



City of Saratoga Springs

RECREATION COMMISSION

15 Vanderbilt Avenue, Saratoga Springs, New York 12866

518-587-3550 x2300 Fax 518-584-1748

www.SaratogaRec.com

Derrick LeGall
Recreation Commission Chair
Alphonse Lambert
Amy Smith
Robert Manasier
Cheryl Smith
John Dowd
Michelle Merola

Recreation Commission Meeting

Tuesday, August 14, 2018

6:30 pm

Minutes

Saratoga Springs Recreation Center

The Saratoga Springs Recreation Commission Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Derrick Legall, chairman.

Attendance – Derrick Legall, Amy Smith, Cheryl Smith, Robert Manasier, John Dowd, Michelle Merola, & Alphonse Lambert. Guests: Deputy Mayor Lisa Shields, & Bob Kernan, The LA Group

Staff: John Hirliman

Public Comment – There was no public comment.

1. Discussion: Master Plan Update – Survey

The Recreation Commission moved the Recreation Master Plan - Survey to the first item. Adam Bossi and Jake Jorgenson from RRC spoke to the Recreation Commission regarding the Recreation Master Plan – Survey. Jake Jorgenson from RRC walked through the slides submitted to the Recreation Commission. There will be changes for the Final report.

Introduction – The survey included feedback from the residents. The purpose of the study was to gather feedback on Saratoga Springs' recreation facilities, services, and programs. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist the City in planning for the future improvements, developments and services.

Methodology – The survey was conducted using three primary methods: mailed survey (invitation survey) sent to randomly selected residents of City Residents, Online invitation survey accessed through a password protected website for residents who received the mail survey and Open-link online survey – open to members of the public who were not part of the invitation survey. The primary list source used for the mailing was purchased from Melissa Data Corp., a leading provider of data with emphasis on U.S., Canadian, and international address and phone verification includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists. In total, 441 city-wide invitation surveys were completed through a variety of survey approaches. In addition, 411 open-link surveys were received (completed and partially completed). The invitation sample includes responses gathered from the mailed survey and online invitation sample. The margin of error for the invitation sample is +/- 4.1%. The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation survey of City of Saratoga Springs respondents. However, invitation sample results are compared to the open-link results throughout the report.

Weighting the data-The underlying data were weighted by age to ensure appropriate representation of City of Saratoga Springs Residents across different demographics cohorts in the sample. Using U.S. Census Data, the age distribution was adjusted to more closely match the demographic profile of the City of Saratoga Springs. Due to variable response rates by some segments of the population the underlying results, while weighted to best match the overall demographics of residents, may not be completely representative of some sub-groups of population.

Demographic Profile-Of invitation respondents, those under age 35 represents the highest percentage (33%) followed by 45-54 (16%) and 55-64 (16%). Couples with children at home have the largest share of responses (32%) followed by couples with no children (21%) and singles with no children (19%). Income was well distributed across the sample with 21% of the invitation sample reporting income of \$100-\$149,999. The majority of respondents were White (97% invite and 94% open link) and skewed female in both invitation and open link (57% and 53% respectively). One percent of the respondents in the invitation sampler (4% in open link) are Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin. Additionally, 5% of the invitation respondents and 3% of the open link reported needing ADA-accessible facilities/services.



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Residential Profile-The majority of residents own their residence (79%) and a smaller share (21%) rent. The two largest groups in length of residence are those who have lived 20+ years (32%) and those new to the area (26% residing 0-5 years), signaling a split between new and long-term residents. Additionally, the East side (34%), West side (28%) and Geysers Crest (14%) were most well represented areas of town.

Usage of the Parks/Facilities in the Past Year – Invitation respondents were moderately familiar with Saratoga Springs with 54% providing a rating of 4 or 5. Open link respondents are more familiar with 70% providing a rating of either 4 or 5. Open link users tend to be more engaged in communities and use parks more frequently. Only 14% of invitation and 8% of open link respondents were unfamiliar with the department (rating 1 or 2). Among invitation respondents, Saratoga Springs respondents used a community/neighborhood park most often (87% used in the past year), followed by using a trail or pathway (83% used) and attending a special event (54% attended). Athletic courts (48% used), Waterfront Park (45% used), athletic fields (45% used), and splash pads (41% used) followed behind in usage by respondents.

Satisfaction with Parks/Facilities/Programs – Overall, Saratoga Springs respondents were moderately to highly satisfied with current offerings. Seventy-nine percent were satisfied with parks (rating 4 or 5), 65% satisfied with facilities, 62% satisfied with maintenance, 58% satisfied with athletic fields, and 57% satisfied with programs. Open link tended to have lower satisfaction levels and were slightly more critical of current conditions.

Areas to improve at most used facility/program-Respondents who had used a City park/facility/program were asked for comments on any improvements that could be made to their most used facility/programs. Improve most used facility/program-continued and increased maintenance of existing facilities, connectivity/better access via pathways and bike routes, increased communication about programs/services and renovations specifically mentioned for: softball fields, skate park, ice rinks, bathrooms facilities.

There was information based on income, race, gender, owner/renter, how long the person lived in Saratoga Springs, & where the person lived and usage of the facilities. Some of the slides showed both the invitation results and the open link data. The Commission requested that all data is shown with invitation (sample), open link, and grand total results. Cheryl Smith asked for more breakdown information on the data. Robert Manasier wanted the detailed information for the Master Plan Committee to review. The members of the Commission will email John Hirleman with additional questions and requests for the upcoming meeting for GreenPlay. The sample was moderately to highly satisfied. Overall people are satisfied with Recreation. The 800 personal comments will be submitted to the City. The sample wanted better awareness of Recreation.

Facilities, Programs, Amenities and Services – Importance of Existing Facilities – When invitation respondents were asked how important existing facilities are to their household (1-5), trails and pathways (4.5), and community/neighborhood park (4.4) stood out as most important. Following behind was Waterfront (3.2), playgrounds (3.2), athletic courts, Saratoga Springs Recreation Center, and athletic fields (3.0 each); the splash pads and Ice Rinks (2.8 each) and Skate Park (1.8).

Level of Needs Met by Existing Facilities – When asked if Saratoga Springs residents' needs were being met, respondents had high ratings, despite their importance to their household. Playgrounds and community neighborhood parks (4.2 each), Saratoga Springs ice rinks, Saratoga Springs Waterfront Park (4.1 each) were perceived as best meeting the needs of Saratoga Springs. That said, only a 0.3 difference separated most of the facilities rated by respondents, highlighting high needs met overall.



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The matrix submitted showed the importance/preference breakdown to facilities and programming. The first quadrant was High importance/low needs met. These are key areas for potential improvements. Improving these facilities would likely positively affect the degree to which community needs are met overall. The second quadrant was High Importance/High Needs Met. These amenities are important to most respondents and should be maintained in the future, but less of a priority for improvements as needs are currently being adequately met. The third quadrant is Low Importance/Low Needs Met- These “niche” facilities have a small but passionate following, so measuring participation when planning for future improvements may prove valuable. The fourth quadrant is Low Importance/High Needs Met. Current levels of support appear to be adequate. Future discussions evaluating whether the resources supporting these facilities outweigh the benefits may be constructive. Most of the facilities are in the middle. It was explained that facilities like the skate park have a small number of interested but very passionate participants.

Importance of Existing Programs – When invitation respondents were asked how important existing programs are to their household, adult cultural arts (3.4), adult fitness (3.1), youth sports (2.9) and adult sports (2.9) were most important. As a trend, adult programs tended to be more important than both senior and youth (except youth sports).
Level of Needs Met by Existing Programs – Similar to needs met by facilities, most programs were perceived as meeting the needs of Saratoga Springs higher than importance. Youth sports (4.1), youth fitness (4.0), youth camp (4.0), and youth cultural arts (3.9) were rated highest for meeting community needs. All adult and senior programs had an equal average (3.6) of meeting community needs.

Importance of Future Facilities & Programs – When asked what the most important needs for Saratoga Springs to be added/expanded/improved in the next 5 to 10 years, invitation respondents were particularly likely to place importance on trail connectivity (4.5), maintenance to existing facilities (4.4), and community neighborhood parks (4.1). Following were playgrounds (3.9), youth programming, aquatic facilities and athletic courts (3.8 each) in terms of importance for the future.

Priorities to Add, Expand, and Improve – When asked to select their top three priorities for the City to add/expand/improve, invitation respondents were most likely to report trail and pathway connectivity (45% first priority; 73% total), followed by community/neighborhood parks (34% total), maintenance of existing facilities (30% total), playgrounds (22% total) and senior programming (17% total).

Factors That Would Increase Usage – Invitation respondents were most likely to highlight better awareness of programs (70%), improved connectivity (60%), improved condition/maintenance of existing parks or facilities and increased activities/programming (37% each) as areas to address to increase usage. Lighting of outdoor facilities (30%) and additional/new types of facilities (26%) followed for areas to increase utilization.

Financial Choices/Fees – **Level of Support for Funding** – Respondents were asked about potential funding options they would support for parks and recreation facilities, operations, and development. When asked directly about their level of support for each option, invitation respondents were most supportive of a dedicated foundation for parks and recreation (74% would support). However, they were less supportive of increased user fees (38% would support), new property tax for parks and recreation (38% would support) and increased property taxes (27% would support).

Communication – **Effectiveness of Communication** – Communication effectiveness of the City was rated on a scale of 1=“not at all effective” to 5=“very effective”. In total, 24% rated current communication on parks and programs as “effective” (rating 4 or 5). Of invitation respondents, 47% rated communication as “ineffective” (rated 1 or 2) with 29% as neutral or moderately effective. Open link respondents had slightly higher rating on communication effectiveness with 40% responding 4 or 5. John Dowd said if they are a part of the Recreation email list, people are getting information.



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Best Ways To Receive Information – Respondents indicated internet/website (62%), emails from City (57%) and parks/recreation program flyers (51%) as the best methods for communication about facilities, services and programs. Open link respondents had a similar response with a slightly higher liking to social media (51% vs. 44%) and lower for parks and parks & recreation program flyers (36% vs 51%). The top three ways people wanted information was internet, website and email. At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments or suggestions about the parks and recreation facilities and programs in Saratoga Springs. Themes that came up frequently throughout the survey were: increased maintenance at facilities/parks, pathway and trail connectivity, renovations desired at specific facilities, and praise for keeping the parks in good condition currently.

Jake Jorgenson explained the sample is the best information for statistical accuracy. The Open Link result is more noise. The Sample (Invited) were randomly selected and statistically valid. The example was given that the needed facility maintenance was higher with the open link than the invited (sample) responses. According to Jake Jorgenson, the number of responses were pretty good. Cheryl Smith asked if there was anything that jumped out at them? The respondents were generally satisfied. There were positive responses and they said that it meets the needs of the community. John Dowd asked how they picked the invited (sample) responses. It was explained that each household in the City was given a number. Then the numbers were randomly selected, and surveys were sent out. The Recreation Commission wanted more detailed information. They requested that the information have the invited (sample) responses, open link responses as well as the total responses listed for comparison. GreenPlay would like feedback. John Hirliman will email any additional questions and items from the Master Plan Committee and the Commission to GreenPlay. Bob Kernan from the LA Group discussed the survey results with the Recreation Commission. Derrick Legall thought the number of responses were low. John Hirliman said the Project team will review the results. There will be a presentation at the September 25, 2018 meeting. John Hirliman explained that the company would only be coming twice. Cheryl Smith said if they are only come and read the information, I can read. Save the money. There will be a public meeting. The Recreation Commission members recommended to GreenPlay to present to the City Council. The final presentation will go to the City Council. John Hirliman recommended that the Commission review the sample Amherst Recreation Master Plan. The Commission wanted to see the financial breakdowns, maintenance, recommendations, and other costs. John Dowd wanted to make sure that the company had met with DPW.

The Recreation Commission members received the July 31, 2018 Recreation Commission meeting minutes.

2. Discussion and Vote: 2019 Budget-The Recreation Commission received and discussed the 2019 Proposed budget.

The Revenue items were the same from the original proposal from the July Meeting which included fee and rental increases. The only changes were to the expenditures. There was an increase in rounding in the lines, the Camp Saradac trip and Tiny T'ball lines. There were other expenditure increases. The Comprehensive budget will be presented at the first City Council meeting in October. There will be a meeting with the Finance Department to discuss the 2019 proposed budget. It was recommended to meet with both DPW and Finance together. DPW figures are included. The Recreation Commission reviewed and discussed the budget. **The motion to submit the 2019 Proposed budget was made by Cheryl Smith and seconded by Michelle Merola (Approved by Voice Vote)**

Adjournment -**The motion to adjourn was made by Cheryl Smith at 8:39 pm and seconded by Michelle Merola (Approved by Voice Vote)** The next meeting will be at the Saratoga Springs Recreation Center on September 25, 2018 at 6:30pm. The upcoming meetings on the last Tuesday of the month are on October 30, 2018, and November 27, 2018. The December 11, 2018 6:30pm Recreation Commission meeting will be held the 2nd Tuesday of the month due to the Holidays.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Lanfear



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Agenda

Saratoga Springs Recreation Center

Attendance

Public Comment

1. Discussion and Vote: 2019 Budget
2. Discussion: Master Plan Update – Survey

Adjournment - Next Meeting – at the Saratoga Springs Recreation Center
Tuesday, September 25, 2018- 6:30 pm. at the Saratoga Springs Recreation Center - The Budget workshops will be Wednesdays, July 18, 2018 and July 25, 2018 6:30pm. The upcoming meetings on the last Tuesday of the month are, October 30, 2018, and November 27, 2018. The December 11, 2018 6:30pm Recreation Commission meeting will be held the 2nd Tuesday of the month due to the Holidays.

Meetings are at 6:30pm on the Last Tuesday of each month at the Saratoga Springs Recreation Center