

**MINUTES**  
**OF THE CITY OF PRINCETON IN THE COUNTY OF MILLE LACS**  
**IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023**

1. Call to Order

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board met in Regular Session and Jill Papesh called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Jill Papesh	Chair	Present ▾
Carla Vita	Vice-Chair	Present ▾
Christina Dearman	Secretary	Present ▾
Elisabeth Burd	Board Member	Present ▾
Aaron Gruber	Board Member	Present ▾
Travis Koenen	Board Member	Present ▾
Robert Peters	Board Member	Present ▾
Bob Gerold	Staff	Present ▾
Jenny Gerold	Council Member Liaison	Present ▾

2. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Month DD, YYYY meeting.

**Motion by Travis Koenen, second by Aaron Gruber to approve the October 23, 2023 minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**

3. New Business:

3.1. Park and Trail Systems Plan Update - WSB

Jeff Sr Architect presenting - the reason for the plan is to create an overall vision for the next 10 years, this provides a plan for the projects and initiatives for the community over the next 10 years. Accessibility was highlighted as a chief struggle in the parks currently along with the other priorities listed in the presentation such as safety and more community gathering spaces. A need for activities that are available in the evening to accommodate working families. A graph of demographic breakdown was shown

highlighting mostly an age range of 35-54 however this was by a smaller margin. The community as a whole is mostly interested in outdoor activities according to another graph presented. A gap analysis was presented and one of the recommended goals is that residents all have some form of recreation/park within a 10-minute walk of their homes. It was noted that around 55% of Princeton residents do meet this recommendation currently. When this graph is expanded to include School and church recreation areas such as green spaces and playgrounds, much more of the city is covered. It was highlighted that the southwest area where the airport and industrial areas are had less coverage.

WSB was involved in some outreach activities and collected 77 survey responses. The majority of the results showed that the city did provide sufficient parks, however, some residents were unaware that Riverside and Riebe Parks existed. There were many comments about the dog park being relocated to an area that does not flood for accessibility. Many residents also expressed a desire for a pool.

While reviewing trends it was shown that Princeton does provide many of the trending activities, however, some items listed are not included.

WSB visited Princeton area parks and scored them. Our best park was Riebe Park in terms of meeting various standards set forth as best practices by WSB.

The main concerns found were about accessibility and the age of the equipment.

When compared to national standards, Princeton meets or exceeds standards on nearly all points, but fails in terms of Multi-Purpose fields. It was determined by WSB that we do not have any of these types of fields.

Also covered was a lack of connection to regional trail systems with Princeton trails.

Each park was then covered with highlighted suggestions as follows:

Mark Park –

Accessibility features, replacing aged equipment, safety netting, potential skate park

Civic Center –

Updated equipment

Veterans park –

Accessibility and upgrading equipment

Riebe Park –

Expanding and reconfiguring the dog park to include an area for smaller dogs, as well as reducing flooding, accessibility features, and some kind of connection to Riverside Park.

Rainbow Park -

Bike racks and repairing equipment

Pioneer Park –

Nature platy features, accessibility, seating areas, and wayfinding

Riverside park –

Parking expansion, bridge to connect to Riebe Park, and equipment repair

Riverview Park -

Tables, accessibility

WSB then opened this to board comment. The presentation will be provided to the board for review

Vita thanked WSB for the presentation. She stated that she was surprised that there was not an inclusion of tree planting on long trails as this is a large issue nationally and regionally. WSB responded that landscaping and shade throughout are meant to be included in the overall scope.

Dearman enquired about what kind of connection there would be. B. Gerold stated that it would be a pedestrian bridge and the cost is very high. Previously the desire to allocate budget to other amenities. B. Gerold stated there is already a crushed granite path that can

be taken to the other park, MDOT only allows a certain amount since it is on MDOT land.

Papesh enquired on the timeline this will go to the council, WSB stated it should be by month end.

### 3.1.1. Discuss possibly a redesign of the disc golf course

Tim Macky with the disc golf designers group presented. He and B Gerold had been in talks about a redesign. The proposal is to make the disc golf course a destination. This would require upgrading baskets and adding tees. As a destination course, city revenue will increase and be a benefit to the city. The highway corridors throughout MN have disc golf courses within 10 minutes of an exit within cities. There are many courses in the state and the sport is becoming more and more popular among youth and female players. Covid has influenced this to be a desirable activity. The plan is to sell the old baskets and install new baskets. St. Cloud recently upgraded the baskets and sold the old ones successfully. Winter is an ideal season to design courses as it's much easier to view the lanes. The reason the course should be adjusted is that the leagues and technology of discs have outpaced older baskets, by redesigning there will be room for both recreational and competitive players. There is currently an indoor putting league with the VFW during the winter, Princeton's course is not playable for enthusiasts so many dedicated players got to Zimmerman since their course is more desirable. It was stated that with some improvements there could be tournaments and leagues in Princeton. There is also a lot of desire to experience a new course in the area. Some of the fallen wood in the area could be recycled into wood chips to help with flooding and vegetation. The owners of the Rustic Depot have offered to help with sponsorships to help with cost savings. The current Tee signs have sponsorships. Currently, there are no pads at the tees but typically there is some type of pad. B. Gerold is working on sourcing some rubber mats and waiting to hear back about some rubber matting from the fairgrounds. The project would be a partnership with the disc golf associations. Zimmerman has a "Wild West Days" tournament during the Wild West Days event, there is an entry fee to tournaments for teams. For Leagues, there is a seasonal league one day a week. The leagues are informal so city involvement to secure the area would not be needed. Sanctioned events are kept track of nationwide involve people from across the country and are organized in graded tiers. A sanctioned event would need coordination with the city to secure the course as they are more high profile. The existing pavilion was mentioned

J Gerold enquired on what the difference was between the baskets we have now and the proposed baskets to install, it was explained that players expect certain types of activities. If the proposed plan is followed there will be 3 campsites in the back of the park that will be removed, with the potential of one being converted into a picnic area instead of a campsite.

R. Peters enquired as to whether the current walking paths would be disrupted by the baskets.

Vita enquired about the effect this project would have on a DNR grant that happened as to whether the campsites would be affected since we want to take them out. It may not have been long enough since the grant. She also enquired about what exactly was being asked of the board. It was stated that the task was if the board would like to close 3 campsites (of 4 available). J Gerold suggested that if we close 3 we should consider closing all 4 and in 5 years there have only ever been 2 legitimate paid reservations, the others have been unpaid and unhoused individuals which has presented a considerable challenge for the police.

The board determined that more information would be gathered and we would reconvene in January to discuss further.

#### 4. Reports by Staff:

##### 4.1. Mark Park

##### 4.1.1. Update on paving project

Todd Fredrick and Jules Zimmer who was previously on the parks board presented a suggestion for the ongoing challenges with the use of Solheim field and trying to create a unified vision and committee to work on enhancements. Included in the packet is a proposed paving project covering two areas that are currently earth and the Solheim users would like to pave. It was mentioned that the various teams and groups using this area play in the rain and these areas are very muddy. a preliminary quote has been provided and funding has been secured for 50% of the project. Todd was requesting B. Gerold's blessing for buy-in. B. Gerold stated this has been in the plan and part of the CIP for a long time, and was waiting on buy-in from all groups. He projected the project could be completed in 9 months. B. Gerold stated that there had been an ongoing challenge in the sandy soils to get grass to grow, these are also high-traffic areas.

Fredrick stated that we currently turn away a lot of softball etc due to the volume of traffic and there is a desire to make Solheim a destination. There was research done over the summer on materials and most other ball fields went with asphalt vs concrete for durability and cost. 40K for both projects, Solheim group has secured 24K in donations and has more donations to collect. Handicap accessibility is a concern and in Princeton, many elderly residents come to watch games and it is difficult for them and there have been accidents. The concession stand is near the proposed paved area, much of the time there is a lot of dust in the area in the summer and that is unpleasant and unhealthy.

Papesh stated that as far as she is concerned the project is something that the board has always been interested in doing this project but cost has been a barrier. She expressed thanks for the presentation and the work to collect donations to offset the costs. B. Gerold stated that part of the project will be to remove the current pavers that are in the area. He also talked about the drainage primarily going between the fields, however, also stated that this would not remove all puddling from the field. French drains were discussed but B. Gerold stated they would become a maintenance issue. He stated that since the soil is sandy, drainage will be easier.

Vita enquired about how the cleats would impact the paved area, Fredrick stated that in his research it was easier to repair the asphalt vs concrete and did not find many fields like this. He stated that transparently concrete is about twice the cost of asphalt and would be cost prohibitive. B. Gerold explained how the repairs from cleat damage could be done by infrared or torch and raking it back out. It was mentioned by Frerick that this would be laid 6-7 months before any traffic would be in this area. Fredrich stated that they do already require that teams not wear cleats on pavement and ask them to wear other shows until they get to the dugout. B Gerold suggested some quarter-inch rubber matting could be used as a protective measure and would not be costly.

#### 4.2. Splash Park

Discussion around the history of sponsored days at the Splash Park. The sponsorship fee of \$300 covers the daily operation and is about \$10 more than needed. In the case of non-profits, and the case of poor weather this buffers us against worse losses.

**Motion by Aaron Gruber second by Carla Vita to suggest to the council that the sponsorship fees for businesses be 300 and non-profits 250 in the fee schedule. motion carried unanimously**

4.3. Riverside Park

4.4. Rainbow Park

4.5. Riebe Park

4.6. Pioneer Park

4.7. Riverview Terrace Nature Park

4.8. Civic Center Park

4.8.1. Discussion on adding permanent benches/picnic tables around pickleball courts in summer and ice skating rink in winter to put on skates.

B. Gerold will investigate if there are benches available to put out this winter and add to the CIP for a more permanent solution.

4.9. Veteran's Park

5. Old Business:

6. Miscellaneous:

7. Adjourn

Park Board chose City Hall for their next regular meeting. **Motion by Carla Vita second by Aaron Gruber to adjourn at 7:52 PM.**