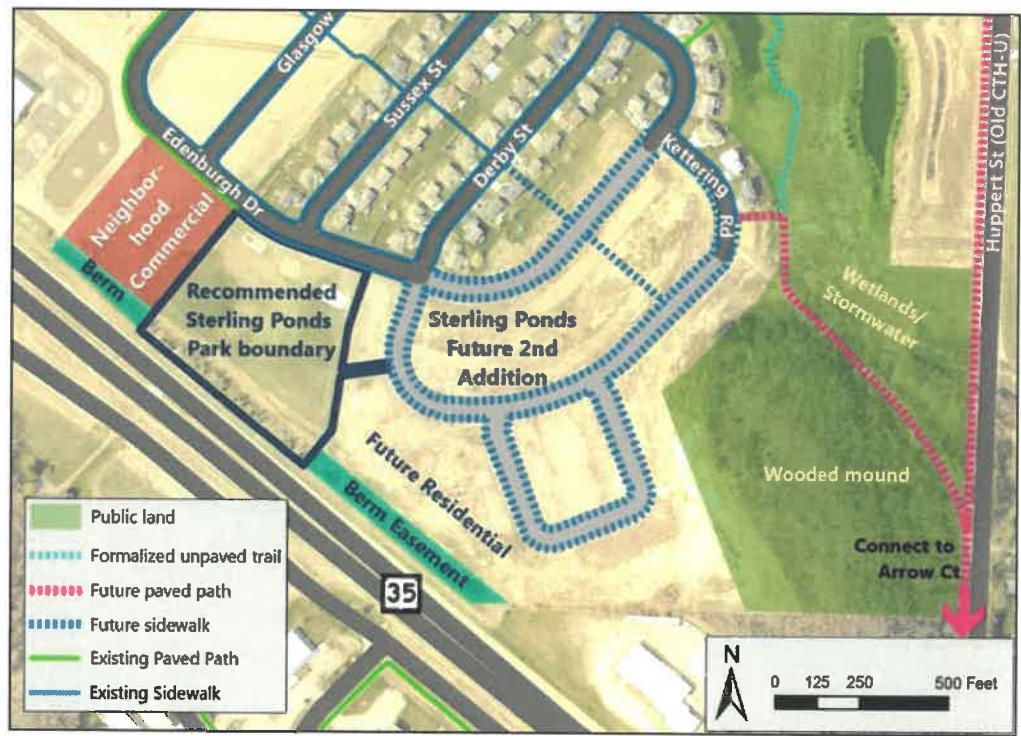


The Sterling Ponds Park Plan, adopted in 2020, also highlighted Sterling Hill's potential for public access trails ("Wooded Mound", below). The plan recommends selling the undeveloped and ungraded portion of Sterling Ponds Park since the lot's rocky soil make it unsuitable for parkland, and there is an abundance of open space in the neighborhood outside the parks' boundaries. This approach reduces the area the City needs to maintain, so resources can be directed to improving existing facilities by adding benches, grills, trash cans, landscaping, a ballfield, a picnic shelter, and upgraded playground equipment to the existing park. Finally, the plan calls for trails and disc golf that take advantage of the ponds and hilly terrain found throughout the

neighborhood beyond the Park's boundary. This provides more outdoor recreation options for the neighborhood while providing better trail connectivity at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has induced demand for outdoor amenities.

DISCUSSION

Disc Golf on Sterling Hill may function like the Kinnickinnic Off Road Cyclists (KORC) trails where City-owned land is open to public outdoor recreation using volunteer-built facilities. City staff will request that the proposed disc golf course allow public use of trails for uses such as hiking and snowshoeing, especially in the off-season, to be consistent



with both the Sterling Ponds Park Plan and the C – Conservancy Zoning District it is located in. Additionally, the Disc Golf Club has already conducted invasive species removal (buckthorn) on Sterling Hill, improving the ecological health of the property no expense to the City.

Currently, a barrier to the Disc Golf Course's development is restrictions by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (WDNR) Urban Green Space Program (UGS). UGS funding was used to buy the area of Hoffman Park in the 1990s where the stadium and new jug-handle now sit. Since the UGS program is used to obtain open space that is not allowed to be developed, the UGS designation of the Hoffman property was later transferred to Sterling Hill and land along the Rocky Branch in the Spring Creek neighborhood. Staff spoke with a WDNR contact who said the UGS designation can either be transferred out of Sterling hill or deleted altogether depending on the appraised value of the land. Staff is currently waiting for direction from WDNR on next steps, but once complete, the Disc Golf Course may be developed on Sterling Hill with appropriate City approvals.

CONCLUSION

The Sterling Ponds Park Plan (2020) and Park and Recreation Advisory Board support the development of Disc Golf on Sterling Hill. If the project is approved by the DNR and City Council, the course could be constructed and operated by the River Falls Disc Golf Club on City-owned land subject to a future memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines City and Disc Golf Club responsibilities. When WDNR's approval process is complete, City staff will update the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and River Falls Disc Golf Club with next steps.



MEMORANDUM

TO: City of River Falls Parks Board

FROM: Mike Noreen, Conservation and Efficiency Coordinator and City Forester

DATE: February 10, 2021

TITLE: Ad doc Tree Advisory Board

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Creation of an ad hoc Tree Advisory board

BACKGROUND

The Parks Board has been and will continue to be an essential governing body for the Forester. The City Forester has reported to the Parks Board since the creation of the position.

The City Forester attends monthly meetings and provides forestry updates on the urban forest in the boulevards and parks. The Forester presents the Annual Forestry Report to the Park Board and seeks input on events such as Arbor Day and Tree City USA celebrations.

The Parks Board contributed to the Emerald Ash Borer plan, just as it did when the Dutch Elm Disease ravaged the Elm population.

The relationship between the Parks Board and the City Forester has been traditionally strong and there is no reason to see that change. Many Cities the size of River Falls also have a Tree Advisory Board. The boards are populated with stakeholders such as contractors, residents, arborists, government officials and tree champions.

DISCUSSION

As the new City Forester, Mike Noreen would like to create an ad hoc Tree Advisory board to help him meet the needs of the community.

The ongoing Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) mitigation plan will have a significant impact on the community aesthetics, environmental health, community perception, and City budget. The Board will advise the Forester on the EAB planning and implementation.

EAB is not unique to River Falls. The advisory board will have members who work outside of our community and would bring in best management practices, new ideas and seen the results of other forestry and communication practices.

The mere fact that a city has a tree advisory board is a plus when submitting application for Tree City USA and state and federal grants. The City of River Falls received a \$25,000 DNR grant for 2021 and the City Forester has every intention to plan for and submit another EAB grant for 2022. The advisory group would be especially helpful in providing input in planning for the grant.

The advisory board would include:

- Parks Board member – suggest Matt Janquart
- Tree removal service
- Tree planting Service
- UWRF grounds chief
- UWRF Forestry professor
- Resident - Native American
- Resident – Tree advocate
- St. Croix County Forester
- City of River Falls-Administrator
- City of River Falls-Public Works crewmember
- City of River Falls -Stormwater Engineer

The Tree Advisory Board would meet 2-4 times annually. The Parks Board would receive the minutes and other updates as necessary.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The positive financial implications for the City of River Falls could be significant. Its mere presence would lend credence in grant applications and the advice on BMP's could save the City and taxpayers money. There are not expected to be any large expenditures because of having a Tree Advisory Board.

CONCLUSION

The creation of a Tree Advisory Board that meets 2-4 times a year will benefit the Forester, the urban forest and the community. Diversity in thought, vocations, and expertise on the Tree Advisory Board will make the Forestry program better.