

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Parks and Recreation system is composed of all those facilities (public and private) designed to allow and encourage the public to participate in activities that are passive and active. The areas in Pipestone devoted to parks and open space can most easily be labeled as playgrounds, playfields, or parks. Generally, a playground will promote active use that is geared towards children. A playfield requires a much larger area than a playground due to the fact that the facilities are developed for particular forms of active use such as team sports. A park may require a small or large area of land, and may be devoted to either passive or active uses.

The following paragraphs briefly describe the various parks, playgrounds, playfields, and other recreation facilities in the city. In addition, recommendations are provided that would enhance the scope and quality of the overall Parks and Recreation system in the City of Pipestone.

Parks, Playfields, and Playgrounds

1. Southwest Park

Southwest Park is located at 8th Avenue and 5th Street Southwest. It contains 1.6 acres of land and occupies an entire City block. The playfield possesses playground equipment, a shelter, one backstop, restrooms, and three basketball courts. The playfield abuts County State-Aid Highway (CSAH) 15 giving it excellent vehicular access, but at the same time, it poses pedestrian access problems due to a relatively high volume of traffic. The facility is heavily developed with active park uses, and small scale landscaping has been done to create a passive atmosphere. Other than street closings, the park allows little opportunity for expansion. Although Southwest Park has been over emphasized as an active recreation area, it serves its neighborhood well.

2. Harmon Park

Harmon Park has long been considered the premier community park. The facility lies at the intersection of Trunk Highway 30 and 75 which provides good city-wide vehicular access, but causes a barrier to pedestrians and limits expansion. Harmon Park contains 6.3 acres of land that hold the following facilities: a state-of-the-art aquatic facility, playground equipment, six tennis courts, sand volleyball courts, picnic facilities, shelter, one lighted ball diamond, and a parking lot. Drainage tile has been installed to alleviate flooding on the lighted ball diamond.

The restroom facilities available to park patrons are located within the bathhouse found in the northwest corner of the park. If a concession stand would be added to this facility, children would be less likely to cross the adjacent highways in search of refreshments.

3. Leon H. Moore Park

Located just north of 4th Street NW and to the west of Hiawatha Avenue is Leon H. Moore Park, one of the larger parks in Pipestone encompassing 8.9 acres. The playfield contains a picnic

area, playground equipment, basketball court, restrooms and the District 3 schoolhouse (the first schoolhouse in Pipestone County). This site lies along a major thoroughfare offering good access; however, it inhibits safe pedestrian crossing. The physical constraints of this long, narrow shaped site cause some use restrictions. The site is restricted from expansion due to the drop off of the quartzite ledge on the west and the joining of the northern boundary with the Hiawatha Pageant grounds.

Being in sight of the National Monument, this facility can be expected to bear the pressure of tourist use. Adequate picnic and shade areas should be available to accommodate the additional users. The parking lot should also be expanded. The City may consider placing a map of Pipestone's historic sites, along with other information about the City, in a visible area of the park. This may encourage users that normally bypass the business district to visit the many historic sites and areas in the city. The Rock Island Depot is immediately south of Leon H. Moore Park, and would make for an excellent starting point for self guided tours through the City.

4. Paulsen Field

Encompassing nearly 38 acres, Paulsen Field is the largest of the recreational sites in the City. The athletic complex/recreational area is located on the western fringe of the City and functions as a major playfield. Its facilities include a football stadium, 1/4 mile track, baseball diamond, two lighted little league/softball fields, practice fields for both football and baseball, shelter, two concession stands, two restroom facilities, storage buildings to house equipment, and off street parking in the southwest and northeast corners. This facility is used primarily as an athletic complex and lacks the playground equipment necessary to make it a playfield. The park lies on relatively flat land, broken by a drainage ditch that helps to control flooding.

Additional trees should be planted around the outfield fences of the ball diamonds and periodically placed throughout other open areas to separate activities and enhance the aesthetics of the area. Playground equipment would increase use by children and encourage parents to bring their children to athletic events. To promote a more passive environment, benches, picnic tables, and other landscaping activities should also be considered. Attention should also be given to the two parking areas at both ends of Paulsen Field. Both lots lack definition, which often times allows for sporadic and awkward parking conditions to occur. To prevent this from happening, the parking areas should be better defined so that patrons have no problems identifying the boundaries ó bituminous paving would be helpful.

It should be noted that the ball fields at Paulsen Field were built with the assistance of State and Federal grant monies (LAWCON). LAWCON requirements state that once a facility has been constructed with LAWCON monies it must forever remain that same facility.

5. Westview Park

A welcome addition to the City of Pipestone is Westview Park. The park incorporates a total of 20 acres-14.5 of the 20 acres has been developed while the remaining 5.5 acres will be left as open space. Located along 2nd Street NW, just north of Paulsen Field, the park has good

accessibility for both vehicles and pedestrians. The facility is comprised of a variety of activities and equipment to satisfy all ages. The following facilities are available: one lighted regulation baseball field, a 1/2 mile walking/bicycling exercise trail, one lighted regulation softball field (300 feet in length), picnic shelter, playground area, two restrooms, sand volleyball court, two parking lots (one paved), tubing hill, cross country ski trails, trees, bushes, and landscaping. This facility provides excellent opportunities for residents to participate in winter activities. The topography is relatively flat with the exception of the creek running lengthwise through most of the area. Not only will the creek sustain a more pleasant environment, it will also provide excellent drainage, allowing little potential for flooding during normal rainfalls.

Since the site is relatively new, the next decade should be devoted to developing and maturing the park and tying it into the Pipestone/Jasper School District #2854 building development. It should be noted that partial funding for this park was provided through Federal and State grant monies (LAWCON).

6. Water Tower Wayside Rest Area

This particular facility was developed with the traveler in mind. As the name suggests, the rest area is relatively passive in nature. The site is approximately 2 blocks off of Trunk Highway 23 and 75 on 2nd Street NE. Open space is available on three sides of the rest area which provides the option for expansion if the need arises. The rest area lies below the historic water tower. The water tower was built in 1921 and restored in 1990 with Celebrate 1990 grant assistance. The 1.3 acres (approx.) houses a parking area that RV accessible, and has the following facilities: picnic tables, heated restrooms, an RV dump site, small shelter, and minimal small playground equipment. Trees have been added to the area to provide adequate shade to patrons.

A sign on Trunk Highway 23 and 75 directing travelers to the rest area may draw more travelers to the site. Adding flags and lighting the water tower would attract the attention of travelers as well. This would be an excellent place to locate signs, information boards, and additional information about the City.

7. Erickson Park

Erickson Park is a small neighborhood playground serving residents on the eastern fringe of the City at the intersection of 4th Street and 9th Avenue SE. The playground is approximately 1.2 acres in size. Expansion is limited as all encompassing areas have been developed. The site is primarily equipped with playground equipment but possesses 3 park benches that help to provide a more passive environment. The land is relatively flat and drains well during normal rainfall. The facility has limited pedestrian access from the west due to Trunk Highways 23 and 75; but nonetheless, serves its neighborhood well.

Because of its size and limitations there is little that could be done to improve this park.

8. Veterans Park

As a beautification effort, Veterans Park was located in the Business District to make use of the vacant land in between two buildings. The site is extremely small (approximately 1/4 acre) and is entirely passive in nature. There exists a drinking fountain, flower beds, trees, benches, and a veterans memorial with flag pole. Security lighting has been added to provide a safe area.

This mini-park is unable to expand in any direction.

9. C.H. Bennett Park

Named after C.H. Bennett, one of the early settlers in Pipestone, this 1/2 acre mini-park houses a flag pole, a stone bearing Bennett's name, a plaque dedicating this site, and landscaping. Like Veterans Park, this area was developed to beautify the area. The site is located at the junction of Trunk Highways 23 and 75 and has off-street parking shared with the Cenex convenience store/gas station.

Adding a picnic table and bench would allow travelers a more comfortable place to rest and picnic. However, this area does not need significant development to attract travelers because of its close proximity to the Water Tower Wayside Rest Area.

10. Ewert Community Recreation Center

Ewert Community Recreation Center is located within the business district on North Hiawatha Avenue. The Center serves as an excellent recreation complex for all ages, especially during the winter months when recreation activity is limited. The facility houses a swimming pool, steam room, racquetball/handball courts, weight exercise room, gymnasium (six basketball hoops), aerobics room, lounge area, whirlpool, and tanning bed. The complex is neatly landscaped with a bed, trees and shrubs, brick sidewalks, antique street lights, park benches, and a parking lot. Use of the facility is supplemented by a daily fee or membership.

Expansion for this facility is limited to adding new programs and equipment which is done when monies become available.

11. Tree Claims

The City owns two tracts of land which are utilized as tree nurseries. The saplings are used by the City to replace damaged trees and for landscaping. The two tree claims are located just west of the Trunk Highway 30 and Trunk Highway 23 intersection, and along the north side of Paulsen Field. The Paulsen Field tree claim is used as a buffer zone delineating the north side of the facility. The City alternates use between the two sites to insure an adequate supply of trees for years to come.

Other Recreational Facilities

1. Thompson Field

Thompson Field is located on the Minnesota West Technical and Community College campus. An under developed, poorly lit softball diamond is the only recreational development that has occurred at this facility. The site is occasionally used by the City as an overflow park during tournaments, or as an alternative site because of wet conditions at the other fields.

The ball diamond could be improved by moving the side fences further away from the base lines and cutting the infield deeper into the outfield in order to comply with field standards. Shade trees and landscaping would make the relatively flat, bare area much more attractive to park users, as well as enhance the campus. Since this area is part of the college campus, other equipment and facilities should be addressed by the college and the needs of the students. Nevertheless, if the area were to receive increased usage, additional facilities such as restrooms and a concession stand may be appropriate.

2. Pipestone Country Club

Pipestone Country Club lies in the southeastern section of the City along County Road 56. The 9-hole privately owned golf course covers 56 acres of flat land. Other facilities include a clubhouse, pro shop, storage sheds, and parking lot. Use of this club is supplemented by membership or an amount based on the number of holes golfed. The Country Club has purchased land from the City to be used as a driving range.

The undeveloped land surrounding the golf course offers an excellent opportunity for the creation of a public course or expansion into an 18-hole facility if the demand would call for it. The golf course would also serve as an excellent facility for cross country skiing during winter months if allowed by the owners of the club.

3. Hiawatha Pageant Grounds

The Hiawatha Pageant Grounds are a private recreation area located on North Hiawatha Avenue immediately north of Leon H. Moore Park. The majority of use has come during the last two weeks of July and the first week of August when the Song of Hiawatha Pageant Program was being presented. Found on the premises are an amphitheater, small lake and several buildings used in the production of the Song of Hiawatha Pageant. The Song of Hiawatha Pageant announced their final program in 2008. Detailed planning will be necessary prior to any future redevelopment of the area.

4. Pipestone County Fairgrounds

This site is located on the eastern edge of the City just off the intersection of Trunk Highway 30 and 75. The 19.5 acres of flat land house a lighted auto track, grandstand, and various buildings used during fair functions. The area lacks adequate parking facilities and buffer zones between

the residential area to the west, and along Trunk Highway 30. Due to relatively little use, this area would not require any significant improvements.

5. Pipestone Family Aquatic Facility

The Pipestone Family Aquatic Center opened in July of 1997 replacing the t-shaped aluminum pool built in 1969. This 2.4 million dollar facility consists of 9,443 square feet of surface area. It has a water holding capacity of 256,100 gallons and a bather load of 573.

Amenities include a new 3,360 square foot bathhouse for the men's and women's locker rooms and shower facilities. Also included are (2) family changing rooms for single-family parents. A guardroom and storage area along with the front desk area complete this buildings features. An outside concession area is located adjacent to the bathhouse with vending machines. This area has the potential to someday become enclosed.

The design team utilized the historical initial bathhouse and renovated this building for all of the mechanical equipment needed to run this facility. All state of the art, high rate sand filters and commercial heaters make for a clean, warm water attraction for the residents of our community.

The swimming area features a zero-depth apron which gradually proceeds to a 3 to 5 feet swimming area. The diving area is 12 feet deep and features a one-meter diving board and a 22.5 foot full enclosed drop slide. A 126 foot body slide, mushroom water fall, 6 spray geysers, small children's turtle slide, wet and dry sand play areas, 2 sand volleyball courts, spacious decking, and large grass areas are all features of this fine facility.

Public School Recreation Facilities

1. Central School

The Central School grounds are comprised of 4.0 acres of which 1.2 acres were historically available for public recreation. The school has a good central location but was limited from expansion due to surrounding development. The Pipestone Public Library was also co-located with the school.

A school bond referendum was passed in 1999 to construct a Middle School/High School along west Highway 30. The new school opened in January 2003 and the Central School site was sold to a private party.

2. Hill Elementary School

With 6.1 acres of relatively flat land, Hill Elementary School has ample space available for recreational activities. The school playground is the only area devoted to recreation in the southwestern section of the City. The site has good access and serves the neighborhood well. Found on the premises are a gymnasium, library, playground equipment, hard court surface with four basketball hoops, and two ball diamonds.

Improvements to the ball diamonds would be beneficial to users for both competitive and non-competitive activities. The development of benches and trees would also promote a more passive area, which this section of the City is currently lacking. Due to surrounding development, the site is unable to expand. For this reason, the City should consider acquiring open space for park development as growth occurs in this area.

3. Brown Elementary School

Limited to access by Trunk Highway 30 and County Road 56, Brown Elementary School functions as a neighborhood playground serving the southeastern section of the City. The school encompasses 8.7 gross acres and the topography is flat with no apparent physical problems. Facilities include a library, gymnasium, playground equipment, and one ball diamond. Complemented by Harmon Playfield, the site is not deficient in any area.

Additional Recommendations

Biking and Walking Paths

The Casey Jones Trail named after the fabled railroad engineer was one of the first state trails authorized by the state of Minnesota when State Trail legislation was passed in the late 1960s. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), "The trail consists of three segments. The longest segment is 13 miles of natural-surfaced, former railroad grade between the city of Pipestone and the Pipestone/Murray county line. A second, small, natural-surfaced segment runs west 1.5 miles from the city of Lake Wilson. The third portion of the trail is a 6 mile, paved loop between Lake Shetek State Park and the city of Currie." There are parking sites in Pipestone off TH 23 and at Woodstock on the other end of the developed trail. The Friends of the Casey Jones Trail have worked for many years to plan and raise funds to complete the multiple use trail.

The addition of lighted biking and walking path in and around Pipestone would greatly strengthen the overall recreation system of the City. There exists a small portion of a bike path leading from the 5th Street dead-end to the ball diamonds on the east side of Paulsen Field. There is also a trail along North Hiawatha Avenue to the Technical College. This path could be extended around the Technical College along County Road 67. The trail would pass by the wildlife preserve, Indian Lake, the national monument, and eventually connect with a trail leading through or around Pipestone Community Park and Paulsen Field. The natural prairie setting would provide users with eye-appealing scenery around a peaceful, relatively uninterrupted area.

Indian Lake

To supplement the bike trail, a small park adjacent to Indian Lake would make the area even more attractive to potential users. Although the lake is relatively small, the use of row boards, paddle boats, canoes, or other non-motorized water vehicles would attract residents, as well as tourists, on hot summer days. The area should not be overdeveloped in order to keep its natural

appeal. Nevertheless, a shelter, restrooms, and picnic tables, could be added along with shade trees to accommodate users. Playground equipment may be added to occupy small children but should be done sparingly to insure that over development doesn't occur.

Community Involvement

A program to encourage community involvement in the upkeep of the Park Facilities could be developed. Civic organizations, businesses, and other groups could "Adopt-A-Park" and be instrumental in ensuring outdoor recreation facilities are neatly maintained and enhanced.

Park Identification

Various parks throughout the City have not been named and are simply referred to by their location, as is the case with 6th Street Playfield. To better identify these facilities, it is recommended that the parks and other facilities that are not yet named be given a proper name or title. Various parks in the City have possessed a certain uniqueness through their development, dedication, history, or because of their physical characteristics. Park patrons may be interested in knowing the significance of these facilities. This information could most easily be displayed to the public on plaques or information boards in areas that are both visible and accessible to patrons.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Goals and Strategies

Goal

It is the goal of the City of Pipestone to enhance the quality of the City by providing recreational opportunities for all residents.

Strategies

- encourage the development of a variety of park and recreation facilities (both active and passive in nature) for all residents, that are conveniently located throughout the community in response to specific neighborhood and community needs
- encourage cooperation and coordination of the City and school district in the provision and use of recreation facilities during limited, non-school hours without excessive duplication.
- create a comprehensive, interconnected system of parks and recreation areas, through the continued development of a trail and corridor network linking facilities, while providing adequate off-street parking
- promote the conservation and provision of greenbelts open space and outdoor classrooms, and wildlife areas within the community
- keep the community informed of current state and federal programs to acquire and develop park recreation and open space areas, showing the benefits of such programs
- develop and maintain a bikeway/walking system to provide an alternative means of transportation and increase safety