

Task Force 5
March 9, 2015
WRC 175

To begin the meeting, the committee welcomed guest speakers Brock Goos, Youth and Adult Sports Director for the city of Cedar Falls, and Gary Koenen, Cedar Falls School District Activities Director. The committee also welcomed Laura Verden, Landscape Architect for Facilities Planning. The group made introductions, and Chris gave the guests a summary of what the Open Space and Recreation Task Force has been charged to focus on.

Brock Goos started the discussion with information about Cedar Falls' sports fields.

- Brock has been in his position with Cedar Falls for 18 years.
- Collaboration with UNI using facilities
 - Baseball fields, softball, and tennis mostly.
- He manages 11 ball diamonds
 - Brock organizes and controls the master schedule
 - City did fence work for access road for baseball diamond at UNI
 - Still coordinates use
 - 30 usage dates
 - The teams that use it the most are adult wood bat leagues
 - The rest of the users are mostly youth clubs
- Softball field
 - Mostly used by girls' youth softball
 - 60 foot bases, perfect size for girls' softball.
 - 17 scheduled dates on UNI's field
 - UNI has 19 dates scheduled for the field
- The public used to just arrange field times themselves for games
 - It was not very organized
 - There is more flexibility and efficiency if the city arranges reservations.
- The city has people that paint and maintain the fields.
- Tennis
 - Youth tennis
 - 18 leagues each summer.
 - Friday Funday games
 - Brings in 175 kids from all over to play tennis.
 - No USTA adult tennis clubs
 - Blackhawk tennis does have clubs
 - Condition of courts
 - Could UNI rebuild elsewhere, or make indoor courts?
 - Two courts at Orchard Hill
 - The courts, however, are in serious need of repair.
 - Peat Park
 - City uses this court

- Cedar Falls is down to two, city usage courts.
 - These are surrounded by houses, and difficult to find.
- The city brings in porta-potties for court users
 - One by ball fields
 - One by tennis courts
 - They are well maintained and clean.

For shared facilities, ball diamonds are the best. Tennis courts are dwindling, but so are tennis programs.

28E Agreements

- Board of Regents schools have an agreement for facility usages.
- Cedar Falls and Cedar Falls Schools have joint usage facilities until 2027.
 - UNI softball uses their field, they use our fields
- The city of Cedar Falls' grounds department takes care of the fields.
- This agreement may have happened anyway since all of the schools are always in close contact.

Trends in youth baseball, softball

- Baseball is becoming more specialized, competitive, and more involved.
- Softball programs are decreasing in size
 - Kids who are involved though, are playing more and more.
- The fields sit empty until 5:00PM, and then are heavily used.

Tennis

- There are limitations of offerings of tennis due to the courts
- Blackhawk facilities are private
 - Blackhawk tennis program is active and successful
 - Successful summer camps
- It is rare that adults request tennis courts in the summer
- Orchard Hill has pickleball courts
 - Easily add lines to existing tennis courts to incorporate pickleball.
- Chris D. has talked to the UNI Foundation about the poor state of the tennis courts.
 - USTA gives grants for tennis courts
 - Tori mentioned UNC – Chapel Hill campus gets government grants to maintain first generation students
 - UNI could qualify for these funds as well.

Chris mentioned that since UNI is a DI campus, baseball and softball fields need to be on campus. They are currently both off campus. Baseball is now a club sport, and cut from the varsity program about nine years ago.

As of graduation day at UNI, reservation responsibilities for baseball and softball will go to Brock's program.

Gary Koenen summarized the Cedar Falls School District sports program.

- There is a long history of sharing between UNI and Cedar Falls schools
- Cedar Falls schools have a contract with UNI Dome.
- Tennis courts at UNI
 - The ones at Robinson-Dresser are not very good, so the schools use UNI's courts.
 - UNI's are barely better.
- There is a need for more tennis courts in the city.
- Intramural boys' soccer used to use fields by dome.
 - They now use the soccer facility in Cedar Falls.
- Softball
 - UNI varsity softball uses CF school's softball complex.
 - The schools fundraised for new scoreboards, tiling under the diamond.
- Birdsill Park – W 12th St.
 - Cross-country meets are held here
 - UNI practices at this part as well.
 - It is a city park, and has many usages.
- Pheasant Ridge Golf Course
 - All three entities use this space.
- Lack of field space for soccer.
 - Soccer tears up fields
 - If the new high school is not built, they may turf down one of their fields.
 - May put in a turf field anyway.

If the new high school was built on 27th St., some sports fields may still be shared with UNI.

- Shared softball, and baseball fields
- Need space for soccer and football practice
 - These sports need to be on high school campus

Turf

- For safety reasons, turf is not good for soccer.
- Turf is tough though, and can handle the wear and tear from soccer.
 - May be worth the high cost
- Currently, CF schools does not have enough green space.
 - They go off campus to find it.

A need for hardwood courts within the community was also brought up. There is a definite lack of tennis court availability; six tennis courts are too few, and need a minimum of twelve to hold big competitions. The need of space in regards to seasons is low due to a suitable job of sharing spaces.

Tennis

- University of Iowa has 6 indoor, and 20 outdoor courts
- Drake has 6 indoor courts
- UNI has 8 outdoor courts
 - Average amount for a campus this size.
 - There is a want to make them multipurpose courts.

Wrestling

- High school program goes offsite due to huge numbers.
- Tim has been approached about the creation of wrestling clubs.
- Athletics has been good to work with in regards to letting intramural wrestlers practice two weeks before intramural wrestling tournament.

Racquetball, adult softball, and adult tennis are dying sports around the area.

There was a brief discussion of the creation of a joint use facility between the city of Cedar Falls, Cedar Falls schools, and UNI.

- Possible collaboration effort between the three entities.
 - May be something to consider in the future.
- Include an indoor tennis facility.

Cross-country trails

- The cross country teams use the city trails
- City teams do not use UNI's soft trails
 - Community use of our trails is adequate
 - In the past, there have been groups that collaborate major runs on UNI's trails without telling UNI.
 - Huge liability issues with this.

There are no private hardwood basketball court facilities in Cedar Falls.

- There is a really nice private facility in Ames.
- Washington DC put sports facilities in malls
- If you build the facilities, they will come, and the sport will grow.
- The private courts cater to private clubs, but will host whoever shows up.

Volleyball

- Most basketball facilities are set-up for volleyball as well.
- There are no indoor sand facilities in Cedar Falls.

They YMCA/YWCA used to be the big sports facilities.

- Now it is the Sportsplex on University Ave.
- A lot of sports move into empty warehouse spaces.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10PM. The next meeting is scheduled for
March 23 at 10:45AM in WRC 175.