

CITY OF TWO RIVERS
SPLASH PAD AND ICE RINK SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 8, 2021
6:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by City Manager Greg Buckley at 6:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Sheila Bialek, Wendy Kozlowski-Brandt, Nathan Kronforst, Kathy Peterson, Jayne Rulseh, Alyssa Schmidt (via Zoom) and Scott Steckmesser. Committee members absent: Councilmember Jay Remiker. (Note: There is one Councilmember vacancy on the Committee at this time.)

City Staff Present: Elizabeth Runge, City Planner/Community Development Director; Terri Vosters, Parks and Recreation Director; Greg Buckley, City Manager. Two Rivers Main Street Program Staff Present: Roger Russove, Executive Director.

Citizens Present: City Councilmembers Curt Andrews, Mark Bittner and Kay Koach, City Councilmember-elect Tracey Koach, Betty Bittner, Lee Hansen and Bridget Barrett (via Zoom).

Also present: Project design consultant Blake Theisen of Parkitecture + Planning.

Mr. Buckley noted that each of the committee members attending in person had been provided with a copy of the minutes of the January 21, 2021 initial committee meeting.

3. Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Buckley requested nominations for the positions of committee chair and vice chair; none were offered. Mr. Theisen suggested that the committee return to this agenda item following his presentation and committee discussion of prospective project locations.

4. Address Alternative Sites: Central Park West, Neshotah Park and Washington Park—
Report from Project Consultant Blake Theisen of Parkitecture + Planning

Mr. Theisen presented his report, reviewing the three possible locations that had been identified at the Committee's January meeting. His comments regarding the three sites included:

--Neshotah Park Site: Primary users of splash pad would likely be visitors; parking is at a premium during summer months; high water table may pose a problem for splash pad foundations and mechanicals; ice skating rink would likely not be located at this park. Side note: park playground equipment is in need of replacement. (Terri Vosters reported that her department is implementing Phase 1 of a playground equipment replacement and upgrade project in 2021.)

--Washington Park: Primary users at this site would likely be local; plenty of room; parking adequate; could readily accommodate both splash pad and ice rink uses. Side note: a well-designed community park, with a good variety of facilities.

--Central Park West: A good location to serve both local residents and visitors/tourists; downtown location could benefit downtown development; nearby Community House offers existing restrooms and support facilities; would entail a more extensive project, likely involving reconstruction of the entire park; trees at north end of park are in poor condition and need replacing; replacing bandstand with new structure at north or south end of park could increase functionality of this space; acknowledges safety concerns due to proximity to Washington Street/STH 42, but feels these can be addressed through design features; likely to place a smaller splash pad structure at this site.

Following Mr. Theisen's presentation, committee and audience members discussed the various sites.

Mark Bittner asked a question about water consumption and the cost of utilities. Mr. Theisen addressed the desire to keep daily water use under 50,000 gallons, which would allow the splash pad to be a "flow through" facility, with water discharged to the storm sewer, avoiding the recirculation and water treatment costs that would be incurred if the facility used over 50,000 gallons of water per day—this due to applicable State regulations.

Addressing concerns expressed at the January meeting about the safety of small children who would be playing at the splash pad with a heavily-travelled street nearby, Mr. Theisen suggested that, with the drop in elevation from Washington Street to West Park Street, the splash pad area could be recessed below Washington Street level, with retaining walls creating a barrier that would deter children from darting from the splash pad into the street.

Mr. Buckley then asked for each of the committee members to state whether they had a preferred site.

--Scott Steckmesser stated that he preferred the Central Park West location, noting that this project would bring year-round outdoor activities to that location and would benefit economic development in Two Rivers' downtown.

--Wendy Kozlowski-Brandt stated that she preferred the Central Park West location, for the same reasons Mr. Steckmesser had stated, and because the area would offer a variety of activities for all generations.

--Kathy Peterson stated that, as a grandmother of young children, she likes the Central Park West location best.

--Sheila Bialek stated that she loves the Central Park West location for the variety of uses it would bring downtown.

--Jayne Rulseh stated her preference for the Central Park West site, "if done right" with good design that addressed child safety concerns (proximity to traffic) and if the splash pad is presented as an art form, as well as a functional play space

--Alyssa Schmidt, noting her prior concerns about child safety at the Central Park West site, stated that she now supports that site, provided that the design takes into account those safety concerns.

--Nate Kronforst, noting his original support as a downtown business owner for Central Park West site, affirmed that support.

Comments offered by other attendees included:

--Statements by Mark and Betty Bittner in support of the Central Park West site

--A statement by Tracey Koach that she supported the Central Park West location, provided that the design addressed child safety concerns and the need for the splash pad to be both functional and a piece of public art.

--A statement by Kay Koach that she preferred the Washington Park location, due to safety and liability concerns about placing a children's play space in Central Park, in proximity to a state highway.

--A statement by Lee Hansen, in support of the Central Park West location

--A statement by Parks and Recreation Director Terri Vosters that she preferred Washington Park from a parks and rec perspective, but appreciated the community benefits of the downtown location and that the design of the splash pad would be different than if it were placed in a park setting.

--Comments by Community Development Director Elizabeth Runge about the economic development advantages of the downtown location

--A statement by City Manager Greg Buckley that he liked the Central Park West location because it would serve both residents and visitors, and because Central Park West is in need of a major revamping.

--A statement by Two Rivers Main Street Program Director Roger Russove, in support of the downtown/Central Park West location.

5. Other Design Considerations

Mr. Theisen noted that he had brought a couple of examples of splash pad spray heads, for inspection by committee members.

6. Review of Next Steps in Planning Process

Mr. Buckley stated that, given the unanimous position of committee members in support of the Central Park West location, he would like to take that recommendation to the City Council at its monthly work session on April 26, seeking approval to now focus the planning process on that location. If the Council agrees with this recommendation, then the next meeting could focus on preliminary design concepts for that space.

He added that a final design concept and cost estimates could then be completed by early Summer, so fund-raising and funding applications for 2022 construction could proceed. If Council were to approve final design during the second half of 2021 and fund-raising was successful, the project could be bid in December-January for Spring 2022 construction.

The City Manager encouraged Committee members to attend that 6:00 PM meeting on April 26, and asked for the design consultant to attend via Zoom, if possible.

7. Reconsider Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. Buckley asked if any committee members were now interested in serving in these positions. Sheila Bialek volunteered to serve as committee chair, and Wendy Kozlowski-Brandt volunteered to serve as vice chair. Nathan Kronforst moved, supported by Kathy Peterson, to cast a unanimous ballot to elect Sheila as Chair and Wendy as Vice Chair.

The motion was approved by voice vote, without dissent.

8. Other Questions or Concerns—None.

9. Reminder: City Council Work Session on April 26 at 6:00 PM; next committee meeting on May 6 at 6:00 PM.

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10. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Buckley declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregory E. Buckley
City Manager