



City of Othello
Planning Commission
December 20, 2021
Anne Henning

CALL TO ORDER

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was a hybrid meeting with a remote component via GoToMeeting. Chair Chris Dorow called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chair Chris Dorow, Alma Carmona, Brian Gentry, Daniela Voorhies (remote)

Absent: Kevin Gilbert (ill)

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning

Attendees: Bob Carlson

MINUTES APPROVAL

Chair Dorow asked the other Commissioners if they agreed that 100' x 100' was the minimum open area in a park, as shown in the Nov. minutes for an Objective under Goal 4. All present agreed that matched their memory of the discussion.

November 15, 2021 minutes were approved as written. M/S Voorhies/Carmona

PARKS & RECREATION ELEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – UPDATE

Since July, the Planning Commission has been working on updating the Parks & Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which serves as the Park Plan that qualifies Othello for grant funding for projects such as the Lions Park ballfields, playground, and basketball courts. To continue to qualify for funding, Park Plans must be updated every 6 years, with Othello's next update due March 1, 2022.

Goals & Objectives

The Commission briefly reviewed the Goals and Objectives decided at previous meetings, and decided they were sufficient as written.

Inventory

The Commissioners discussed the new information provided, that Kiwanis Park has a deed restriction on organized team sports. Chair Dorow stated he didn't see this as a restriction on the facilities that could be provided, just on their use as part of a league. Ms. Henning pointed out that if the City is going to invest in a facility, it would probably be better to have it be one that could also be used for a league. Chair Dorow felt that a futsal court would make sense, since it is played informally rather than part of an organized league. A futsal court would be a unique amenity for Kiwanis Park. It should be lighted to extend the time it could be used. Other possibilities for unique facilities at Kiwanis mentioned were a splash pad, pickleball, and a sensory playground.

The Commissioners discussed their feelings that Triangle Park was just a money-loser for the City, with no benefit to the community. They suggested the City should sell the property to the neighbors. Chair Dorow thought this had been tried in the past, and the neighboring owners weren't interested. The Commission felt it was worth trying again, since there may be new owners or they may have a different opinion now. As an alternative, the Commissioners felt an amenity could be added to create value for the

neighborhood, such as a pickleball court. So their first recommendation is to remove Triangle Park from the park inventory, otherwise add an amenity to it.

The Commissioners noted that "Rock Park" at Madera Street and Cemetery Road should be included in the inventory and map.

Park Radius Map

Commissioners reviewed the Park Radius Map from the 2015 Comp Plan. They felt the radius for Kiwanis was too small. They felt that residents south of Main Street used Kiwanis, while those north of Main use Lions. Despite the traffic signals to help crossing the street, Main Street is such a wide and busy street, it is a definite barrier. The Commissioners felt the Kiwanis radius should extend to Main Street, so about a half mile from the park boundary (rather than from the center point, as it was done in the 2015 map.) Commissioners felt the 1.5-mile radius for Lions Park was appropriate. They felt the Pioneer radius should be rounded up from 0.19 to 0.2 miles. They felt the Triangle Park radius should be reduced from 0.14 to 0.1 mile. They felt for all parks, the boundary should be from the edge of the park, rather than the center.

Park Survey

Commissioner Gentry felt that most people weren't aware of the survey, even though it was mailed out with utility bills. He printed copies and handed out about 15 to try to get more responses. Commissioners would have liked the survey to be open longer, but they understand the need to move quickly on the Park Plan. They noted that the 239 responses for this survey was a lot better than the previous survey, which only had about 90 responses.

Chair Dorow felt the survey was confusing, and disliked the question about choosing the top 3 new facilities. He felt that including the indoor sports facilities on the list, without discussion of costs, will make people believe these facilities are being promised to the community, when they are unattainable without tax increases. Ms. Henning explained that these facilities are priorities of the parks staff, and she felt it was important to know how interested the community was in these facilities. If people had prioritized many other projects ahead of the indoor facilities, then we would know not to devote much time and energy to them. But they were among the top choices, so it shows the City should work toward providing these facilities, even if they are outside of the 6-year time frame of the current Park Plan.

Chair Dorow said the survey showed that we need more land to meet capacity needs. We can't provide the facilities the community wants in the park land that currently exists. He mentioned that Othello has the same amount of park land now with a population over 8000 as it did when he was young and the population was only 4000. He pointed out that not every facility needed separate land; for instance, it could be good to have the farmers market at a sports complex.

Commissioner Carmona pointed out that walking and hiking were very popular. She also mentioned that a soccer complex ranked lower in the survey, but that might be because of who responded. With only 8 surveys returned in Spanish, that shows very limited participation by the segment of the community more comfortable in Spanish. She also pointed out that Internet access is another barrier. She felt if the outreach had been better, soccer would have ranked higher. But among existing facilities that people want more of, soccer fields was #1. She felt that of the people she interacts with, a farmers market and soccer were tied as most needed. Chair Dorow agreed it was the same for the people he deals with.

Chair Dorow pointed out that a futsal court can double for street hockey, although the ball can get stuck in the fence. He mentioned that the existing street hockey rink has the poles on the wrong side of the fencing—the posts should be outside the fencing.

Chair Dorow said many people are interested in having a sledding hill. He mentioned one in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where a 12-story investment building added a ramp for sledding. Discussion about making the existing hill in Kiwanis taller with some earth work.

Commissioners felt that survey results conflicted with their goal of maintaining unstructured open space at parks. They felt that the capacity issue needs to be addressed so that open space can be maintained.

Public Engagement

Commissioners would like to see input from the youth and adult soccer community and volleyball community.

Chair Dorow mentioned he had talked to the Beta Club, to tell them about the Park Plan Update and gather any input. He said they didn't have any comments to share. He said he would also do a presentation to the Rotary Club, as another form of outreach.

Ms. Henning pointed out that the meeting a few weeks ago could be considered a stakeholder meeting. Attendees included the Council Parks & Rec Committee, Planning Commissioners, Adams County Planning Commissioners, Othello Housing Authority, Port of Othello, Chamber of Commerce, real estate agents, landowners, and residents.

Future Needs

Commissioners discussed the use of the basketball half-court and shared space with tennis at Kiwanis. Commissioner Carmona has not seen the half-court used but has seen lines of people waiting to use the basketball hoops in the tennis courts. Chair Dorow has seen the half-court being used but has not seen the tennis courts used for basketball. Commissioners felt a full-size lighted basketball court is needed at Kiwanis, but they felt a futsal court is needed even more than new basketball facilities.

Commissioners noted that if the City is going to pursue indoor facilities, more land is needed. Need to add land acquisition and financial commitment. Chair Dorow estimated that an additional 40 to 60 acres of park land is needed to address the various needs.

Commissioners agreed that one new large picnic shelter each at Lions and Kiwanis was the right target for now. They felt that possibly more than one pickleball court should be added in the next 6 years. They confirmed their recommendation that the splash pad should be located at Kiwanis, and removed their recommendation to have it be inside the fence at the pool. Ms. Henning asked for input on the amount of new walking trails needed. There is the existing "walk path" at 4.8 miles, but this is not a city-maintained facility. Commissioners settled on 1.5 to 2 miles of new trails, and stated that new paths at existing parks were not needed.

6-Year CIP

Commissioners looked at the 2022-2027 Capital Facilities Plan that the Council adopted with the budget Dec. 13, with additional community and staff priorities that need to be worked in. Chair Dorow stated that despite his association with the hockey community, he felt that providing futsal facilities was more important than renovating the hockey rink, so should be done sooner. After further discussion, he said

that adding boards to the hockey rink came at a price of \$50,000, when just putting the fence on the inside of the posts would address the problem. He didn't feel that the slab needed to be replaced, just some concrete patching. So the \$150,000 shown in the Council's adopted CFP could be reduced, which would leave funds to create a futsal court.

Chair Dorow estimated that the hoped-for indoor turf facility would be more like \$10 to \$12 million, and that the hoped-for indoor gym would cost more than the initial estimate.

Commissioner Carmona felt that soccer should be moved up in the priority list. Commissioner Gentry felt that soccer is more important to the community than a farmers market. He felt soccer should be a top priority, and the farmers market/food truck court/event center was too expensive. Ms. Henning pointed out that the City would apply for Community Development Block Grant funds for the farmers market. Since it is a different source of funds than the recreation projects, it doesn't take away financial capacity from the other projects.

Commissioners felt pickleball should be scheduled for 2023, possibly in Triangle Park.

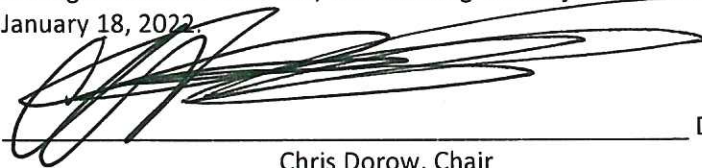
Commissioner Carmona noted that path maintenance is a big issue, and if it is only \$100,000 to fix it, that project should occur soon, such as 2023.

Chair Dorow noted that while the overall cost estimate for the eco park/nature park was large, most of that would be outside funds, and the actual City expense was likely to be relatively small; therefore, this project could be scheduled for 2023.

Commissioners felt that one futsal court each at Lions and Kiwanis would be adequate for now. They felt restroom maintenance was fairly urgent, so should be scheduled for 2023. They felt that adding a picnic shelter could wait until 2026 for the first one. They felt that hockey and futsal courts that would be used daily were more important than a stage at Lions which would be used occasionally, so they would like to see the stage pushed back to 2025 and hockey and futsal scheduled for 2024. They hoped the walking trails could be incorporated into the eco park, so scheduled that expense to beyond the 6 years of the plan, in case it ended up being addressed in the eco park project.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm. Next regular meeting is Tuesday, January 18, 2022.



Chris Dorow, Chair

Date: 1-18-2022



Anne Henning, Community Development Director

Date: 1-18-2022