

April 2005

MEMO

TO: Council Members
FROM: Peg Ekedahl
Focus Group Facilitator
RE: Recreation in Milton

It was my pleasure, on the evening of April 5, to facilitate a group focusing on Milton recreation. Interested citizens, including Pastor George Calhoun, Skip Drew, Ken Kidder, Tom Lieder, Terry Michel, Tom Slaten, and Peter Thomas, joined by Alderperson Sharon Rozelle, engaged in meaningful dialogue that provided the information included in this memo.

This summary includes some general introductory observations as well as strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for the future. As with any synthesis of information, individual comments may not appear. Instead, the points below are my perception of common themes and ideas that emerged from the two-hour session.

Introductory thoughts

- There is confusion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the city, in relationship to the school district, in providing programming, facilities, and outdoor space for recreation.
- Although this focus group did not perceive development of Crossridge Park as a high priority in times of limited resources, the group did support retaining the property as the city continues to grow.

Perceived strengths

- Entry-level and competitive athletic programs for school-aged children
- Number and availability of parks and recreational areas
- Wide variety of special events, functions, and programs available across the community

Perceived weaknesses

- Difficulty in accessing information about available community events, functions, and programs
- Lack of overall coordination
- Little non-athletic programming for children outside of summer school
- Few adult recreation opportunities
- Lack of a multi-purpose fieldhouse

Suggestions for the future

- Collate information regarding existing events, functions, and programming on a routine basis (for example, MACC functions, summer ball programs, private sports leagues...).
- Publicize the full array of recreational opportunities in the Milton area in more than one format (for example, pamphlets, a recreation web site, newspaper articles...).
- Provide information about how to access these opportunities (for example, contact names, numbers, and addresses...).
- Determine, as a council, where recreation falls in the priorities of the city. Delegate personnel and resources that reflect the level of priority.
- Discuss who might serve as an overall coordinator, able to focus routinely on recreation in the community.
- Consider redesigning a recreation committee.

In conclusion, I offer these final comments. This focus group believes that our current hurdle is providing easy access and reliable, complete information to constituents about recreation in Milton. They believe that by maximizing recreational opportunities that already exist, the city can build support for further expansion of recreational facilities and programming in the coming years.