



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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MEETING NOTES

Highland 9 Golf Course Preliminary Visioning Study

MEETING DATE: October 1, 2018 - 6:00-7:30pm

LOCATION: Highland Park Community Center, Gymnasium

ATTENDANCE: 129 Total (Approximately)

Parks and Recreation: Brett Hussong, Alice Messer, Susie Odegard, Andy Rodriguez, Mike Hahm

Parks and Recreation Planning Commission: John Mountain

Ward 3: Council Member Tolbert, Melanie McMahon Legislative Aide

NOTES BY: Brett Hussong

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Parks and Recreation Design and Construction Manager, Alice Messer, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and introduced Ward 3 Council Member Tolbert.

Council Member Tolbert thanked everyone for coming and gave a brief background about the study. The purpose is to learn more about the current uses of the Highland 9 golf course, and to look at the modern needs of the community and neighborhood. St. Paul Parks and Rec is only studying these 9 holes of the 27 in the park and is only evaluating current and potential park uses for the site. There are no funds for implementation of any changes in land use to the space.

Project Manager, Brett Hussong explained the communication process to date, the meeting agenda, project goals & Parks and Recreation Systems Plan Vision:

Communication:

- Villager & Pioneer Press
- Social Media
- Email
- Flyers (Rec Center, individual homeowners adjacent to Edgumbe)

Project Goals

1. Long-term visioning exercise to determine future use by community.

2. Funding available for preliminary study only. \$30,000 does not include exhaustive economic and site analysis.
3. No additional funding for planning, design or construction.
4. Re-evaluate existing land use for modern needs.
5. Develop preliminary concept plans and cost estimates.

Parks and Recreation Systems Plan Vision:

The task of Parks and recreation staff is a balance between the seven below items. Community input is just one factor that influences the overall Parks and Recreation Systems Plan. Influential factors (not in order of importance):

- System: assess the needs of the overall park system
- Context: Geographic, historic
- Budget
- Funding available
- Operations and Maintenance
- Regulatory: health, safety, welfare, municipal and federal statutes
- Community: design advisory groups, focus groups, survey, neighborhood plan

Brett presented an overall citywide amenities map. (see Meeting #1 presentation). Saint Paul has more park land per capita and a higher percentage of land area devoted to parks than in most cities. The neighborhood of Highland Park has a multi-use facility gap and a strength are the special services activities, including golf, frisbee golf, aquatic center, winter sports. The Parks and Recreation systems plans has a deficit of 8 full size soccer and 11 youth soccer fields. In addition, system plan suggests a minimum of 2 public golf courses in Saint Paul. Como and Phalen currently are owned by Parks and Recreation but maintained and operated by private vendor.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback about a community vision. To begin the discussion, Brett identified potential parkland uses:

Nature trail

Winter sports: cross country skiing, skijoring, sledding

Bike skills park

Skate park

Dog park

Outdoor futsal court

Multi-use athletic fields

Fitness equipment

Transition to six-hole golf course

Practice area: driving and chipping

Parks and Recreation staff fielded questions from the community:

1. Question (Q): Did you look at any land on the Ford Plant? Nova Academy Site?
Answer (A): The Ford site developer is proposing two youth baseball fields. The Nova Academy Site allows for public use during specific times.
2. Q: Will cross country skiing become available on the 18-hole?

- A: Cross country skiing is not currently available on the 18-hole, but Operations and Maintenance would need to help determine that use in the future.
3. Suggested to find room for softball/baseball fields at Ford Fields. (Little league coach/HGRA).
A: See response to question 1 above.
 4. What is the goal tonight? What can this site be? (Senior Men's Club for the 9-hole)
A: This is preliminary study and no funding is available for further planning, design or construction. The goal is to collect feedback from the community and neighborhood about future park uses.
 5. The visioning planning process is 15-20 years. This was on the Parks website and city email but has been removed? What is the timeline? (Golf League Member)
A: Since there is no additional funding available or concept plan it is difficult to determine a future timeline. We are just gathering baseline information. Parks and Recreation would not consider closing the 9-hole course because land values would drop for the 9 hole and surrounding land uses.
 6. Comment: The 9-hole course has a different purpose for many golfers. It is a challenging and much needed course.
 7. Comment: The 9 hole is used for all ages and abilities as well as the cross-country ski trials. Can't lose the cross-country trails. (Resident skier)
 8. Suggested that the property values will go down if you develop anything other than open green space. (Resident and Real Estate agent)
 9. What is the financial viability of golf? Can we use the school district land next to the Highland nine hole?
A: Thank you for the comments. Park and Recreation to consider.
 10. Comment: Parks and Recreation indicated that green space is rare, but open space is rare.
 11. Comment: Cross Country running is compatible with golf courses.
 12. Suggested to add the 9-hole on the corner of the 18-hole.
 13. Comment: only see the increase usage in 9-hole, competitive, and affordable.
 14. Suggestion: Mattocks Park should be a multi-use field possibility, pool house, build the par three and you can still have cross country skiing.
 15. Suggestion: Soccer is growing, and Blackhawk Soccer wants a home in Saint Paul. (Blackhawks board member)
 16. Consider a variety of park uses to make site intergenerational such as community gardens, trails, etc. (Friends of Highland Arts)

Written Comments

1. We need facilities for Senior's too - not just the kids. Seniors are paying for both. Post-It Note Attached: CUT TAXES Outsource City Workers at Golf Course. KEEP 9 Hole.
2. Keep the Highland 9 a 9 hole golf course in a metro area is very unique. More golfers are playing "9" instead of the time consuming "18" holes. Can't some recreation land for St. Paul be carved into the FORD Project?

3. I cross country skied on this plot since before it was a golf course. I can walk there and the grooming is awesome! If that (skiing) is taken away I assume we will ski on the 18 hole course.
4. Please consider adding quality soccer and baseball/softball fields to this space! Thank you!
5. The population is aging and there will be more golfers rather than fewer. Shortening it to a six hole course will turn golfers away.
6. How do we learn from Elm Creek and Hyland Hills? They enhanced their XC Ski trails w/snowmaking by adding features that appealed to a larger audience – specifically they added tubing & downhill skiing. The additional revenue from these features enabled snowmaking on the XC trails. Could Highland 9 hole enhance the ski trails w/lighting or w/snowmaking by installing a feature that appeals to others? Might athletic fields be synergistic if they were flooded bot hockey rinks in the winter & the refrigeration system also made a snowmaking loop? (for XC Skiing)? Look for synergies that enable a win – win.
7. Don't agree you have 27 holes of golf. You have an 18 hole course and a much separate entity in the 9 hole course. They are 2 very different entities!
8. Have the environmental consequences of closing the course been thought-through? There are more aged Cottonwoods on this course than Summit Avenue. The costs of cutting all the trees down and bulldozing the landscape of the course into playing fields seems silly when there are so many other plots of land available in the area. Has any thought been given to using the southern part of the 18 hold course across the street?
9. Please preserve options for the golf course every day in the winter when there is snow as do my kids.
10. Thank you for this information meeting!! Keeping this as a 9-hole course is the way to go!! This is the best 9-hole in the area – good for the young and old – It is a beautiful piece of property that should remain a plus in the Highland Area.
11. Maintain 9 hole. Youth 1st Tee, Fairway Foundation, Cross Country Skiing. Work with schools on fields. Utilize 4.3 acres on Water Dept property.
12. If you convert 9 hole to ball fields, you need to replace the XC Ski Trails. It's the only winter activity in the area.
13. Please do not take away the Highland Nine golf course! For Recreation new land use old Water Reservoir or incorporate Rec area into ford plant development.

Post-it Note Comments

Comment	Quantity	Percent
Winter sports: XC skiing, skijoring, sledding, ice skating/trail	47	22%
Oppose change/status quo	30	14%
Year-round use	27	12%
Athletic fields: soccer/Lacrosse	23	11%
Keep it green	14	6%
Hiking/ walking/ cross country running	10	5%
Biking infrastructure	9	4%
Fitness equipment	8	4%
Wellness /cultural arts center	6	3%

Ropes course	5	2%
Cooperate with SPPS	5	2%
Snowmaking	4	2%
Baseball/Softball	3	1%
Futsal	3	1%
Combined use facility: golf/multi-use/ski	2	1%
Pickleball	2	1%
Add shared parking w/ Circus Juventas	2	1%
Ask radically diverse groups/students	2	1%
Use pool house/club house for winter sports	2	1%
Skate park	2	1%
Heart of Highland Park (Blue Zone)	1	0.5%
Save perimeter and trees	1	0.5%
Yoga	1	0.5%
Tai chi	1	0.5%
Rain gardens	1	0.5%
Hockey	1	0.5%
Add lights and cover to driving range	1	0.5%
Farmers/craft fair	1	0.5%
Invest in existing rec centers	1	0.5%
No new parking	1	0.5%
No lighting and sound amplification	1	0.5%
Six hole golf course	1	0.5%
Dog park	0	0.0%
Total Comments	218	100%