

Bowers Harbor Park Expansion Community Engagement Exercise

Summary Report

Peninsula Township Park Commission

Process

Bowers Harbor Park, a previously 21-acre park with sports fields and play equipment located on the scenic Old Mission Peninsula, was expanded with the purchase of 58 acres of land formerly planted as an orchard. As part of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund acquisition grant application process, an initial concept plan was developed for the expanded park area to demonstrate to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources what the park property might be used for if acquired. With the grant application successful and the new park property officially purchased, the Township brought the community to the table to ask what the future of Bowers Harbor Park should be.

Around sixty members of the community and Peninsula Township elected officials and staff attended an input session held the evening of August 18th, 2016, at the Old Mission Peninsula School. Beckett & Raeder presented an overview of the park design process to date and informed the public about the findings of the Due Care Analysis report. Following the presentation, the attendees participated in an interactive element preference survey meant to gauge the community's inclination for or against a list of 35 potential park elements. The list of elements began with those that already exist in the original park and followed with elements that do not currently exist at the park, to see which elements the community felt were important to retain or add to the newly expanded park. As each element appeared on the screen along with several descriptive photos, each attendee could vote either A, B, C, or D. "A" meant that the element should definitely remain or would be a fantastic addition to the park. "B" meant that the element could be good or interesting at the park. "C" was a neutral response. "D" meant that the element was not desired at the park at all.

Attendees were invited to fill out comment cards to give further detailed input. They were asked if there were any further recreational elements not identified in the survey that should be at the park, and if there were any other comments to offer the Park Commission. The public was also encouraged to email the Township with any other comments or concerns.

Results

Elements that presently exist in the park were mostly verified as currently desirable recreational activities to remain. Trails received an overwhelmingly positive response and winter recreational pursuits were also widely supported. Survey responses indicate, and several comments mentioned, that more active recreation elements should be confined to the existing park, and that those existing park amenities should be better maintained and/or upgraded, especially the playground. Survey responses and comments show that the south property expansion should be mainly for nature viewing and walking trails, similar to the initial concept plan. Several comments discussed

the need for restroom facilities and a source of water, either for drinking fountains, getting water for dogs, filling up children's pools, or just rinsing off.

The idea of a dog park received very mixed reviews in the survey results. Likewise, comments were either enthusiastically for a dog park, or quite concerned and against the idea. There was not a clear consensus on that issue. Those who wanted a dog park discussed the importance of a place for dogs to run free and the benefits to residents who could meet and socialize there. Those against the idea cited concerns with noise, fighting between dogs, and the potential for the spread of canine diseases.

Next Steps

The information contained herein provides Peninsula Township and the Peninsula Township Park Commission with valuable data demonstrating the public's preferences related to Bowers Harbor Park. Many other factors will most certainly influence the final design including the Due Care Plan, budgetary constraints, and site challenges. However, the outcome of the Community Engagement Exercise better equips the Township and Park Commission to determine the program of recreational elements it wishes to pursue as it contemplates improvements at the existing park site and expansion of the park onto the recently-acquired property.

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Element Preference Survey Results					
Element (Ranked in Order of Preference)	A	B	C	D	Existing Element?
Pedestrian Trails	91%	5%	2%	2%	Yes
Playground	76%	17%	6%	2%	Yes
Picnic Pavilions	67%	18%	15%	0%	Yes
Outdoor Ice Rink	62%	23%	11%	4%	No
Natural Tree Cover	58%	17%	17%	8%	No
Meadow / Wildflowers / Native Grass Plantings	57%	21%	7%	14%	No
Sled Hill	53%	18%	18%	12%	No
Non-motorized Trails	52%	15%	13%	20%	No
Open Green Lawns	50%	20%	17%	13%	No
Interpretive Trails / Viewing Trails	45%	14%	17%	24%	No
Tennis Courts	44%	25%	27%	4%	Yes
Baseball Fields	44%	24%	20%	13%	Yes
Cross Country Ski Trails	40%	21%	28%	11%	No
Stormwater Management	37%	19%	22%	22%	No
Improved Parking - Gravel	36%	25%	22%	16%	No
Soccer Fields	34%	28%	26%	11%	Yes
Sand box	33%	23%	19%	25%	Yes
Multi-Use Pavilion	29%	29%	23%	20%	No
Basketball Courts	27%	27%	37%	8%	Yes
Poured-in-Place Safety Surfacing	27%	25%	25%	22%	No
Pickle Ball Court	26%	22%	30%	22%	Yes
Farmers Market Pavilion	24%	15%	24%	38%	No
Dog Park	23%	14%	25%	39%	No
Enclosed Toddler Play	19%	15%	29%	37%	No
Volleyball Court	16%	38%	32%	14%	Yes
Shuffleboard Court	15%	13%	40%	32%	No
Fitness Stations	13%	10%	27%	50%	No
Contained Water Play Feature	13%	4%	9%	74%	No
Horseshoes	12%	23%	33%	33%	No
Disc Golf	10%	12%	20%	57%	No
Bocce Ball Court	10%	12%	33%	45%	No
Splash Pad	9%	5%	5%	81%	No
Improved Parking – Paved / Curbed	8%	8%	25%	60%	No
Bean Bag Toss	6%	6%	37%	52%	No
Historic Agricultural Plantings	2%	7%	25%	65%	No

Comment Responses			
Number	Are there any recreational program elements not identified in the survey that should be at the park?	Are there any other comments you'd like to offer to the Park Commission?	Name
1		All playground equipment needs replacing! Parts of it are downright dangerous!	Victoria Shurly
2	Nothing more I can think of. Very good list.	Great work BHP exp. Com	Maura Sanders
3	Restrooms (not pit toilets)		
4		The current parking lot is a soggy mess many times of the year. Needs to be better prepped. I walk the dog very often so have to park on the grass, which is not good.	
5	More wildlife area - currently good birding. Wider path for part (not all) paths for bikes. Need cut through from Devils dive to BH road near Pen. Drive. Need event parking for TRI and half marathon. More tree cover near pavilions. No splash pad.		Monnie Peters
6	Restrooms (so you don't have to drive home), drinking fountains	Loved farmers market idea. Need things for grandkids and guests	
7	Outdoor grills and picnic tables. Warming hut for winter storms by sled hill or ice rink.	Improve restrooms in park. Have a wash down / sprinkler head area for cooling off	
8		Pavilion seating faces setting sun - yuck. Who will maintain equipment? Hand out horseshoes? Security? Liability? Maint?	
9		Equipment management, maintenance, liability, congestion, confusion, parking, implementation of maintenance and costs, workers to care maintain area?	
10	No	The addition needs to remain passive use. Active uses can be improved in the north park area. Stormwater management - yes if native plants, need to protect neighboring properties from flooding.	

11	Bird watching platform, benches for viewing sunsets, promote natural / native plant materials, snowshoe trails, if not groomed x country trails.	Keep spaces as natural to this peninsula as possible. Space for young and old residents. Thanks for winter snow plowing done now!	Bill Camper (?)
12		Really need a dog park	Barb Taylor
13		Dog park with a water fountain for the dogs. A water hook up to fill up small pools would be great too	Alecia Hurley
14		Dog park with water hook ups, hoses to fill kiddie pools. Also I would be willing to help organize at the basketball courts.	Kevin Hurley khurley28@hotmail.com
15		I believe the farmers market option is an excellent idea. Keeping adults in the park prevents problems.	Bill Catinella, 2600 Bowers Harbor Rd
16		Improved and additional restroom facilities. Invasive species control program. Vet and breeder professions do not support dog parks.	
17	Benches for viewing nature. (Bird watching platform in wetlands area on 2013 plan). Be aware of many ground nesting birds in south end of park. In donating to the purchase of the park we were led to believe it would be a natural area - let's maintain as much of that as possible!	Playgrounds and sandbox at the current park need upgrading, but we don't need more. Same is true of basketball and soccer and tennis etc. Multi-use pavilion and farmers market could be same structure. Outdoor rink should be simple, open, less expensive style.	Diana Hammond
18	Bird watching platform / areas / benches. Sensitivity to existing ground nesting birds and animals would be nice. Please if do the pavilion make compatible multiuse (i.e. farmers market). Playground need upgrade, not new ones. Simple outdoor ice rink, not covered with refrigeration.	I goofed in the water feature vote. Meant to vote D, voted A. (I think its either bacteria or chemicals). Was led to believe the south annex would be more nature oriented.	Nancy K. Hammond
19	A longer hiking / view trail. Maybe simple multiuse pavilion for unplugged performance events / gatherings.	I like all the existing uses in the quantity now present. Maybe instead of 2 playgrounds, the new area should be left natural except for a hiking / view trail through it. All the existing uses should remain informal, no increase in parking, no paving. We need natural areas, places that are quiet for entire new expansion - except possibly pavilion as above. No new parking, or at most 1 small 6-place lot on Devil's Dive. Busses can be required for bigger events or walking from the Bowers Harbor dirt lot.	Bill Gittlen

20	No	Thank you for your work. I am strongly in favor of not adding any NEW tennis courts, ball fields, soccer fields, or playgrounds. Those that we already have in existing park are fine and sufficient. Fields and native plantings and pedestrian trails would be ideal - that would keep nature and peace / quiet at a maximum. Most healthful for us all (not to mention the birds & butterflies etc). Please don't pave paradise and put up a parking lot.	
21		At this discussion group, most of the attendees were older folks. The results might be different if more young people responded.	
22	Bird watching natural area	When we donated for the south addition we were told that purchase (south area) would be fore low intensity use permitting the north area to be higher intensity. Hope this is still correct.	Tim Wolf
23	Retain softball fields - they both result in good use of the park.	The playground situation is so old and not [illegible] its embarrassing and likely unsafe. Definitely more hiking / biking trails and skiing on the same trails in winter. X country & consider winter uses & sledding / ice rink / skiing.	
24		Please try to preserve it as naturally as possible. Please talk to the people who have ideas about birds & wildlife & take care of their concerns.	Nancy Tucker
25	You covered it well, thank you.	We would like to see fewer elements done well... rather than over reach of too many projects.	Kathleen & Eric Dreier
26	Came in late and did not get to vote on toddler park - awesome idea!!!		
27	How can water be used for children, when it was too polluted to use for housing.	1) Great attention should be given to upkeep costs. 2) None of the facilities are used because of lack of supervision and organization e.g.. Tennis courts & pickle ball.	

28	No	We really need elements for our children in the peninsula! Our playground is currently in need of repair! Please help peninsula kids get out & play!	Chris Curran
29	Community Center w/ pool etc.	Better maintenance of current & future park	
30	The dog park is an important element. There is no open public space for dogs to run free. This would provide that opportunity. It is also a great place for residents to meet and interact. It is as important for people as for the dogs.		
31	Yes, a bathroom & shower and a small camp area for bicyclists.	What are we good at. Well cycling, running, swimming.	
32		Good job in current park. Voted for BB courts, tennis courts, baseball fields etc. but did not vote for increased or duplication in new area.	David Tucker
33	Please remove or correct the drain tile so anything that is done at the park does not increase of runoff or flow of water to any homes to the west.	Please no dog park out of respect for adjoining property owners. Improve the playground in the existing part but don't place a new playground in the new land. Keep soccer, baseball, basketball, & tennis at the existing park. New park walking trail should be a combo of trails like Pyatt Lake & paved for strollers. Add a retention pond in wetland to hold water on property instead of draining it.	
34	Organizer of activities. Small pool to swim laps and swim lessons etc. Handicap access & activity related.	Community garden. Drinking fountains. More benches & restrooms. If civic center pool closes & not enough funds raised for that playground - minimal items on east side of town! :(Please remember all demographics. We want families and to support them. Winter activities (rink & Sledding). Thanks for your work from a OMP resident 35+ years with grandkids living here too!	

35		<p>Would like to see improvements in existing park. Passive use - trails in addition. No new stuff. If you must, use existing baseball / softball fields as dog park OFF SEASON. Ridiculous for them to sit unused 6(?) months a year! Please do NOT build new dog park. Really bad in opinion of dog behaviorists. Please do your homework. Who is liable for spread of dog diseases and dog fight? Really BAD idea. What is invasive species control program? Spotted knapweed is out of control and grape vines will be soon.</p>	
EMAIL 1		<p>My husband and I have loved and used Bowers Harbor Park for over twenty years. We both love the walking trail and I love the tennis courts. Our seven grandchildren have spent untold hours on the playground equipment, walking trail and tennis courts. We would like to see the playscape updated and enlarged. We feel that shade should be provided at the south end play area through trees or playscape awning covering. The kids all seem to love the older equipment at the north end...especially the merry go round, swings and metal slide! Plus there is shade... While I am not a pickle ball player, I feel that the park could provide at least two courts. I'd like to see the tennis courts remain tennis courts and not just be re-stripped for pickle ball. The existing tennis courts seem to have lots of players. Perhaps more basketball areas. More walking paths would also be welcome! Anything to get the community out and active! Thank you, Susan and E.J. Eckert.</p>	
EMAIL 2		<p>I believe that a high school regulation size baseball field would be an excellent addition to the Little League baseball fields at Bowers Harbor Park. Also a basketball court would be used by our kids and families. Attached is a sketch illustrating the proposed location of the baseball field and basketball court. The greater Traverse City Area is lacking good baseball facilities in general. Central High School has a single field while West High School has 2 fields. The Civic Center doesn't have anything of high school regulation size. Charlevoix Township recently constructed a beautiful baseball field and basketball court at their township park. The baseball field is being utilized by their high school teams and also facilitates travel team tournaments. I will forward the site planning as well as pictures of those facilities. It is possible that Central High School could use this facility in the same manner whereby the residents of Peninsula Township could enjoy watching their kids play and practice baseball there. I would encourage you as well as the members of your planning committee to visit the Charlevoix Township Park which is located at 12491 Waller Rd, Charlevoix MI 49720. Thanks again for your time this morning. Sincerely, Patrick Flynn</p>	

<p>EMAIL 3</p>	<p>I am unable to attend the public input meeting tonight and would like to give you my thoughts. Ideally, we'd have a Peninsula Township newsletter that goes out to every resident with a survey seeking input that could be mailed in or dropped off. My priorities: 1. I would love to see a wonderful new and expanded playground for children with safety features and some handicap accessible features. A bike path for children's small bikes around or near the playground would be great, as well as benches and some picnic tables so parents can watch their children during extended play. It could be a great way for community families to connect. 2. I would like to see the walking path be extended around the perimeter of the entire area. It's great that it is plowed in winter for safe walking. This resource should be advertized in the township newsletter. 3. People who design playgrounds and parks professionally should be sought for ideas and bids once the main goals of the park expansion are decided. 4. Less important: a dog park or a skateboard park, if there is enough interest and funding. Thanks for providing the opportunity to provide input. Rose Skurski</p>	
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PUBLIC INPUT MEETING
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: August 18, 2016
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Old Mission Peninsula School Gym

Name	Mailing Address	E-mail Address
Maura Sanders	20202 Center Rd.	maura.a.sanders@gmail.com
John Snow	10605 Bluff Rd	johnsnow@charter.net
Rick & Chris Curran	15618 Bluff Rd	rcurran51@AOL.COM
John Washburn	13524 Center Rd.	
Bill Catimella	2600 Bowers Harbor Rd	beatimella@charter.com
DIANA HAMMOND	13598 HEDEEN DR TLM1 49686	admin@stampeaz.com
Ernie Darlay	13728 Peninsula Dr	
Michelle Rardon	Peninsula	
Nancy Davy	14713 Shipman Rd.	Nancywdavy@aol.com
MARCY Wellbourn	933 Abbey Rd East Lansing MI 48823	MARCY@Transmi.com
BRAD ^{Amy} Lyman	18420 Center Rd	ablyman999@juno.com
DONNA VALDMANIS	1484 Chimney Ridge	dmvaldmanis@gmail.com
Jennifer + Russ Spranger	8009 Underwood Rdg.	jstfreud@aol.com
Soyce McMenos	13625 Centennial Lane	smac29@accgroup.cc
Nancy & Tim Wolf	10440 Peninsula Dr	

**PUBLIC INPUT MEETING
 SIGN IN SHEET**

DATE: August 18, 2016
 TIME: 7:00 p.m.
 LOCATION: Old Mission Peninsula School Gym

Name	Mailing Address	E-mail Address
Judith Weaver	2022 Peninsula Dr TC 49686	weavmusic@aol.com
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Bill Gittlen	15063 Donna Drive TC 49686	wbgtraverse@yahoo.com
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Karen Ludwig	9726 Peninsula Dr TC 49686	karkar5371@aol.com
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BEV THOMPSON	18398 DOUGLASS 49686	✓

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SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: August 18, 2016
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Old Mission Peninsula School Gym

Name	Mailing Address	E-mail Address
DAVID TUCKER	P.O. Box 89, Old Mission, MI 49673	DTUCKDOG@CUMCAST.NET
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DATE: August 18, 2016
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Old Mission Peninsula School Gym

Name	Mailing Address	E-mail Address
Bill & Patricia Phoenix	3136 Peninsula Dr TC 49686 46240 Quail Ridge Ct Ply. MI 48170	
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JUDY ARNOLD	660 NEANTAWANTA TC 49686	judyneah@gmail.com
John Metzker	13343 Hedeen Dr T.C 49686	
Kathleen & Eric Dreier	12434 Peninsula Dr. 49686	ksdscout@gmail.com
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