



MEETING NOTES

Rochester Parks & Recreation Master Plan – Advisory Committee Meeting #3

December 17, 2015

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

City of Rochester Firestation at 3rd Ave NE and 7th St NE

Attendees:

Park Board Members Larry ‘Mort’ Mortenson, Linnea Archer, John Sipple, Richard Dale, Dr. Paul Scanlon, Vern Yetzer; Advisory Committee Members Pam Meyer, Martha Mangan, Randy Thomas, Rene Lafflam, Michael O’Connor, Ed Hruska; Rita Trapp and Anna Springer from HKGi; Mike Nigbur and Paul Widman from City of Rochester.

1. Meeting Introductions & Welcome to Invited Park Board Members

The meeting was kicked off by the Park Board President and brief introductions by all present were made. The purpose and agenda of the night’s meeting were then reviewed.

2. Approval of Advisory Committee #2 Notes & Key Findings

Advisory Committee members were asked if there were any changes to the notes or Key Findings from the previous Advisory Committee meeting. None were noted.

3. Introduction to Vision Framework and Establishment of Guiding Principles

The consultants provided an overview on visioning and introduced a set of draft guiding principles. Attendees provided feedback and edits to the working set of guiding principles to be included in the master plan. The existing City of Rochester Parks and Recreation Strategic Vision Plan for 2015-2018 was reviewed to ensure that the proposed guiding principles related.

Feedback on the Guiding Principles included:

a. Cultivate Health

- Clarification was sought on what the term ‘spine’ for the trail network meant
- Plan should include some aspect of measurement/metrics to make sure the system is effective.
- Need a bigger statement about contributions to health/healthy living
- Suggest the second bullet regarding facilities and programming be separated into two
- Should safety be included here?
- Need content about health being an all-seasons issue / winter recreation opportunities

b. Support Excellence

- Include measurements/metrics here as well?

- Include neighborhoods in the strengthening partnerships bullet
 - Potential for new bullet about the experience part of excellence, including economic drivers and connection
 - Promote community pride
- c. Create Connections
- Integrate arts & culture-how do you do that? Improve access? At this level it seems like we need to involve those groups more-it's part of support excellence.
 - 'Boost system and marketing' should be more about the value of doing that rather than a recommendation
 - Add neighborhood reference someplace in this principle
- d. Be Flexible & Responsive
- 5th bullet does not rise to vision level
 - 4th bullet is pretty important
 - Stimulate innovation should be a strategy rather than guiding principles
 - Add diversity to 1st bullet?
- e. Grow Gracefully
- Add system marketing & branding here
 - Wordsmith bullet 5: use Honor instead of Preserve. There is a heritage preservation committee already so this needs to be relative to parks and recreation.
- f. Overall
- Like the brevity of 3 bullets
 - 4-6 bullets is ideal, although 6 is too long
 - More specific comment about sports is not needed-local activities are covered, but a stronger statement about the regional/economic import of sports should be include (From the local business aspect, \$19Million comes from sports that is important part of local economy).
- g. Order of Guiding Principles – there was no agreement on the appropriate order with many different opinions on what might be first. A suggestion was made about putting them in a circle to avoid the issue.

4. Establishment of Park System Framework

The consultants provided an overview of the park system framework components focusing on the areas of who the system should serve, how parks are recommended to be classified, and the distribution and location of activities/facilities. Discussion and feedback on the framework included:

- a. Who the system serves?
- Where do competitors who visit fit in– they compare Rochester to other places
 - Visitor category – should it be separated into 2 groups – occasional/elite
 - Keep four categories
 - Add language in the elite category regarding competitors
 - Lifestyle –think the word “unscheduled” is not quite right

- Agreement was reached that the goal is to serve all of these groups. Consultants will bring back this table at the end of the process to review and confirm that all groups are being served.
- b. Park Classification
- Seems good
 - Golf gets a distinct category since there are four and they have such a large revenue stream and are a unique feature of the system
- c. Activity Delivery Guidelines
- Diamond Practice Fields – discussion about the frequency with which these should be distributed. It was noted that there is a parking problem when they are used for association needs for families outside the neighborhoods. Generally it seems that there is interest in more consolidated fields . It was noted that the current distributed model is good in bringing folks to different parks around the system.
 - Add Nature Center
 - Request for the table to be distributed for additional review.

5. 5 Minute Brainstorming

Attendees were asked to provide insight and feedback on issues identified during the needs assessment process.

Topics and feedback included:

- a. Neighborhood Parks
- Picnic tables, trash can, path in
 - Shade trees
 - Playgrounds (different playgrounds)
 - Trees/landscaping
 - Open space/playfield/flex space
- b. Multi-purpose indoor space
- There are private facilities that people use, but people who can't afford should have space too
 - Rooms for meetings
 - Warming houses/community center
 - Courts to help people stay active (gym space)
 - Staff requirements need to be considered
 - Are there potential partnerships with community associations, especially during 5-8pm
 - Court space is high on priority
 - Don't need fitness equipment-private options are affordable enough
 - Distribution: should depend on size of space; If it includes basketball courts then there should be fewer. If it's just a couple of rooms there should be more.
 - Heat, electricity, secular, meeting space. Who opens it? Who maintains it?
 - Quarry hill gets lots of requests for meeting space

- The Dome gets a lot of use at RCTC

c. Aquatics

- Splash pads non-staffed across the community
- Feeling that swimmers were down on splash pads because they thought they would mean no pools
- Silver Lake-RFP to privatize? Look at things differently-city owned land but private pool.
- Pool at RAC, pool at Y
- Splash Pads are good for under 8
- Free pool at silver lake was awesome before it closed
- Need a community pool!
- Orcas are building their own pool.
- Swim Club should not be a high priority
- Cascade Lake is a resource

d. Sports Complexes

- Have to consolidate these to control costs
- Expenses at complexes are parking, concessions, watering; they are more economical to have in one place
- Can you do open hours at athletic complexes, similar to skating at Graham arena? They do that at the bubble right now.
- Flex space at other parks can accommodate those who aren't organized

e. Tennis

- Tennis players will move around somewhat to access courts -they can drive to courts and as a result courts can be somewhat consolidated and repurposed for pickleball or other uses
- When John Marshall opened people would drive to them because they were nice
- Soldiers and Kutzky don't get utilized as much as possible
- For recreational users it is nice to have free public courts
- Should have one bigger complex to accommodate elite users

f. Mayo Field

- Its historic
- Draws visitors from downtown
- Good location, but not big enough
- Ideal future is that Mayo field gets repurposed, but premier league plays somewhere else
- It's a single purpose, which is unfortunate. Nice to have Rochester Honkers downtown, but...
- Opportunity is in the private sector
- The site limits its potential

g. Golf

- It's a great setup for golfers, but worried that popularity is declining

- How much of city resources goes into golf? It is a revenue generator.
- Golf subgroup exists that is exploring this topic

h. Natural Areas

- Trends/holistic perspective – need more
- Definition: something you can recreate in. A destination type
- Is this a revenue generating thing? They still cost money.
- Areas to retain. Is there a ratio for park dedication at a different multiplier? Give natural land, too. Prairie Crossing is an example of that.
- Kutzky had a nature programming element. Doesn't need to be elaborate just not a big flat grass space.
- Put them in areas there are none.
- Also consider neighboring amenities

i. Recreation Programming

- More about facilities than programming
- More programs with partners in targeted high density parks
- Need to blend with what is out there. Support like pickleball group. Best thing is to support and not step on toes of existing groups.
- Thursdays on 1st. Should get a table there.
- Have tours like trolley tours thru parks and rec areas

j. Time ran out to discuss sustainability and arts; attendees were asked to provide feedback via email or to consultants after the meeting.

6. Next Steps

- a. Review of revised Guiding Principles and System Framework – via email
- b. January – no meeting
- c. February 18th meeting will focus on reviewing draft recommendations