



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**222 Lewis Street
River Falls, WI 54022**

**Phone (715)425-0900
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**AGENDA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, June 19, 2019
Training Room-City Hall 5:15PM**

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Minutes of May 15, 2019 Park and Recreation Advisory Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Related Topic

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Leadership group update**
- 2. Sterling Ponds Park Plan-Sam Wessel**
- 3. Glen Park Update**

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

Council members may be in attendance for informational purposes only.

No official Council action will be taken.



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MINUTES

Wednesday, May 15, 2019 at 5:15pm
City Hall Lower Level Training Room

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

Members Absent: Jim Nordgren

Staff Present: Cindi Danke-*Recreation Manager*; Brenda Rundle-*Recreation Assistant*; Reid Wronski – *City Engineer*; Nate Croes-*City Forrester*; Sam Wessel - *Planner*

Others Present: Ben Fochs – *local citizen*

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting convened at 5:15pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MSC Dobbertin/Downing to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2019 Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting. Motion passed 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

City Engineer Reid Wronski showed current photos of construction at Glen Park. Winter was tough, but construction progress has been going very well lately. The project is on schedule to be completed in the fall. The nature playgrounds will be added later based on donors. Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has been working on suggestions for panel artwork for the side of the pavilion.

NEW BUSINESS

City Planner Sam Wessel spoke about the Sterling Ponds Park Plan. The neighborhood's mix of housing types has changed considerably since the existing park was first created over fifteen years ago. The park planning process includes analysis, evaluation, neighborhood and City Staff feedback, neighborhood surveys, and a draft of a plan with proposed improvements. These steps should be completed by fall 2019.

City Forester Nate Croes gave an annual forestry report. River Falls meets the requirements to be a Tree City USA. River Falls has an annual Forestry budget of slightly over \$4/capita. Nate works with many schools and organizations to educate people and plant trees. There are approximately 8,000 managed trees within the city, not including green spaces. Approximately 50 mature trees are removed every year (due to diseases or damage). Approximately 120 trees are planted every year. Over 1,200 trees were pruned in 2018. 25% of trees in our City are ash trees, which can be wiped out by the emerald ash borer, which has been found as close as Hudson, but it has not yet reached River Falls. 35% of trees in the City are various types of maple. The City is trying to diversify. The City has a gravel tree bed, which allows the City to purchase bare root trees in April and plant them by fall. The bare-root gravel system allows roots to grow well, and there is a better transplant success, more stock selection, and healthier trees. They are lightweight and a fraction of the cost. It is also more space efficient. Nate can be contacted at ncroes@rfcity.org with any forestry questions.

ADJOURNMENT

MSC Reese/Gaulke to adjourn the meeting at 6:30pm. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Brenda Rundle, Recreation Assistant

Community Development Department

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PARK AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING JUNE 19, 2019 STAFF REPORT

ITEM: Sterling Ponds Park Update, Survey

APPLICANT: Not Applicable

STAFF: Sam Wessel, Planner

INTRODUCTION

City Staff has created a simple survey for the Sterling Ponds neighborhood to identify recreation needs to consider for the Sterling Ponds Park Plan. The goal of this meeting is to receive feedback from the Park and Recreation Board on the draft survey and potentially incorporate suggestions prior to administering the survey. Included is an update on project progress.

BACKGROUND

Last month, the Park and Recreation Board was introduced to the Sterling Ponds Park Plan project, and presented with a project timeline, below:

Sterling Pond Parks Plan 2019						
Task	April	May	June	July	August	September
Phase 1: Existing Conditions						
1.1 Parkland dedication analysis						
1.2 Project Introduction		X				
1.3 On-site evaluation of existing conditions						
Phase 2: Public Participation						
2.1 Park and Rec Board kickoff meeting			X			
2.2 Neighborhood survey						
2.3 Draft 1 review with PR Board, City Staff					X	
2.4 Final Document Adoption						X
Phase 3: Plan Document						
3.1 Draft 1						
3.2 Final Draft and Production for Adoption						

Task 2.1 involves Park and Recreation Board input regarding the first step of public participation. City Staff has determined that the 2010 neighborhood survey (attached, Exhibit A) does not reflect the current population in Sterling Ponds, as the participant ages and homeownership have likely changed considerably since the last survey.

SURVEY DESCRIPTION

Attached to this memo is a draft survey (Exhibit B). Staff has retained much of the previous survey's questions, while creating a much simpler survey format. The survey is to be administered at the beginning of July to each home as an attention-grabbing door hanger, and which the respondents have the option of filling out and mailing, bringing to City hall, or completing online (a hyperlink is included).

Staff has removed questions pertaining to how far respondents must walk and how frequently they visit. Connectivity to the existing neighborhood is already a component of this plan, and frequency of visit is expected to have little impact on what type of facilities are desired. The question regarding receiving information about the adopt-a-park program has been eliminated, since responses are anonymous and there isn't a way for interested individuals to leave a return address on the survey itself. Staff is open to suggestions on how to address the adopt-a-park program and how it relates to this project if the interest in volunteering labor is strong in survey responses. Finally, three questions about age and household size have been streamlined into one question that answers both items.

OTHER PROJECT UPDATES

On 5/2/2019, Community Development staff met with Public Works staff regarding the park's future. Public Works staff suggested the following:

- Although the City does not maintain the informal mowed path along stormwater ponds, although the path contributes to the amount of accessible green space in the neighborhood
- Simple additions such as grills, picnic tables, and a simple picnic shelter would make the park much more appealing to a variety of users.
- A simple softball diamond was requested in the 2009 survey, and Glen Park is losing one, so the City could consider the feasibility of locating one here.
- A new survey should be administered to clarify which facilities are desired
- If possible, the City should extend the sidewalk into the corporate park and include cut-through to the next phase of Sterling Ponds neighborhood to the east of the park

In early May, City Staff conducted an on-site visit to the park to evaluate existing conditions. The developed lot contains highly-compacted soils except for a small mound, which is sometimes used as a sledding hill. The large, flat nature of the property is suitable for athletic fields, but the hard soils will have to be addressed. Currently, it is mowed and mostly undeveloped. The undeveloped lot has a more varied grade, which may not need to be graded if natural features like a restored prairie with walking trails are desired.

NEXT STEPS

Community Development staff will administer the survey, compile results, and meet with Public Works to determine which facilities to recommend. The Parks and Recreation Board will have the opportunity to review these recommendations in Draft 1 of the Sterling Ponds Park Plan, tentatively scheduled for completion by August.

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A: 2010 Survey Data

Exhibit B: Draft 2019 Survey

EXHIBIT A: Sterling Ponds 2010 Survey Results

We sent out 152 surveys and have received 65 responses for a return rate of 43%.

of Adults listed on surveys were:

Ages 18-30= 40 Ages 31-40= 59

Ages 41-49= 14 Ages 50+ = 19

of Children living in your household:

13 people responded they have 1 child 13 people responded they have 2 children

8 people responded they have 3 children 2 people responded they have 4 children

0 people responded they have 5+ children

Ages of children in household (81 total children)

1yrs old= 17, 2yrs old= 9, 3yrs old= 6, 4yrs old= 11, 5yrs old= 4, 6yrs old= 1, 7yrs old= 7, 8yrs old= 2, 9yrs old= 5, 10yrs old= 0, 11yrs old= 3, 12yrs old= 2, 13+ yrs old= 10

Amenities rating for Sterling Ponds-

Paved Walking/Bike Path –	15 rated #1	11 rated #2	7 rated #3
Playground Equipment Age 3-5-	13 rated #1	3-rated #2	3 rated #3
Playground Equipment Age 6-12 –	14 rated #1	12 rated #2	3 rated #3
Trees/Landscaping-	3 rated #1	12 rated #2	4 rated #3
Basketball Court-	5 rated #1	5 rated #2	8 rated #3
Lighting –	3 rated #1	5 rated #2	6 rated #3
Gardens –	3 rated #1	1 rated #2	4 rated #3
Benches/Picnic Area –	3 rated #1	8 rated #2	12 rated #3
Ball field/Backstop –	1 rated #1	6 rated #2	3 rated #3
Gazebo –	1 rated #1	0 rated #2	1 rated #3
Volleyball Court –	1 rated #1	0 rated #2	3 rated #3
Skateboard elements –	0 rated #1	0 rated #2	1 rated #3
Open Play area-	0 rated #1	1 rated #2	7 rated #3

Other amenities suggested

Dog Park -8

Tennis Court – 7

How far do you live from the Park?

0-1/4 mile - 74% - 46 responded

1/4-1/2 mile – 26% - 16 responded

More then 1/2 mile - 0% - 0 responded

How often would you spend time in Park on a yearly basis?

Daily – 48%

Weekly – 45%

Monthly – 6%

Rarely – 1%

Would you be interested in receiving information on the Adopt a Park Program?

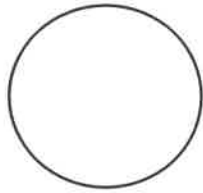
Yes – 50% - 31 people responded

No – 50% - 31 People responded

Would you be willing to contribute labor?

Yes- 62% - 40 people responded

No – 38% - 24 people responded



We want your opinion!

The City is planning Sterling Ponds Park's future!

Instructions: Please circle the top three facilities you would like to see at Sterling Ponds Park:

- Paved Walking Trail/Bike Path**
- Playground Equipment Age 3-5**
- Playground Equipment Age 6-12**
- Trees/Landscaping**
- Basketball Court**
- Lighting**
- Gardens/Prairie**
- Benches/Picnic Area**
- Ball field/Backstop**
- Gazebo**
- Volleyball Court**
- Skateboard elements**
- Open Play area**
- Dog Area**
- Tennis Court**

Other idea not listed: _____

Ages of household members: _____

Are you interested in helping build park improvements? Yes / No

Any other comments, questions, or ideas?
Call **715-426-3424**

Survey responses are kept anonymous and will be used to guide the Sterling Ponds Park Plan. You may bring or mail this survey to City Hall, 222 Lewis St, or complete it online: ([insert hyperlink](#))