

Findings and Recommendations
Rhinelanders Parks Public Engagement Task Force
May 22, 2017

Volunteer Task Force Members

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|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| ● Rhinelanders City Council | Steve Sauer |
| ● Forward Rhinelanders | Dave Heck |
| ● Hodag BMX Club | Robbie Deede |
| ● Hodag Farmers' Market | Vacant |
| ● Hodag Paw (Dog) Park | Tina Werres |
| ● Hodag Water Ski Show | Chris Gilman |
| ● Little League | Janet Jamison |
| ● Oneida County Fair | Nancy Gehrig |
| ● School District of Rhinelanders | Brian Paulson |

Volunteer Task Force Supporters

- Kathy Cutforth - Historic Preservation, Trails
- Gina Heck - Community Foundation, Forward Rhinelanders
- Todd Riopel - Hodag Water Ski Show

City of Rhinelanders Staff

- Jeremy Biolo, Rhinelanders Parks, Buildings and Grounds Director
- Mary Stoll, Rhinelanders Deputy Clerk

City of Rhinelanders Council

- Sherrie Belliveau, Rhinelanders Parks, Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair
- Rhinelanders Parks, Buildings and Grounds Committee Members

Acknowledgements

- School District of Rhinelanders for two evenings of the Rhinelanders High School Commons without charge.
- Rhinelanders Chamber of Commerce for allowing the Task Force to host the information meet and greet concurrent with the Hodag Home Show.

1. Executive Summary

Rhinelanders Parks are a strength for the City due to their size, access to water, and locations. Yet, the parks suffer from poor maintenance, inconsistent development, and lack of a coordinated plan.

In spring 2016 proposals for two needed facilities were made:

- An additional softball field
- A dog park

Both were proposed in Pioneer Park. Conflict erupted in social media, and at Parks, Buildings and Grounds and City Council meetings. The city chose to undertake a public engagement process to solicit more information from community members to guide park decision making.

The Rhinelanders Parks Public Engagement Task Force built on public engagement begun in the summer of 2016. From January 12 to April 11, 2017, the Task Force conducted five phases of work:

- Park user group interviews
- Review existing plans and reports
- Informational meet and greet at Hodag Home Show March 18
- Two public meetings held at Rhinelanders High School on April 18 and 20
- Information synthesis and reporting

At each public meeting people expressed the desire to reset the park planning decision making process, cut through old conflicts, and forge ahead united in a new vision of Rhinelanders as a quality destination. Thriving parks with year-round activities will improve residents' quality of life and support local economic development.

To reach this vision, Rhinelanders Parks need two things:

- 1. A capital improvement plan with identified priorities, logical development sequence, and project target dates**
- 2. Substantial public and private investments**

Findings Summary

Guiding Principles	Specific Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Maintain our parks as a source of civic pride● Maintain our parks to grow the local economy● Support year-round activities and use of the water● Parks should be for people of all ages and all abilities● Parks should be family-oriented with better playgrounds and affordable activities● Parks should provide open green space● Leadership needs to collaborate to plan and implement park improvements● Funding drives city park development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dog park● Additional softball field● Large, multi-use, all-season venue or facility● Improved park infrastructure● Skate park● Safe, accessible biking and hiking trails that connect to other parks

2. Overview

Natural beauty is a key strength for the City of Rhinelander. The City maintains 56.3 acres of parks. The School District of Rhinelander (SDR) has 54.1 acres of recreation land. The total of city and school park and park-like land is 107.4 acres. Additional nearby recreation land includes the 260-acre city golf course with the adjacent Heal Creek conservation easement, the city's Slaughterhouse Creek property (in brownfield remediation), and county and state park and park-like land.

The *Outdoor Recreation Plan*¹ anticipates the city population to grow very little. The *Plan* recommends defining the level of service "by the community's needs rather than an arbitrary acreage-per-1000-people standard. The LOS is generated locally for each park classification . . . Public input is collected, and the needs . . . are determined."² In 2010 Rhinelander had 13.77 acres of park and SDR land per 1,000 people. With a few additional acres and the projected population increase by 2020, Rhinelander will have 14.31 acres per 1,000 people.

Rhinelander exceeds former level of service standards. The Task Force views that as a strength for users and a challenge for the small maintenance staff. Park maintenance has fallen behind. That work backlog needs to be addressed without delay of needed improvements.

Project Background and Description

Presenting issues (location of an additional softball field and location of a dog park) and open conflict at meetings and on social media motivated the city to undertake a public engagement process to solicit more information from community members to guide park decision making.

The task force focused on the large Rhinelander City Parks:

- Hodag Park
- Pioneer Park
- Sarocka Park
- Shepard Park
- West Side Park

Several park-like places are outside the scope of the task force work:

- Norway Street Snow Dock
- Slaughterhouse Creek
- Linear Parks and Trails
- Northwoods Golf Course
- Heal Creek
- Hanson Lake

¹ North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (2015). City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020, page 14ff.

² IBID

On December 20, 2016, the City of Rhinelander Parks, Buildings and Ground Committee sought more public engagement for park planning. The City Council approved creation of a Task Force. The Task Force was charged to gather public input that would identify the following:

- Current and anticipated unmet demands
- The desired character of each existing and potential future parks
- Uses appropriate to each park
- A development strategy for Rhinelander parks with priority order for future investment

What Is the Task Force?

The city invited eleven park user groups³ to represent all the different types of people that use Rhinelander parks. Delegates from those user groups chose nine organizations to be the official Task Force⁴. Other park supporters worked with the Task Force. All members were volunteers. Myles Alexander, University of Wisconsin Extension - Oneida County, led the Task Force.

As a committee of the City of Rhinelander, the task force complied with open meeting law. The Task Force met 13 times from January through May. Members and friends contributed over 250 hours in meetings and events. The standard value of volunteer time results in a value of \$5,620.00. Task force volunteers contributed at least as many additional hours outside of meetings. Mr. Alexander's contribution is 50% time over 18 weeks for a salary value of \$8,310. Consulting services would cost many times this amount.

The task force followed professional community development practices as described in the International Association for Public Participation Core Values, Community Development Society Principles of Good Practice, and National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation Principles of Public Engagement (included in attachments)

Online Public Engagement Opportunities and Insight

Parallel to the task force work, an online public engagement website was launched by Oneida County Extension⁵. The website was funded as part of a University of Wisconsin Extension, North Central Region Innovation Grant. Mr. Alexander managed the website. During and after the April 2017 public meetings

³ Forward Rhinelander, Hodag BMX Club, Hodag Farmers Market, Hodag Ski Shows, Oneida County Fair, RASTA (Rhinelander Area Silent Trails Association), Rhinelander Babe Ruth Baseball, Rhinelander High School Girls Softball Team, Rhinelander Little League, Hodag Paw (Dog) Park. The School District of Rhinelander. In addition, the Rhinelander City Council appointed a representative.

⁴ Forward Rhinelander, Hodag BMX Club, Hodag (Rhinelander) Farmers Market, Hodag Ski Shows, Oneida County Fair, Rhinelander Little League, Hodag Paw (Dog) Park, School District of Rhinelander, Rhinelander City Council representative

⁵ <https://www.placespeak.com/en/topic/5212-rhinelander-parks-public-engagement/#/overview>

the website offered a survey with the same questions asked at the meetings, discussion about each park, and a poll about funding strategies.

To access the survey, site users verified their address, whether the City of Rhinelander or an Oneida County Town. Though survey responses were anonymous, the jurisdiction of each respondent's home was included in the data. Since the survey was not a random sample of City and Town residents it only represents the actual respondents. No conclusions about the whole community can be drawn.

Dr. David Trechter, Professor of Agricultural Economics and Director of the Survey Research Center at University of Wisconsin at River Falls, contributed the analysis of the online survey data. With 46 completed surveys there was enough data to run a valid analysis of the difference between Rhinelander and Town residents. However, "The small number of observations make any conclusions very uncertain."

One thing is certain. Of 217 items, only 17 have a 90% probability that City of Rhinelander and Town residents would respond differently. Further, there was not a pattern of difference among the 17 items. The data from this self-selected sample suggests there may not be a significant difference between City and Town residents' thoughts about Rhinelander Parks.

How were Priorities Developed?

The Task Force conducted four phases of work:

- park user group interviews,
- Informational meet and greet at Hodag Home Show March 18,
- Two public meetings held at Rhinelander High School
- Information synthesis and reporting

In addition to the task force interviews and public events, Oneida County Extension made an online public engagement website available.

To promote the public events the task force worked with the newspapers, radio and television to publicize public about events. Members also used their organizations' social media to promote participation. A University of Wisconsin Extension Oneida County Facebook post reached 903 viewers. The Rhinelander Parks Public Engagement Task Force online public engagement website had 958 visits. Of the 99 people who completed registration to participate in surveys and polls, 50 are Rhinelander residents and 49 are from Towns in the School District of Rhinelander.

The Task Force findings come from the following sources and are the basis of the recommendations.

	Information Source	Date	Number of Participants or Survey Responses
a.	Public Meetings	April 18 and 20, 2017	32
b.	Survey posted on online engagement website	April 2017	46
c.	Discussion comments posted on online engagement website	April 2017	
d.	Meet and Greet at Hodag Home Show	March 18, 2017	88
e.	Interviews of Rhinelander Parks User Groups by task force	February 2017	13
f.	Rhinelander Park Public Meetings	September 8, 2016	70
g.	Survey, City of Rhinelander	Summer 2016	152
h.	<i>City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020 and related survey by North Central Regional Planning Commission</i>	July 6, 2015	431
i.	<i>North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Regional Livability Plan 2015</i>	April 29, 2015	
j.	Community Input for City Governance and For Economic Development Strategic Planning Session	March 1, 2015	52
k.	<i>Attitudes about Life in Rhinelander/Oneida County</i> , University of Wisconsin Extension - Oneida County with Rhinelander Young Professional for Downtown Rhinelander, Inc.	September, 2014	478

3. Findings and Recommendations

Guiding Principles for Future Park Development

- Maintain our parks as a source of civic pride (d, b, k, e)
 - People want to see our parks improved and beautified (a, d, b, i, k, g, e)
 - People want maintained parks, clean bathrooms and facilities (a, d, b, i, k, g, e, c)
 - Maintain current parks, but also improve current facilities and develop new facilities (b, i, k, g, e)
- Maintain our parks to grow the local economy
 - Park development is economic development for the city and our community (a, d, f, j, i, k, e)
 - Increased event and sports tourism can directly and indirectly raise revenue through user fees, Hotel Room Tax revenue, Premier Resort Tax revenue, as well as support local businesses. (e, d, a)
- Support year-round activities and use of the water (d, b, i, k, g, e)
 - Parks should be developed to include more uses (b, i, k, g, e)
- Parks should be for people of all ages (a, d, i, k, g) and all abilities (a, d, b, i, k, g)
- Parks should be family-oriented with better playgrounds and affordable activities (a, b, i, k, g, e)
 - Low-cost community and family-oriented activities and clubs should be offered (k)
- Parks should provide open green space (b, i, g, e)
 - Parks need to balance the needs of users and not be too crowded with facilities at the expense of open space (a, b)
- Leadership needs to collaborate to plan and implement park improvements (b, k, e)
 - Create and implement a long-term parks plan that addresses the needs of each park (a, d, b, j, e)
 - All stakeholders need to work together and potential conflict be managed (a, d, b)
 - Parks have not developed in the past due to a few negative comments from neighbors and hurt greater opportunity to develop (a, e)
- Funding drives city park development
 - Lack of funding limits park maintenance and improvements (b, k)
 - In the past park development occurred when projects with private funding were proposed rather than by a needs-based plan (b, k)

Specific Improvements Needed in Rhinelander Parks

- Build a dog park (a, d, b, k, e, c)
- Build a large, multi-use, all-season venue or facility (a, d, b, j, i, k, g, e)
- Add an additional softball field (g, e, b)
- Improve current park infrastructure
 - Electrical, lighting upgrades (a, d, b, i, g, e)
 - Restroom improvements (a, d, b, i, k, g, e)
 - Park fixtures: garbage and recycling receptacles, grills, benches, picnic tables (a, d, g)
 - Drinking water available to the public in all parks (a, b, c.)
- Build a skate park (h, e, b)
- Safe, accessible biking and hiking trails that connect to other parks (a, d, b, h, j, i, k, g, e)

4. Findings and Recommendations for Each Park

Hodag Park is on Boom Lake, a flowage created by the paper mill dam on the Wisconsin River. At 25.2 acres, it is the City's largest park and one of the largest public waterfronts in northcentral Wisconsin. The trees and open space are important to the character of Hodag Park. The park hosts many uses. The busy boat ramp and baseball complex are at the south end. Water ski shows and lessons and the swimming beach with lifeguard are at the north end. Paved waterside walking trails, picnic and free play areas are in the central area. Hodag Park is the site of Fourth of July events and fireworks, and other community events.

The Hodag Beach House is a stone structure located at the small beach and swimming area. Built by the WPA in 1935 it has a pavilion, restrooms and changing area (now used for storage). It is a Locally-Designated Historic Building which gives the City Historic Preservation Commission design review over proposed changes to the structure.

Despite its favorable waterfront location, Hodag Park is rarely used at night and beyond summer. A year-round facility and connections to downtown could increase use and create a community gathering spot and driver of tourism and economic development.

Appropriate Uses

- Water activities: swimming, watercraft of all types, fishing, water skiing, snowmobile access from the frozen lake
- Quiet enjoyment of Boom Lake
- Unstructured play
- Youth hang out
- Walking
- Biking
- Skateboard park
- Picnic and other group events such as parties and reunions
- Baseball
- Seasonal community events

Park Needs

1. Better maintenance, especially of the waterfront and Hodag Beach House area (a, j, i, d, c)
2. Improved restrooms (a, d, b, c)
3. A multi-purpose all-season facility. (k)
 - a. The Water Ski Show and Little League both use concession stands. How concessions and other uses could be a part of a multi-purpose facility need to be planned with user groups (j, k, e)
 - b. Improved restroom facilities was a top need from all sources. Public restrooms must meet standards for accessibility, family use, and year-round operation. If current structures cannot be improved, public restrooms can be part of a new multipurpose facility. (j, l, k, g, e)

- c. Add electrical upgrades to accommodate community uses. (i, k, e)
- d. Future development could include a restaurant, outdoor public dining areas, and/or larger gathering space. (a, j, k, e)
- 4. To increase the number of activities and off-peak use
 - a. Move the existing band shell or build a new band shell. Include study of a natural performance bowl. (a, k, e)
 - b. Winter holiday light display fundraiser (a, c)
 - c. Add street and/or trail lighting and directional signage from downtown to the riverfront, and along biking and walking trails to Hodag Park (a, d, j, i, k, g, e).
- 5. Improve vehicle circulation and parking (d)
- 6. Renovate ball fields (infield earth, lighting, irrigation) and dugouts (b, e)
- 7. Tennis courts are discussed in the section of this document titled “General Park Facility Needs” on page 14. If the tennis courts are moved, replace with green space, trees, picnic tables (g, e)
- 8. Wayfinding and access
 - a. Include the park in walking and bike trails connected to downtown. (g, e)
 - b. Road signs to guide drivers

Specific User Needs:

- 1. Lakefront – Hodag Water Ski Show (j, e)
 - a. New storage building
 - b. Water and sewer service to the storage building
- 2. Hodag Beach (a, i, k, e)
 - c. Make planned repairs of windows, trim, etc.
 - d. Study needs to determine how to improve and use the historic beach house
 - e. Clean up beach area
- 3. Playground users
 - a. Repair and replace playground equipment (a, g, e)
 - b. As improvements are made, locate playgrounds, tennis courts and volleyball courts to prevent use conflicts (k, e)
 - c. Add adult exercise equipment (i)
- 4. Little League fields
 - a. Upgrade concession stand, field irrigation, field lights, fences, scoreboards, bullpens, batting cages, and straighten foul poles (k, e, j)
- 5. Babe Ruth Baseball field (e)
 - a. Trim pine trees by American flag
 - b. Paint trim on buildings and rebuild pitching mounds in bullpens and push down fence posts
 - c. Replace lighting to Stafford Field
- 6. Volleyball courts: Determine usage. If there is demand, update. If there is little demand, replace with a higher demand activity such as a skateboard park or basketball courts. (h, k, e)
- 7. Walkers (j, i, k, e)
 - a. Safe, paved, well-lit pathways around the park
 - b. A paved, direct route from seating and observation locations to the restrooms
 - c. Stations for dog debris pick up

8. Water users
 - a. Larger or additional docks for boaters to arrive by water and use the park (j, k, e)
 - b. Place benches on docks, by the waterfront, in locations useful to snowmobilers in winter (j, k, e)
 - c. More docks to accommodate additional fishing and ice fishing. Daily boat tours would be more possible. (k, e)
 - d. Water craft rental and boat rides
9. Let's Go Fishing
 - a. Maintain current facilities

Pioneer Park and Historical Complex is 12.4 acres of land centrally located on South Oneida Avenue close to several historic residential neighborhoods, Lincoln Street and downtown on a bend in the Pelican River. Pioneer Park is one of the most intensively used parks in Rhinelander with a range of activities. The mix of open space, heavily wooded areas and historic structures create a “quaint country feel.”⁶

The park contains tennis courts, a softball diamond, winter ice rink, picnicking areas, the City's largest and most used playground, City Parks garage, and the Pioneer Park Historical Complex, an open-air museum. The Pioneer Park ball diamond continues a long heritage of men's fast pitch and girls' softball. In the summer, it is the site of the Hodag Farmers' Market and the Oneida County Fair, both major draws for visitors.

The intensity of use has created disagreements over its future. In 2016 proposals to add a softball field and a dog park were denied. Many were upset when the boards enclosing the ice hockey rink were removed. Users opposed to further development felt the park is too small to accommodate many new uses, and were concerned about the preservation of open space and trees.

Pioneer Park Historical Complex (PPHC) is in the north end of Pioneer Park in a fenced-in enclosure. It is comprised of seven semi-independent museums in 10 main buildings and numerous ancillary structures owned by the city. The museums are supported by several volunteer groups, and by a PPHC Advisory Committee. PPHC was initially staffed by volunteers. As volunteer support waned, the City took over that function seven years ago. The Hotel Room Tax funds PPHC staff. Donations do not cover remaining needs and many of the aging structures and exhibits need repair.

The museum complex has thousands of visitors each summer, mainly from the Great Lakes Region, but also from all over the United States and other nations. PPHC could be more of a tourist draw if it was developed and more widely advertised.

⁶ Discussion comment posted on online engagement website

Appropriate Uses

- Unstructured play
- Walking and biking
- Softball
- Picnic
- Work and lunch breaks
- Family and other group events
- Youth hang out
- Experience and appreciate the history and heritage of the Rhinelander area
- Large community events such as the Oneida County Fair
- Small community events such as the weekly Hodag Farmers' market
- Quiet enjoyment of the woods and Pelican River

Park Needs

1. Upgraded and maintained restrooms (a, b, i, k, g, e, c)
2. Tennis courts are discussed at the end of this section under "Needed Community Facilities" (a, g, e)
3. Open space preserved (b, g)
4. A large pavilion, possible a year-round, multi-use facility (b, g, e)
5. Improved and expanded lighting, electrical service and potable water (a, b, i, g, e)
6. Splash pad (d, g, e)

Specific User Needs

1. Playground Users
 - a. Repaired or replaced playground equipment (a, b, i, k, g, e)
 - b. Paved paths to improve access (a)
 - c. Add shaded seating and play areas (a)
2. Softball Diamond (e, j)
 - a. Evaluate softball field if alternative site capable of hosting a tournament is developed (e, j)
3. Oneida County Fair (e)
 - a. Upgrade lighting and electrical hookups (a, b, i, g, e)
 - b. A band shell (e)
 - c. Large picnic pavilion (e)
 - d. Additional restrooms (e)
4. Hodag Farmers' Market (e)
 - a. Dedicated market area in the park
 - b. Vehicle access for vendors and parking for visitors
 - c. Expanded electrical service
 - d. A pavilion that shelters vendors and customers
5. Pioneer Park Historical Complex
 - a. Renovation, better maintenance and winter protection of structures, the train, and outdoor exhibits. (a, j, d, i, k, e)
 - b. Inventory and evaluation of trees. Remove failing trees that endanger structures (e)
 - c. Remove hanging branches and encroaching vegetation (e)

- d. Access to museum exhibits that meets ADA standards to include the model train layout in the basement of the Soo Line Train Depot Museum. (k, e)
- e. Schedule of roof cleaning, repair and replacement. Immediate need for Rural Schoolhouse Museum (j, i, e)
- f. Back gate to improve site vehicular access and movement of antique fire trucks from Fire Barn (e)
- g. Remove tipi and add historically accurate Native American/Fur Trapper exhibit or educational area (j, i, k, e)
- h. Build new structure to shelter railroad and logging equipment and other outdoor displays. Include workshops, archive, storage and office space, perhaps a new visitor's center and gift shop. This long-term project could be built in phases. (a, j, i, k, e)
- i. Explore expansion options into undeveloped land along Barnes St. to improve vehicular access and parking, and provide for museum support functions, such as offices, archive, workshops, storage and a new visitor's center with gift shop (e)
- j. Support efforts to create a new nonprofit or foundation to provide volunteer support, fundraising, coordination and guidance to the entire museum complex (e)

Sarocka Field is a 3-acre neighborhood park located in the Courthouse District on what was the Rhinelander High School football field. It has tennis courts, a ball field, a playground, open play space. It is the site for Pop Warner Football. It is a popular sledding hill in winter. The only parking is on neighborhood streets. Sarocka Field needs better maintenance and amenities to fulfill its potential.

The park is a Locally Designated Historic Site due to its historic ties to the community and because it is the site of the Green Bay Packer's first training camp in 1935. Leadership Oneida County 2016, Rhinelander Historic Preservation Commission and other institutions collaborated to design a memorial gateway on Rives Street. They are currently seeking grant funding.

Appropriate Uses

- Unstructured play
- Picnic
- Snow sledding
- Ice skating
- Field sports

Park Needs:

1. Repaired or replaced playground equipment (a, k, e, c)
2. Tennis courts are discussed at the end of this section under "Needed Community Facilities"
3. Improved parking (a)
4. Restrooms (a, i, e)
5. Ice rink (a, k, e)
6. Ballfield, dugout and steps maintenance (a)

7. Integrate proposed memorial into park design (e)
8. A multi-purpose covered pavilion for gatherings that can also be a warming house for ice skaters and sledders (e)

Pop Warner Football Needs:

1. A larger storage shed with Historic Preservation Design Review approval. (e)
2. Include restrooms in storage building (e)

Shepard Park & Pelican Rapids

Shepard Park is 8.4 acres on the Pelican River. It was the former wastewater treatment plant site. A

new pumping station is at that location. There is a picnic area at the wooded hilltop and a paved walkway along the river. The Pelican Rapids Boat Landing is a 2.7-acre site at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers. It offers a boat landing and picnic area. The two areas are separated by Boyce Drive, the entry from State Highway 17.

This combined park was part of the original Curran Family Homestead and Trading Post, which predated the founding of Rhinelander in 1882. It later became part of the estate of Eugene Shepard, inventor of the Hodag.

It is primarily a nature area and boat ramp. Users cited the natural beauty and riverfront overlook as the primary assets. The area is underused. Further development may include a bicycle trail to Kemp Street, a lighted boardwalk at the confluence, a kayak landing, and better connections to Holmboe Conifer Forest State Natural Area, which lies directly across the Pelican River from the park. It is currently the proposed location for a dog park.

Appropriate Uses

- Unstructured play
- Walking and community gathering
- Small boat, canoe, kayak and paddleboard access to rivers
- Picnic
- Snow sledding
- Quiet enjoyment of the Pelican River

Park Needs

1. Park benches, docks, picnic tables, etc. that take advantage of riverfront overlook (a, j, k)
2. A small playground (h, i)
3. Pedestrian and bicycle access via West Prospect St. at Brunner to serve nearby neighborhoods (h, i)
4. At pumping station drive, add public restrooms and small pavilion (h, i)
5. Walking, biking and skiing trails (a, b, j, k, i, e)
6. Location and direction signage

7. Safe pedestrian crossing of Boyce Drive
8. Safe pedestrian and bike crossing of Pelican River that continues to Holmboe Conifer Forest State Natural Area (a, e)

User Needs:

1. A community-based dog park. The need for a dog park was a top recommendation and received the greatest support of any specific proposed park improvement (a, d, b, k, g, e, c)
2. A kayak and canoe landing (a, j, d)

West Side Park is a 5.9 acre neighborhood park. It is the only City park west of the Wisconsin River. The park contains a softball diamond and a BMX race track managed and maintained by Hodag BMX. Other amenities are a small playground, two single user restrooms, and a shelter. There is no access to drinking water.

A large part of West Side Park is undefined open space with few trees that serves as a water catchment area for the surrounding neighborhood. Particularly in the spring, water floods much of the park and the ball diamond is unusable. Thus, West Side Park is not used to its potential, and its facilities are in the worst condition of all City parks.

Hodag BMX has held sanctioned racing for the past eighteen years at West Side Park. The club hosts annual local, state, and regional events which attract riders from the local area, state, and country. Park improvements would make larger sponsored events possible and draw many more participants and spectators that bring tourist revenue to Rhinelander. (e)

To locate a skateboard park at West Side Park could overburden the park and the user groups responsible for each. Park neighbors are concerned about noise. (a, e)

Appropriate Uses

- BMX competitions
- Unstructured play
- Youth hang out
- Picnic and other group events at pavilions

Park Needs:

1. Improved playground (a, k, g, e, c)
2. Improved parking (a, e)
3. More restrooms, park benches and picnic facilities (a, c)
4. Provide drinking water (a, e)
5. Resolve flooding with landscaping that complements recreational use and the natural environment, possibly with a pond/catchment basin (e)

6. A park design developed with the neighborhood that makes West Side a safe, attractive, fully functional neighborhood park (e)
 - a. Include uses that relieve some pressure on the other parks
 - b. Anticipate infrastructure needed for larger, more frequent BMX events

BMX Race Track Needs:

1. Asphalt paved track turns to improve safety and eliminate washouts (k, e)
2. Updated track lighting (k, e)
3. A new pavilion area with potable water and restrooms (a, b, e)
4. Improved bike and pedestrian access to and around the track (a, e)
5. A fence to close the track when it is not safe to ride and to prevent vandalism (e)

General Park Facility Needs

require further information to plan these park facilities that can be in one location or in multiple locations.

- Additional softball diamond (a, b, k, e)
 - Removal or reuse of the diamonds depend on construction of softball fields or an athletics complex capable of hosting tournaments
 - A flat site is required
 - Each softball diamond requires 1.5 to 2.0 acres⁷
 - Softball involves the City (host), user groups (facility funding and program advocacy) and the School District of Rhinelander (sponsor).
 - Discuss development of softball diamonds on School District of Rhinelander property with the District. Remove or adapt existing diamond for other ball diamond use.
- Dog park (a, b, c, d, e, f, h)
- Disc golf (a)
- Ice skating rink(s) (a)
- Pickleball and tennis courts (a, g, e)
 - The community reports need for two tennis and pickleball courts.
 - At present, there are tennis courts in Hodag, Pioneer and Sarocka parks. None are in good condition. Remove Hodag and Sarocka park courts and renovate Pioneer Park tennis courts.
- Basketball courts (a)
- Biking, skiing and walking trails (a, d)
- All-season community gathering space(s).
- All-season athletic complex

Park-Like Places

in and near Rhinelander were not studied by the task force.

⁷ National Recreation and Park Association, quoted in City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020, Attachment B.

- **Norway Street Snow Dock**

This small lot on the west bank of the Wisconsin River is not an official park. It provides river access that can be improved with a better boat ramp and new kayak/canoe ramps (a, j, d)

- **Slaughterhouse Creek**

The City owned site has potential for dog park, softball complex, year-round athletic complex, or other large open space uses (a, d). Slaughterhouse Creek is in southeast Rhinelander between Old Highway 8 and the industry, commercial and mobile home park on the south side of Lincoln St. It includes the former City landfill, a brownfield nearing the end of remediation. The task force did not study how to release the brownfield area from remediation or what uses would be permitted.

- **Linear Parks and Trails**

Rhinelander needs more biking and hiking trails that connect parks, schools, other destinations in the city, and other trail systems. People asked for trails to access natural areas, especially along the rivers. (a, d, b, j, k)

- **Northwoods Golf Course**

The City owned golf course is a community asset. Public opinion about the golf course varies. People are glad it hosts Nordic skiing and biking trails adjacent to Heal Creek. (a, d)

- **Heal Creek**

Several properties in land trusts are known as Heal Creek. They are managed for silent sport trails attractive to tourists. The site adjoins Northwoods Golf Course. (a, k, d) Rhinelander Area Silent Trails Association (RASTA) has plans for trail development at Heal Creek.

- **City Mini-Parks**

There are two mini-parks in downtown Rhinelander that the task force did not study. They are:

- Stevens Port Square at Davenport and Stevens streets.
- Estabrook Green Space and the corner of Rives and Brown streets.

5. Park Development Strategy

Direction from the Comprehensive Plan

There are several goals and policies in the City of Rhinelander Comprehensive Plan of 2016 as adopted which pertain to the parks:

- Provide a safe and healthy environment in Rhinelander for people to live, work, and play.⁸
- Provide outdoor recreation for residents and visitors
- Encourage development of a walking and biking train and pathway system throughout the City to take advantage of existing natural amenities⁹
- Continue to support the Pioneer Park Historical Complex.¹⁰
- Downtown riverfront redevelopment is an opportunity to achieve the goal “Make Downtown Rhinelander a destination” and the objective “Create a strong linkage between the Wisconsin River and the central business district through strategic public and private sector cooperation and public works projects.”¹¹ The City can support maximum development and community benefit by leveraging private investment with public investment in infrastructure that includes park and linear parks (paths and trails). A Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) is one financial tool the City can use. A public-private partnership that includes park user groups meets the urgent need the public identified. (a)
- Make it policy to track plan implementation of recommendations and capital improvements¹²
 - Review Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan goals and objectives each year
 - Update Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan current every 5 years

Direction from the City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020

Plan amendments are common and part of the planning process.¹³ Amendments frequently represent project development or good use of the plan. The Park, Buildings and Grounds Committee can respond best to well-prepared amendments to the *City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020*.

Changes may be made to the plan within the 5-year plan timeframe. The order of action is:

1. Present proposal to Parks, Buildings and Grounds Committee in meeting.
2. The Committee meets to act on the proposal.
3. If approved by the Committee present to the City Council for approval.
4. If approved, to apply for outdoor recreation grants, forward the Plan changes to the DNR.

⁸ North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (2016). City of Rhinelander, Wisconsin Comprehensive Plan 2016, page 39

⁹ IBID, page 52

¹⁰ IBID, page 17

¹¹ IBID, page 61. See also,

http://www.wausaudevelopment.com/portals/0/resources/documents/RFP_WausauEastRiverfront.pdf.

¹² IBID, page 39

¹³ North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (2015). City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020, page 1ff.

Project proposals need to include funding needs for a facility that meets standards, and explain coordination with private sources. Proposals are best brought to the committee in time to include in the fall budgeting process. Project proposals need to include:

- Goal of each project
- Design of the proposed facility
- Projected costs
- Funding sources: private donations, grants, etc.
- Naming opportunities, if approved by city, that rewards private donors.

Funding Strategy

At the September 8, 2016, public meetings five funding strategies were presented for discussion. The public ranked “park district” as most useful.¹⁴ The other funding strategies discussed in September, in order of preference, are:

1. User fees
2. User group non-profit organizations fund infrastructure and programs
3. Business sponsorships
4. Collaborate with School District of Rhinelander to build new athletic fields in one location

A poll on the public engagement website home page asked registered visitors which strategy they thought was most useful. Twenty of 28 people ranked “park district that includes Rhinelander and surrounding Towns” as most useful.

The Rhinelander Area Library District is an existing special use funding district. A county-wide park district is a second model. Both are politically challenging. A county Park District may be less challenging.

The City can also use additional funding strategies such as:

- Crowdsourcing
 - In Person, give restaurant, hotel, and retail customers the option to add a contribution to support Rhinelander parks and trails
 - Municipal utility bills, add a park donation option
 - Via social media and local websites invite the Rhinelander diaspora to contribute
 - A Friends of Rhinelander Parks not-for-profit organization that advocates for the parks and helps coordinate fundraising and project planning
- Income producing activities
 - Food and beverage sales at times user groups are not selling
- Grants
 - Adoption of the *City of Rhinelander Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2020* qualifies Rhinelander for of Federal and State outdoor recreation grants.¹⁵
 - The City and park user groups should identify appropriate grants and who would write the proposals for the City.

¹⁴ A report from the September meeting is included in the attachments

¹⁵ Chapter NR 50.06(4), Wisconsin Administrative code

- Tax Increment Financing and other infrastructure financing options. For example, in 2016 the City of Wausau leveraged the 15-acre East Riverfront Development public-park development.
- Support user groups to host tournaments and events. For example, Central Wisconsin BMX in Wisconsin Rapids hosts national events that add \$500,000 to \$1 million dollars to the local economy. Visitors will need lodging, meals, shopping, and other services. Spectators may be willing to pay City Parks for event parking. Other direct city income comes from user group fees. Indirect income comes from increased sales and room taxes and the economic multiplying effect of outside money.

6. 2017 to 2018 Park Priorities¹⁶

Project in Priority Order are:

1. A Dog Park. Work with Drs. Foster and Smith (Petco) for final funding and implementation.
2. Improve drainage at West Park.
3. Establish an advisory committee of representative park users to work with City Parks, Buildings and Grounds Direct and elected officials to review and support Plan implementation.
4. Collaborate with the School District of Rhinelander to study, evaluate and act on the recommendation to move the softball diamonds from Pioneer and West Side parks to Rhinelander High School grounds. Further collaborate with foundations and organizations to raise necessary funds. Current ball diamonds may be converted to serve other unmet needs.
5. Review existing and potential community gathering spaces to identify how to improve and encourage year-round use.
 - a. Ice skating is a winter time activity to re-establish. People suggest the Trig's out lot (a prominent downtown location) and Sarocka Park. Outdoor winter activity would benefit downtown. Features to consider include a landscaped community space, seating and possibly a fire pit.
 - b. Plan for a multi-purpose, year-round facility at Hodag Park that includes restrooms, gathering space, and may replace the existing concession stand for food and beverage sales. Potential users include Hodag Water Ski Shows, Little League, and Community Band.
 - c. Work with community groups and Rhinelander Chamber of Commerce to promote year-round activities at Hodag Park such as Lights of the Northwoods in December, concerts, festivals, fun runs and other events.
6. Inventory all facilities.
 - a. Evaluate which can be removed if not used or needed. Repair remaining facilities.
 - b. Plan conversion of underused facility to new uses: pickle ball, basketball courts, skateboarding or to expand current uses such as gathering place, green space, trees, or playground.
7. Work with Rhinelander Community Foundation and other organizations to establish restricted accounts for Rhinelander Park capital projects and maintenance endowments. These new financial tools can complement the fundraising already done by the many independent user groups for the infrastructure and the programs they manage.

¹⁶ Also see "Interviews with User Groups" in attachments.

Attachments

1. Core Values - International Association for Public Participation
2. Principles of Good Practice - Community Development Society
3. The Seven Core Principles for Public Participation – National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, adopted by International City/County Management Association
4. Public Engagement Data from Events April 18 and 20, 2017 (citation a)
5. Survey Results Summary from March 18, 2017 Hodag Home Show Meet and Greet (citation d)
6. Interviews with User Groups – Summary Table (citation e)
7. Preliminary Summary Results from Community Conversations 8 September 2016 – Memo (citation f)
8. Reflections on Rhinelander Resident Park Survey, Summer 2016 (citation g)
9. Parallel Data Tables
 - a. Park Use
 - b. Demographics
 - c. Funding Strategies
 - d. Information Sources
 - e. Meeting Evaluation

IAP2/International Association for Public Participation Core Values

As an international leader in public participation, IAP2 has developed the "IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation" for use in the development and implementation of public participation processes. These core values were developed over a two year period with broad international input to identify those aspects of public participation which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries. The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Principles of Good Practice

Community Development Society

<http://www.comm-dev.org/about/principles-of-good-practice>

As a part of the CDS beliefs, the organization follows the core Principles of Good Practice:

- Promote active and representative participation toward enabling all community members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives.
- Engage community members in learning about and understanding community issues, and the economic, social, environmental, political, psychological, and other impacts associated with alternative courses of action.
- Incorporate the diverse interests and cultures of the community in the community development process; and disengage from support of any effort that is likely to adversely affect the disadvantaged members of a community.
- Work actively to enhance the leadership capacity of community members, leaders, and groups within the community.
- Be open to using the full range of action strategies to work toward the long-term sustainability and well-being of the community.

The Seven Core Principles for Public Engagement

These seven principles reflect the *common* beliefs and understandings of those working in the fields of public engagement, conflict resolution, and collaboration. In practice, people apply these and additional principles in many different ways.

1. CAREFUL PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.

2. INCLUSION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

3. COLLABORATION AND SHARED PURPOSE

Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.

4. OPENNESS AND LEARNING

Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously evaluate public engagement activities for effectiveness.

5. TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.

6. IMPACT AND ACTION

Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.

7. SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality public engagement.

Rhinelanders Parks Task Force Public Engagement Data

gathered from public engagement event on 4/18/17

Question 1 Part One: List all of the people and groups that use Rhinelanders parks.

1. Families (children, adults, and elderly)
2. Athletes/Team Sports participants
3. Tourists and visitors
4. Community events/non-profits
5. Fair and Farmers Market
6. Nature Lovers

Also listed:

- people with special needs
- exercisers (walking/jogging)
- fisherman
- museum visitors
- skiers
- waterskiers

Part Two: What activities are important to accommodate in our parks?

1. Picnicking and use of pavilions
2. Sports/Playing ball
3. Kids Play/Playground equipment
4. Walking, exercising
5. Enjoying nature
6. Community events and festivals
7. Dog park

Also listed:

- swimmers/ beach goers
- bikers, BMX
- fishing tournaments
- family/group gatherings
- skateboarding
- tennis/pickleball
- museum visiting

Question 2 Part One: What facilities are needed for those activities?

1. Year round, well-maintained restrooms, facilities, pavilions, grills (existing infrastructure)
2. Facilities to allow for use of parks morning, day, and night - lighting for baseball, softball, community
3. More paths/handicap accessible walkways
4. Dog park
5. Multi-use facility -need facility to provide access for winter and summer gathering space & activities
6. Year round activities (ice skating)
7. Updated, handicap accessible playground equipment

Also listed:

- additional restrooms
- additional picnic tables, benches
- preserve open space
- electrical and plumbing infrastructure
- more/better quality ball fields
- docks (not just at boat landing)
- tennis/pickleball courts

Part Two: What do we currently lack?

1. Funding
2. Proactive maintenance, especially restrooms
3. Quality walkways, paths, lighting
4. A facility to be used by community members for gatherings/events (heated in winter)
5. Shelters, grills, tennis courts
6. Playground equipment (especially Hodag and West Side Parks)

Also listed:

- electrical for fair and pavilions
- ballfield lights
- public ice rinks
- bike paths

Question 3 What is urgent?

1. City leadership, communication and action
2. Public/private/usergroup partnerships and groups working together
3. Maintenance of existing facilities
4. Restroom maintenance and upgrades
5. Determine funding pathways
6. Lighting and electrical upgrades
7. Identifying the character of the parks. Where should dog park, lights, baseball, skiing, gathering, etc. be located?

Also listed:

- improve ball fields
- trust in user groups (from the city)
- community parks marketing and promotion plan
- more parking
- bleachers for spectators
- playground equipment

Question 4 Part One: What have you seen at other parks that might be valuable here?

1. Well-maintained facilities
2. Concerts and festivals
3. Lighted walkways and paths
4. Year round use of parks (ice skating)
5. Community gathering facilities (heated buildings, large pavilions)
6. Holiday lights display

Also listed:

- splash pool/splash pad
- rentable recreation equipment (bikes, kayaks)
- well-maintained sports complexes
- well-used waterfront with amenities
- skate parks
- camping facilities

Part Two: How does that fit with your hopes of what Rhinelander parks will be in 10 years?	Votes
1. Parks as a source of pride	10
2. Well-maintained parks	7
3. Four season usage by residents and visitors	7
4. Multi-generational usage/ diverse user groups	4
5. Management of parks with a long range plan	3
6. Dog park	2

The Task Force collected 88 short surveys. Several themes emerged from the comments:

- **Support for a dog park:** Many people missed the informal dog park in the Pioneer Park hockey rink. Pioneer Park and Shepard Park were most mentioned future locations.
- **Child and family activities, facilities:** Better playgrounds, a greater number of affordable programmed activities, and more introductory sports programs.
- **Extend and connect biking/hiking/silent sports trails:** People mentioned the example of other communities who have done so.
- **Park development spurs economic development:** An athletic complex, bike trails, waterfront development, music and special activities draw people to town.
- **Negative neighbors squash projects:** Some people were frustrated by how long it takes to make decisions. Then negative comments from a few neighbors stop any changes.
- **Better maintenance and improved public restrooms:** Especially for Sarocka Field and West Side Park. Playgrounds, park benches, picnic tables and pavilions in every park.
- **Manage potential conflicts among uses:** Pioneer Park and Hodag Park.

Park	What People Appreciate	What to Improve
Hodag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterfront • Boat launch and dock • Natural beauty • Mature trees • Open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More events and activities • Lawn and vegetation upkeep • Playground • Restrooms • Boat launch • Hodag Beach House
Pioneer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central location • Variety of activities • Farmers’ Market • Oneida County Fair • Natural beauty, mature trees • Playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog park • Playgrounds
Shepard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees • Natural beauty • Playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog park • Playground • Benches and picnic tables
West Side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMX track • Ballfield • Playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage • Playground • Additional ballfield • Picnic shelter
Sarocka Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sledding hill • Playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballfield maintenance • Tennis court maintenance

A detailed report of results and selected comments is available at <https://www.placespeak.com/en/topic/5212-rhinelanders-parks-public-engagement/#/resources>.

Interviews with User Groups

Park Users	Current Plans for Facility Improvements and Timeline	Current status of fund raising. Sources of funds (grants, fees, etc.)
4H	4H is hopeful that Pioneer Park will get improved electrical infrastructure.	4H is independently funded and purchases tents or other needed items as necessary.
Babe Ruth	Babe Ruth plans to continue to assist with maintenance of Stafford Field and it's concession stand, dugouts, and batting cages as needed. This season, Babe Ruth would like the pine trees trimmed that cover the American Flag and would like to paint the trim on the Stafford Field concession stand.	Babe Ruth players pay a fee to pay. Babe Ruth also pays the city of Rhinelander \$500 per year for use and upkeep of the fields.
Rhinelander Community Foundation	The Community Foundation supports update to facilities and maintenance at all parks that will contribute to vitality and quality livability in the Rhinelander area for all ages and abilities. The Foundation hopes to support and collaborate non-profits and municipalities to achieve this goals. The Foundation recognizes that this can be achieved only with proper input, planning and leadership from the City.	A donor initiated the Hodag Parks Improvement Fund. It is open for public contributions. RCF facilitates continued charitable donations and collaboration with other non-profits and municipalities based on donor interest and support for the parks. Well executable plans are necessary. Naming and sponsor opportunities may be attractive for new and enhanced community spaces.
County Fair	The Fair is installing a 60 amp permanent power panel by the tennis courts. This power installation will 1) get clean and adequate power to the tennis court area where the 4H Exhibition Court is located, and 2) supply power to street lights to be installed in 2018. The Fair hopes to install two of the street lights in summer 2017 to illuminate the north gate walkway.	The Fair has money carried over from previous years.
Hodag Paw (Dog) Park	The Hodag Paw Park is proposed for Shepard Park for construction in summer 2017. There will be small and large dog areas. Amenities will include seating, dog waste receptacles, and a dog community bulletin board. Improvements to negotiate with the city to provide include signage, roads and parking, water for dogs and humans, and additional electrical service. Future plans include a throwing field for fetch and retrieve dogs.	As planned, Hodag Paw Park is fully funded by private donations (\$10,000) and sponsorship from Drs. Foster and Smith (Petco).
Hodag Farmers' Market	The Hodag Farmers' Market does not have plans for park improvements at this time.	The Farmers Market pays the city \$70/year for electric and land use. Each vendor pays \$10/visit or \$125 per season to participate. No fund raising is planned.
	The Pioneer Park Historical Complex Museums is determining how to shelter the train and outdoor exhibits. The museums at PPHC are: Logging, Rural Schoolhouse, CCC Museum, Soo Line Train Depot, Thunder Lake Lumber Company Railroad, Fire Barn, Red's Sawmill, Duke Montgomery Antique Outboard Motor and Boating	Hotel Room Tax funds the Site Coordinator, tour guides and some advertising. City owns the land and buildings and pays for utilities, security, insurance and provides basic yard maintenance and minor building maintenance. Improvements are made with donations and volunteer labor. Needs outweighs income. In 2020 the City may borrow money for major repairs, such as roof replacement. Minor income from gift shop, coin operated displays, and wishing well. User fees and corporate sponsorship under consideration.
Hodag BMX	Improve lighting, pave turns, build canopy over starting hill, build new registration/concessions/bike repair/ bathroom structure.	Nonprofit donations, volunteer labor, grants, concessions, racer fees
Ice Skaters	There is interest in an ice rink and warming house in one or two city parks. No organized group exists at this time that is pursuing this goal.	None

Interviews with User Groups

Park Users	Current Plans for Facility Improvements and Timeline	Current status of fund raising. Sources of funds (grants, fees, etc.)
Let's Go Fishing	A long term need may be boat storage. They currently use the property of an elderly Hodag Park neighbor.	Let's Go Fishing is a non-profit volunteer run organization. It does not charge participants. They rely on donations and ad sales. Fundraising is sometimes a struggle.
Little League	Little League needs a new concession stand at Hodag Park and an additional softball field prior to the 2018 season. Improvements needed in the next 1-3 years: add irrigation, new fencing, improved infields/dirt, and lights to the baseball fields at Hodag Park. Restroom upgrades are needed at Hodag, West Side, and Pioneer Parks. Other improvements include drainage at West Side, and at Hodag dugout improvements, regulation Little League fields, mounds, PA system at Hodag, and repaired foul poles.	Player fees, non-profit donations, concession stand profits, sponsorships, individual donations, volunteer labor. The city mows the Little League fields. Little League pays the city \$1,382.50/year for dragging the fields, painting foul lines, etc. Nearly all upgrades and maintenance to existing Little League fields or buildings has been funded by Little League through donations and fees.
Pop Warner Football	Pop Warner plans a newer and larger equipment shed in the next 1-2 years.	Pop Warner has the funds to build a new equipment shed from player fees and donations.
Rhineland Area Silent Trails Association (RASTA)	Maintenance of current trail systems. Development of Heal Creek	Trail fees, registration fees, donations, grants
Tennis and Pickleball	None. Rhineland tennis and pickleball players use the high school courts.	None.
Water Skiers (Hodag Water Show)	In the next 1-3 years, HWS will replace the storage building. The new building will include storage, concessions, changing areas, and restrooms. Running water and sewer are necessary. Upgraded walking path lighting is a secondary priority.	HWS relies on membership dues, concession sales, donations, sponsorships, and fundraisers. They have 501(c)3 status and just began a capital campaign to raise money for the new building that they need.
Skate Park	The 2015 Outdoor Recreation Plan recommends a skate park. There are no plans in place.	None.



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14 September 2016

TO: Rhineland City Parks, Buildings and Grounds Committee
FR Myles Alexander, UWEX Oneida County
RE: Preliminary Summary Results from Community Conversations 8 September 2016

Attendance at the community conversations totaled 70. Midday 40 people participated. In the evening attendance was 30. Not everyone voted on the multiple choice questions. Everyone participated in table discussions. The tables combine both sessions, with a few exceptions. There are some differences between the midday and evening results. Those differences are likely due to the number of older people that participated midday. The aggregate is most important.

The software upgrade I was instructed to make by the instant voting tech support person removed the ability to record the demographic questions. That is very unfortunate. I expected to be able to separate votes by, for example, location of residence. Unfortunately, that is not possible with the upgrade.

I did capture the residence location from the evening session. The proportion of City to surrounding Town residents was 2:1. Most of the people signed in. It may be possible to identify their residence location.

In the midday session the question of fees combined individual users and groups that contract for park facility use. People thought of them differently. I separated them for the evening session. You will see S1 for the midday session and S1A and S1B for the evening session

Another data problem is votes evaluating Strategy 2 are missing for the evening session. The ranking votes of both sessions were recorded. Strategy 2 ranked highest.

Because people were surprised by the format of the meeting I am surprised how positively they evaluated the meeting. Seventy-nine percent were satisfied with their small group discussion. Sixty-nine percent would also come to another meeting like this to discuss an important local issue. Since these events were the first of their kind, it was important that people thought well of the discussions which were the core of the meeting. Sixty-three percent felt more encouraged about Rhineland parks after the meeting.

I am encouraged by the number of people that would participate in a similar meeting and their positive attitude. There are people willing to work on master planning questions such as what character each park should have and how different activities are best accommodated. People want to see how their investment of time and risk-taking yields positive results. To build on this initial successful public

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engagement the committee must acknowledge and use the information the public provides. As people gather to solve problems in collaboration with the city to benefit everyone, I expect skeptics such as the softball advocates who boycotted the evening event will see participation serves their interests.

In conversation with people during and after each event, the disappointment with the community conversations was due mostly to missed expectations. The press release and flyers described the meetings as “guided conversation.” Most readers, including the press, did not catch that distinction. In the future it will be good to explain the design of meetings that differ from the customary public hearing clearly and boldly.

After the table discussions I asked each table to choose one or two big ideas, the most important topics that came up at their table. Some brought more than two. They are:

- People want to be involved in the process.
- Not all [every] parks can meet all needs.
- Handicapped accessibility for kids and adults with disabilities
- Community need driven [park planning], not driven by who has money.
- Free and safe access to everyone.
- Systematic public input.
- Maintain what we have better.
- Improve infrastructure in ALL parks.
- All revenue sources must be explored. Negatives impact types eliminated. ONLY positive impact types accepted.
- Collaboration of all parks users.
- Creation of Parks District.
- Separate sports complex, both indoor and outdoor activities.
- Parks should be free with nominal use fees. The most equitable funding is a district.
- Improve current facilities and promote parks to residents and visitors.
- Preserve open space
- Like the library, Town folks use the parks. We can help pay [for them].
- Think about modern options: pickle ball, Frisbee golf, dog parks, walk and bike paths and routes, geocaching.
- Consider what parks can handle:
 - Parking at Pioneer Park can't support two ball fields.
 - Tennis courts could also be lined for pickle ball.
- Love having the [county] fair in town. [It] is working for now.
- Park district
- Hybrid funding
- Improve leadership. [There needs to be] a leader for the parks, a working leader.
- Park publicity – awareness of uses.
- Electricity in Pioneer Park
- Pavilion in Pioneer Park
- Learn from other places. What works for them? For example, Ashland, Merrill and Duluth.



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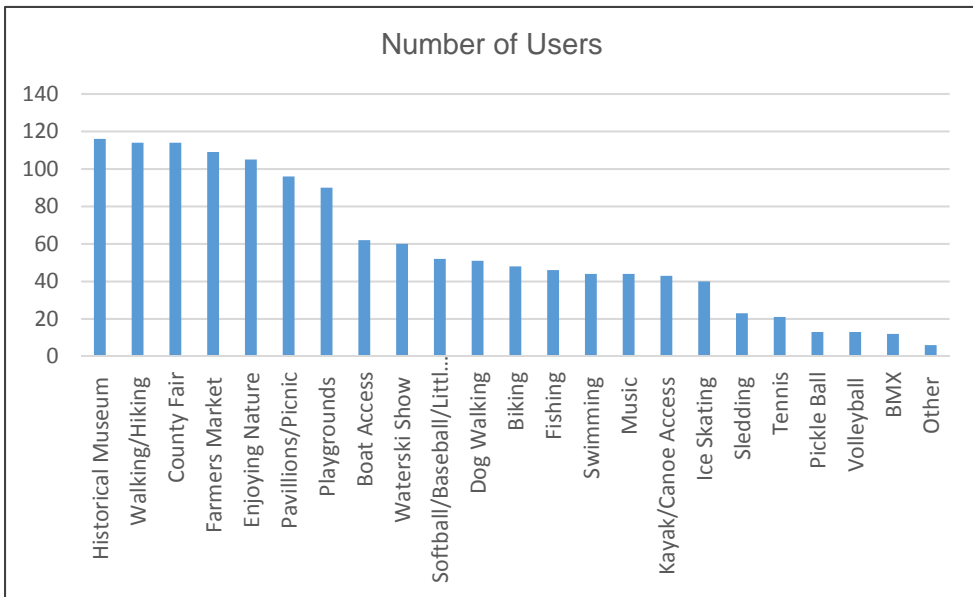
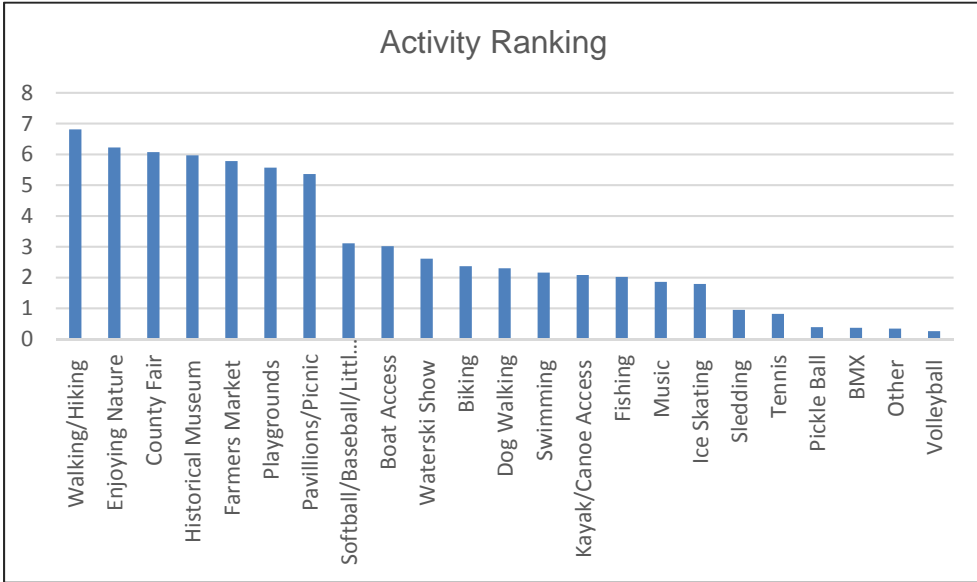
29 August 2016

Reflections on Rhineland Resident Park Survey, Summer 2016

Myles Alexander

Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development

1. The results of the survey may be interesting but they are not valid or reliable.
 - a. The sample was not random. It would be best to have responses from 350 randomly selected households.
 - b. According to the 2010 U.S. census there are 3,545 households in Rhineland. The return rate is approximately 4% (152). A 7% response rate from all households would provide minimally valid and reliable results.
 - c. Sixty percent of Rhineland homes are rental. Less than 3% of the survey respondents are renters. Thus the majority of households' interests are excluded in this survey.
2. The survey respondents represented 79 children and youth. The 2010 census reported 1850 people below the age of 19. The survey represents approximately 4% of Rhineland youth.
3. We did not request age, income, education or neighborhood location of residence information.
4. Of the people who responded to the survey (visual summary in the table below):
 - a. Most valued passive activities. The combined ranking score of Walking/Hiking, Enjoying Nature and Dog Walking is 15.33.
 - b. Water related activities score a combined 8.87.
 - c. Softball, baseball, Little League and kickball scored 3.11.



Parallel Data Tables

How do YOU use Rhinelander parks?		What do you use Hodag and Pioneer parks for?		Which recreational activities did you participate in during 2014?	
Open ended		Activities ranked from 1 (most important) to 10		Choose all that apply	
April Task Force Survey		Summer 2017 Survey		2014 Survey by NCWRPC	
	Score		Score		Score
Walk/Hike	76	Walking/Hiking	68	Walking/Hiking	78
Enjoying Nature	71	Enjoying Nature	62	Boating, Canoeing, Kayaking	62
Children Play	71	County Fair	61	Fishing	49
OC Fair	69	Historical Museum	60	Driving for Pleasure	49
Gatherings	67	Farmers Market	58	Gardening	46
Farmer's Market	60	Playgrounds	56	Swimming	45
Boating	53	Pavillions/Picnic	54	Bicycling	39
Watch Waterski	51	Ball	31	Camping (tent or RV)	33
Launch Boat	47	Boat Access	30	Bird Watching/Nature Viewing	32
Biking	44	Waterski Show	26	Cross Country Skiing/Snowshoeing	28
Museum Complex	44	Biking	24	Hunting	26
Ball	44	Dog Walking	23	Archery/Rifle Shooting	22
Music	42	Swimming	22	Running	21
Swim	42	Kayak/Canoe Access	21	Disc Golf	19
Dog Walk	38	Fishing	20	Golf	15
Sled	36	Music	19	ATV Riding	14
Launch Kayak/Canoe	33	Ice Skating	18	Dog Park Activities	14
Ice Skating	29	Sledding	10	Ice Skating	14
Tennis	24	Tennis	8	Baseball/Softball/T-ball	13
Fish Dock	24	Pickle Ball	4	Snowmobiling	12
Football	22	BMX	4	Downhill Skiing	10
Waterski	13	Other	3	Basketball	7
Volleyball	7	Volleyball	3	Geocaching/Letterboxing	6
Pickleball	4			Soccer	6
BMX	4			Volleyball	4
				Tennis	4
				Skateboarding	3
				Horse Riding	3
				Inline Skating	1
				Other (please specify)	8

Parallel Data Tables

	April Survey		2016 Summer Survey		2014 NCWRPC Survey		
	n	%	n	%		n	%
What is your age?							
<22	0	0%			18 - 24	17	4%
22 - 38	11	28%			25 - 34	96	24%
39 to 52	18	45%			35 - 44	104	26%
53 to 65	8	20%			45 - 54	60	15%
≥66 years	3	8%			55 - 64	71	18%
					65+	48	12%
What is your race?							
American Indian or A	0	0%					
Asian	0	0%					
Black/African Americ	1	2%					
Native Hawaiian or O	0	0%					
White	37	90%					
Two or more	0	0%					
Choose not to respon	3	7%					
What is your ethnicity?							
Hispanic or Latino	0						
Not Hispanic/Latino	35						
Choose not to respon	4						
household income							
< \$15,000	2	5%					
\$15,000 to \$34,999	3	8%					
\$35,000 to \$49,999	7	19%					
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11	30%					
\$75,000 to \$149,999	12	32%					
\$150,000 and above	2	5%					
Does your household own or rent your home?							
Own	35		131	97%			
Rent	6		4	3%			
Where do you live?							
Rhinelander	23	51%		100%			
Town	22	49%					
					Number of Children at Home		
					n		%
					0	208	52%
					Children in Household		
					any	190	48%
					Birth-5	27	16%
					K-5th	16	21%
					6th-8th	15	7%
					9th-12th	21	3%
					5+	4	1%
					TT	398	