

(For March 2019)

Around the City with City Manager David Thayer

The calendar says it is spring, but that would take some convincing for many. However, for the City, we are busy planning for the summer with special emphasis on recreational opportunities. Recreation enhances the quality of life for our citizens and is a major reason for visitors to make our community a destination location; which is a major plank of our economy.

The new Parks and Recreation Committee is engaged in drafting a 5-year Community Recreational Plan for submittal to the State. They have been reviewing our current assets, making recommendations for improvements, and considering the need for new facilities. Public input will be solicited this summer for inclusion into the plan. Your comments regarding recreational opportunities and recreation in general is welcomed anytime.

We are partnered with the Iron River Soccer Association to build a soccer complex on city property recently dedicated as a Park for that purpose. The location is on the corner of Kofmehl and Coolidge Roads. For the last several years, we have witnessed over 300 youths registering to join the association each season. However, we lack significant venues for them to play and fully enjoy the experience. If fundraising efforts are successful, the complex could be ready for use in 2021.

Representatives from the Menominee Range Gliders visited recently and shared that our disc golf course, “The Tailings”, is the premier site in the Upper Peninsula. Located just south of the RV Park, running along the Iron River, it is a hidden gem that is underutilized and largely unknown to our community. Several tournaments are held there each year and it has the potential to be a major economic driver for our community. The course needs several improvements including signage, new tees, and general upgrades to maintenance. The DDA will

address these improvements this summer. I would like to see the Chamber at the RV Park rent discs to help increase play, give people the experience of playing disc golf, and help build the reputation of the course.

Pickleball is the fastest growing sport throughout the country. We have two courts at Nelson Field Park. Demand for playing time will only increase. If funds can be found to do so, an area to build 4 to 6 new courts is laid out at Bachman Park.

Plans for improvements are in the works for Ice Lake Park this summer. Upgrades will be made to the bathhouse. New grills were added last year, and new picnic tables are planned for this year. The previous "No Fishing" restrictions were lifted last fall and better swimming access is planned.

The Veteran Memorial Rehabilitation Project at the Iron River Honor Roll Park is running on schedule for the great reveal on Memorial Day. Last week, they started engraving the before mentioned names of our World War I and World War II veterans in the granite panels. To date, we have raised \$25,134 of the \$40,000 goal. Last Friday, I received a \$5,000 anonymous challenge donation. The donator will match up to \$5,000 of all donations received for the project through March 31st. If you have not made a gift yet, now is the time to do so.

Throughout this conversation, I have yet to talk about the Iron River or any of the other Blue-Ribbon trout streams. There are so many opportunities and missed opportunities involving the Iron River that it would take a whole column to discuss.