MEETING DATE: September 30, 2015
TIME: 3:30-5:30 PM
PLACE: Fishers City Hall
Central Conference Room
1 Municipal Drive
Fishers, Indiana 46038

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE
MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Rodney Retzner, Cecilia Coble, Corby Thompson, Tim Russell, John Amos, Jocelyn Vare, Natalie Temeya

Members Not Present: Cathy Ferree

Others Present: Caleb Gutshall, Rachel Johnson, Leah McGrath, Connie Nimmo, Todd Gillian, Maria H.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- “Park systems bring added value to the City.” – Tony Elliot
  - Parks add higher quality of life, encourage health/wellness, offer a community gathering space, provide conservation of ecosystems, increase property value and attracts tourism.

- Review of the draft plan
  - Section 1: Vision and Plan Overview
    - The presented document has been approved by the Parks Advisory Board.
    - Accessibility can be defined as easy to get to or meeting ADA requirements.
    - The final draft of the Parks Plan will reflect Fishers 2040’s smart, vibrant and entrepreneurial vision.
  - Section 2: Community Profile and Needs Assessment
    - The community needs connective trails that are safe to cross.
      - For example, a safe solution to crossing 37 may be a pedestrian bridge.
    - Geist Reservoir would be a great location for trails and parks, however most of the parcels surrounding it are private and difficult to acquire.
    - Some current sidewalks will become a ten-foot, asphalt trail.
    - Most residents are within a five-minute drive to a park.
    - Major needs in the community include walking/hiking/biking trails, small neighborhood parks, large community parks and natural areas and wildlife.
    - Satisfaction levels of facilities, etc. are clustered in community.
    - Citizens may not use City amenities, but private neighborhood amenities.
    - Areas east of I-69 lacks amenities, such as soccer fields, neighborhood parks and play equipment.
    - As sports and trends change, the amenity needs and use may change.
    - Residents near Richey Woods were dissatisfied with the amount of parks/trails in the area. This could be because there isn’t safe pedestrian access to the park.
    - The addition of amenities are only necessary if comparable amenities aren’t easily accessible in neighboring communities.
  - Section 3: Parks Inventory
    - Accessibility and dog friendliness isn’t indicated on parks inventory.
      - All dogs are welcome in all Fishers parks provided they are leashed and waste is disposed of properly.
    - All parks (public and private) are not accounted for.
      - Neighborhood parks are often owned and maintained privately. School parks and playgrounds are considered a public amenity through a partnership with the City.
    - Parks are typically acquired through purchasing or dedication of land.
• Development standards for open spaces will provide the community with the opportunity to better utilize land.
  ▪ Carmel and Noblesville have a greater public City park space “ratio” than Fishers because they use various private parks in their calculations.
  ▪ I-69 divides the City and limits accessibility to parks. Attention should be given to improve bike/pedestrian connections across the interstate
  ▪ “(Rotary Park, located on 116th Street) should personify the community and what we stand for.” – Cecilia Coble
  ▪ Park visibility is low for Rotary Park.
  ▪ An inventory of neighborhood parks may provide a more comprehensive analysis of parks available to residents.
  ▪ Private parks can be difficult to acquire because of maintenance.
    o Section 4: Environmentally Sensitive Areas
      ▪ Sensitive areas can have trials, compostable restrooms and other low impact amenities but no buildings.
  • Review of draft plan goals
    o Goal 1
      ▪ ADA equipment (gliders), sensory activities (sandboxes), signage in multiple languages and amenities for vision and hearing impaired will better serve the needs of the community.
      ▪ Activities for all ages is crucial to getting residents to explore the park system. Many park amenities cater to young children. Activities like Frisbee golf and running trails are needed.
      ▪ Amenities for all seasons (warming shed) is important as residents use parks in colder months.
    o Goal 2
      ▪ The addition to a community sports facility is needed as the YMCA is too crowded.
      ▪ Docking states, bike racks and hydration and tool stations will enhance facilities.
    o Goal 3
      ▪ Parks need more shade and trees.
      ▪ Mature trees should be preserved by inventorying, determining health and creating policy to protect them.
      ▪ American elm trees are pristine in Fall Creek.
      ▪ Campaigns like flagging the biggest tree in the area are good for awareness.
    o Goal 4
      ▪ Adopt-a-park and sponsorship programs will increase awareness and help with maintenance by parks.
    o Goal 5
      ▪ Projects like St. Vincent Hospital’s fitness park, which provides educational elements that motivate, should be accessible by trails.
    o Goal 6
      ▪ Overgrown tree roots pose a safety concern for bicyclists, rollerbladers, etc.
    o Goal 7
      ▪ Geocaching and other hobby organizations will connect residents and encourage them to gather in parks.
      ▪ “Create a rich environment for people to do their ideas.” – Jocelyn Vare
      ▪ “Where adventure meets nature… Meet everybody where they are.” – Leah McGrath
    o Goal 8
      ▪ Online feedback portals make it easier to address maintenance concerns.
      ▪ State of the parks report will keep residents “in the know.”
    o Goal 9
      ▪ Add action item to partner with regional health network.
    o Goal 10

ACTION ITEMS
• Make necessary changes to draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Sections 1-4, to reflect decisions made at meeting – Staff
• Review Sections 6-11 by October 13 – All Members
• Bring feedback from October 7 tour (if attending) to next meeting – All Members
ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Sections 1 and 4, Excerpt
- Measuring the Economic Value of a City Parks System