

City of Northfield
Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)

AGENDA for February 9, 2010
7:00 PM, Northfield City Hall, Second Floor Training Room

Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Call Meeting to order | Chair Vanasek |
| 2. Public Comment: | Public |
| <p>This is the opportunity for residents of Northfield to address the Park and Recreation Advisory Board. After being recognized by the chair, each individual will identify herself/himself and the group they represent, if any. To insure all individuals will have a chance to speak, speakers will be limited to a three-minute presentation. Please note this is the time for public comments on agenda items before the board.</p> | |
| 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes:
December 8, 2009 Monthly Meeting | PRAB |
| 4. PRAB Member Terms and Officer Selection | Staff |
| 5. Discussion on Designating Way Park as
Heritage Preservation Site | Staff |
| 6. Northfield Code – Chapter 54 | Staff |
| 7. Discussion on Dog Park | PRAB |
| 8. Other Items: | |
| a. Lashbrook Park Eagle Scout Project | Staff |
| b. PRAB Meeting Schedule | Staff |
| c. Friends of Old Memorial Field | PRAB |
| 9. Adjourn | |



December 17, 2009
Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting
5:00 PM
Second Floor Training Room
City Hall

Members Present: Rick Vanasek, Grace Clark, Dennis Easley, Nathan Knutson, David Hvistendahl

Also Present: Jon Dennison – City Council Member, Brian Erickson – Liaison to PRAB, TJ Heinrich-Streets and Parks Supervisor, Barb Thompson-Administrative Assistant

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair R. Vanasek called the meeting to order at 5:20 PM.

2. Public Comments

none

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 10, 2009

After discussion **A Motion was made to approve the Minutes from November 10, 2009. Motion was made by G. Clark and seconded by N. Knutson.**

All in favor.

Motion carried.

6A). Warming House Discussion

A warming house has been placed in the NE corner of the arena lot, next to the outdoor rink, built by parents of the Northfield Hockey Association. The project was stalled, but the permit has been issued and the construction can be completed. The NHA will donate the structure along with the boards to the City of Northfield when the formal agreement has been signed by Council in January. Until that time, the NHA will retain the keys for the structure and will cover the structure under their liability insurance. Signage will be developed to keep drop offs off of Bollenbach drive, and direct the skaters to the west side of the arena for entrance into the area.

4. 2009 Review and 2010 Goals for PRAB

A letter was sent from the Mayor to each of the City's boards and commissions requesting a summary of the 2009 achievements, new initiatives that the board will like the Council to consider and the future goals and role is planned for 2010.

PRAB Achievements for 2009

- o Trail on sewerline
- o Plantings at Lashbrook Park
- o Prioritized spending in the face of budget constraints-fiscally responsible spending
- o Community Gardens process completed and ready for Council review
- o Began formalized Adopt a Park program
- o Successful year for the outdoor pool, even with less than ideal weather
- o Recommended possible site for skateboard park
- o Land trade brokered with Culvers to gain permanent access to Babcock Park, rodeo grounds

Future Role of PRAB

- o Partnerwith Carleton College for Central Park development
- o Locate a permanent home for the Dog Park currently located at Babcock Park
- o Gain increased connectivity with trails planned for both Way Park and Memorial Park
- o Continue improvements at the outdoor pool, including possible concession stand and establishing a savings plan for pool maintenance and improvements
- o Identify underutilized park areas for possible sale/transfer

5. Adopt a Park

B. Erickson reported. On Oct 8 a meeting was held regarding the creation of an Adopt a Park program. The goal of this program would be to reduce staff time required for general park maintenance as well as building community involvement in the parks.

Key aspects to the program include:

- The Park, Open Space, and Trail System Plan will be the governing document
- Volunteers are asked for a three year commitment
- No major construction in the parks
- No funding provided by the City

After discussion, it was felt that having the liability insurance clause in the agreement would severely limit the groups that would be eligible for the program. A 1-page positive approach waver system was recommended for use instead of the formal agreement brought to the PRAB.

6B). Landscape Architect

The PRAB would like to have assistance of a landscape architect when planning trails and developing parks. Quotes will be solicited to check the feasibility of retaining

9. Other Items

2010 Meeting changes. After a vote of all those in attendance, the PRAB meetings will now be held the second (2) Monday of each month at 7:00PM at City Hall in the second floor training room

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm. A motion was made by G. Clark to adjourn and seconded by N. Knutson. All voted in favor. Motion carried



MEMORANDUM

*Public Services Department
Public Works Operations Engineer*

**Park & Recreation Advisory Board
February 8, 2010
Agenda Item #4**

Item: Member Terms/Officer Selection 2010

Requested By: City Charter

Submitted By: Brian Erickson

Background:

As required by the City Charter: Board and commissions, Article II. Park and Recreation Advisory Board, Sec 54-28. Officers: At the first meeting of each calendar year, members of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board shall elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary, each to serve throughout the year until a successor is chosen.

Please note that the Sec 54-27(c) states in part, "An appointee shall continue on the board until his/her successor is appointed." Therefore the two members shown below at having expired terms are still members of the board until their successor is appointed.

Action Required:

Review board member status and election of officers for 2010:

Board Member	3 Year Term Expires	Term	Position 2007	Position 2008	Position 2009
Clark	12/31/10	2 nd	Community Ed Liaison	Community Ed Liaison	Community Ed Liaison
Easley	12/31/10	2 nd			
Hong	12/31/11	1 st			
Vacant*	12/31/09				
Hvistendahl**	12/31/09	1 st			
Knutson	12/31/10	1 st			
Vanasek	12/31/09	3 rd	Chair	Chair	Chair

* Hudson – Resigned

** Hvistendahl – Interim appointed May 4, 2009

Nominate and elect officers for 2010.



MEMORANDUM

*Community Development Department
City Planner*

**Park & Recreation Advisory Board
February 8, 2010
Agenda Item #5**

Item: Discuss the designation of Way Park as a heritage preservation site with Heritage Preservation Commission

Requested By: Judy Swanson, on behalf of Friends of Way Park

Submitted By: Dan Olson, City Planner

Background:

The Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) is being asked to make a recommendation to the City Council as to whether or not Way Park should be designated as a heritage preservation site. The following is further information about this agenda item:

- The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) has received a request from the Friends of Way Park committee for this designation (Attachment #2).
- According to City Code, the City Council makes the decision of which properties are designated as heritage preservation sites, after a recommendation from affected Boards and Commissions. On December 17, 2009, the HPC decided to pursue the designation of Way Park, with the stipulation that a recommendation also be given by the PRAB to the City Council.
- After a recommendation is received from the PRAB, the HPC will request direction from the City Council as to whether or not they are interested in pursuing the designation. A detailed process timeline for the designation is found at the end of this Staff report.

Members of the HPC will be present at the January 11, 2010, PRAB meeting to discuss this request and recommendation.

A. Review of a heritage preservation site

A heritage preservation site is, according to City Code Section 34-456, "...any area, place, building, structure, land, significant landscaping, building interior, district, adjacent property or other object which has been so designated pursuant to this article. The downtown historic district is considered individually and in its entirety as a heritage preservation site." The City's only other heritage preservation site is the railroad depot building west of Highway #3 in the downtown area. City Code Section 34-457 states that heritage preservation sites are created because the "...preservation, protection, perpetuation and use of areas, places, buildings, structures, and other objects having special historical interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, safety, welfare, and prosperity of the people."

City Code Section 34-460 requires that any activity on a heritage preservation site undergo review and approval by the HPC. Activity includes alterations to the exterior of existing buildings, new construction, moving of buildings, demolition of buildings, and public improvement projects, which affect the site.

If the City Council directs the HPC to begin the designation process, the HPC would work with the PRAB to implement a development plan for the park that would guide future review of any new buildings, or exterior alterations to any existing buildings. In the City's "Parks, Open Space, and Trail System Plan", adopted by the City Council in 2008, there is a concept plan for Way Park (Attachment #3). The plan called for creating a cul-de-sac in First Street West to unify the northern and southern sections of the park. That cul-de-sac has now been installed. Other proposed improvements in the park plan include creating a large open space with adjacent tiered seating in a hillside for a natural amphitheater, redesigning much of the north side into a more cohesive and interesting design, and creating a new memorial space on the south side. Improvements to the children's play area, ballfield, skating rink, and walking trails are also envisioned. The estimated costs to complete all of the proposed improvements is \$800,000 to \$900,000 (this cost estimate is for improvements not including the cost to construct the cul-de-sac on First Street). At this point, the only project proposed for Way Park is the construction of some connecting trails between St. Olaf Ave and Second Street West.

The Friends of Way Park have stated that they are in agreement with this Way Park plan, but the plan has not been reviewed by the HPC. It is Staff's belief that the HPC and PRAB should come to an agreement on the development plan for Way Park, if the City Council directs that the designation process proceed.

B. Criteria for approval of a heritage preservation site

According to City Code Section 34-517, the HPC should apply the following stated criteria, when designating additional sites. These criteria are the same as those established by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Generally, the HPC is to review the quality of the site in its significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture, and that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Staff response to these criteria, which are based on a review of Attachment #2, are shown in **BOLD**:

- (1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
Staff response: Way Park was the site of the Northfield Hospital for many years. The property also has remnants of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project from the 1930s.
- (2) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
Staff response: Attachment #2 refers to the Way family and Professor Leal Headley, who were both significantly associated with Way Park.
- (3) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
Staff response: The Friends of Way Park have indicated that park plans were developed in the 1930s by the prominent Minneapolis landscape architecture firm of Morrell and Nichols. These historical plans could be incorporated into a future park plan.

- (4) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
Staff response: Neither the Friends of Way Park, nor City staff, are aware of any potential historical artifacts that might be found on the property.
- (5) That have a unique location or singular physical characteristics representing established and familiar aspects of a view, vista, site, area or district in the city.
Staff response: The property is a significant public gathering space on the City's west side.

The Friends of Way Park group has submitted a response to these criteria (Attachment #2), and these statements about the Park should be verified as to their historical accuracy. The Friends group has indicated that more detailed information about the park's history can be presented at a later date to more fully address these criteria. Staff recommends that this information be submitted if the City Council directs the HPC to begin the process of designating the park as a heritage preservation site (see designation process, below). It is Staff's belief that the Way Park designation preliminarily meets the criteria found in Attachment #2 and, therefore, warrants further analysis by the HPC.

C. Local or national designation

At their meeting on December 17, 2009, the HPC indicated that if the City Council directs them to pursue the designation of Way Park as a heritage preservation site, they would pursue "local" designation of Way Park rather than "national" designation. A local designation is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and does not receive formal recognition and approval from the State Historic Preservation office (SHPO) and the U.S. Department of the Interior. A local designation involves approval by the City Council of the designation, after a recommendation from City Boards and Commissions and comments from SHPO.

A national designation is listed on the National Register and is formally recognized by SHPO and the Department of the Interior. Having a property on the National Register makes it possible to apply for tax incentives for expenses incurred preserving the property. A national designation must still be approved by the City Council after a recommendation from City Boards and Commissions.

D. Designation process:

City Code Sections 34-518 to 34-521 (Attachment #4) outline the process by which heritage preservation sites are designated. Ultimately, the City Council makes the decision to approve the creation of new sites, after a recommendation by the HPC. The Council also has the option of requesting a recommendation from the Planning Commission for the designation's conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. In the case of a Way Park designation, the PRAB would also make a recommendation to the City Council about the designation. Staff suggests the following process for the designation of Way Park:

- After the PRAB meeting, the HPC will forward the recommendation of both the HPC and PRAB to the City Council, and request that the City Council provide direction to the HPC on this request. This step should be taken by the HPC early on in the investigation process in order to avoid spending time on a project that is not supported by the Council.
- If the City Council directs the HPC to begin the designation process, the HPC would review the more detailed historical information from the Friends of Way Park organization. An additional joint meeting would be held with the PRAB to come to agreement on the development plan for the park.

- After the development plan is solidified, the plan should be sent to SHPO for review and comment. This is required according to City Code Section 34-521.
- The HPC and PRAB would then make a recommendation to the City Council on the Way Park designation. If requested by the City Council, a recommendation would also be received from the Planning Commission.
- The City Council would then hold a public hearing, and make a decision on the designation.

Action Required:

The HPC and City Staff is requesting that the Park and Recreation Advisory Board provide a recommendation to the City Council on whether or not Way Park should be designated as a heritage preservation site.

Attachments:

1. Site location map
2. Letter and narrative to the HPC from the Friends of Way Park
3. Way Park Master Plan
4. City Code requirements for heritage preservation site designations



October 15, 2009

Robert Will, Chair
Northfield HPC

Convinced of Way Park's historical significance for Northfield, we ask that the HPC consider designating the park a Local Heritage Site. Doing so now would be timely: work began this summer to implement the Spencer Jones Master Plan, a history-sensitive design that preserves the WPA stone wall and steps, thoughtfully reflects the 1939 Morell and Nichols landscaping plan, and includes a memorial to the city hospital and its presence in the park for over sixty years. (Picture a photo shoot at a gathering there of a thousand local residents, all of whom had been born in the park.)

We appreciate your attention to our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Judy Swanson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

*Sarah Carlsen · Judy Covey · Cahrene Dimick · Christopher Ennis · Robert Hickcox · Jim Holden
Chris Kauffeld · Anne Larson · Cora Scholz · Judy Swanson*

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL DESIGNATION
INFORMATION ON WAY PARK

A (1) The site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history.

- The land (4.6 acres) was given to the city in 1933 for use as a public park by the family of prominent citizen John S. Way.
- The park was the site of the city hospital for 65 years, from 1938 to 2003. Upon agreeing to placement of the hospital in the park, the Way family stated that, were the land no longer used for hospital purposes, it should revert to parkland.
- The park boasts one of the very few WPA remnants in Northfield: a stone wall with two flights of steps leading down into the park.

B (2) The site is associated with lives of persons significant in our past.

- The parkland was given to the city by the John S. Way family members, granddaughters Laura and Lucile. John Way was one of Northfield's early settlers (1855) and property owners, a farmer who also owned and managed an inn on St. Olaf Avenue. Lucile continued to live in the St. Olaf Avenue house and taught at St. Olaf College.
- Carleton Professor Leal Headley was chairman of the city hospital board in 1939 and most likely was instrumental in commissioning the well-known firm of Morell and Nichols to design the Way Park plan which then included the hospital. The classical plan remained in the archives of the Minneapolis architectural firm, Ellerbe Becket.

D (5) The site embodies distinctive characteristics that are representative examples of a local historical context, and/or its developmental history, and thereby important for continued public understanding of our heritage.

- (5) The site has a unique location, etc.**

- The gift of parkland in 1933 at the height of the depression, plus WPA's subsequent involvement, indicate how important public parks were to community life and citizens' well being, even then.
- Building a hospital in a park was popular at that time, with understandable acknowledgement of nature's healing properties.
- Restoring the former hospital site to its original parkland state is being done with consideration for the Way family's vision and the 1939 Morell and Nichols plan, retention of the WPA stone wall, planning for a hospital memorial, and at the same time addressing today's needs and use of the park.
- The site remains a significant central feature of the larger Westside neighborhood, a sizeable (almost 5 acres) public gathering place, which has in its 76 years welcomed and served many generations of Northfield families and college students.
- The topography of the parkland was altered with the hospital's presence and gradual expansion. With the work under way to regrade after the hospital's removal, the contour of the south half will be restored to a hillside resembling that of the 1930's. The 2007 park master plan reflects the open and natural approach of the 1939 Morrell and Nichols design with features recalling their sunken garden and ornamental pool.

Northfield's Way Park



Sample Application for Historic Site Designation Draft, 17 December 2009

Prepared by David P. Sudermann
For Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

City of Northfield
Northfield, Minnesota

Historic Designation Request Form

This City form is for requesting the local designation of sites within the City of Northfield as Historic Sites. The form utilizes topics and criteria similar to those on the Registration Form for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, adapted for the purpose of local designation only. This form is not to be used for nomination to the National Registration for Historic Places.

Each topic lists instructions for completing the form. Each numbered section can be expanded as needed with relevant and applicable information. Supplemental information can be referred to in the form and included by attached section continuation pages.

1. Name of the Site (a Site may be a district, property, building, landscape feature, or object)

Current name Way Park
Historic name Way Park
Other

2. Location

Street address 801 1st St W. (south end); 720 1st St. W. (north end)
Other Bounded by 2nd St. West on the south and St. Olaf Ave. on the north
City Northfield **State** MN **Zip code** 55057 **County** RICE
GPS (if available) 44° 27' 30.56" N x 93° 10' 17.9" W

3. Ownership and Contact

Current owner City of Northfield in trust for the citizens
Street Address 801 Washington St.
City Northfield **State** MN **Zip Code** 55057
Telephone number(s) 507-645-3022
Owner Representative Dr. Richard Vanasek, Chair, Park & Recreation Advisory Board; Brian Erickson, Public Works Operations Engineer, Jim Pokorney, City Councilor
Telephone Number(s) 507-645-3050 (Erickson); 507-301-9065 (Pokorney)

4. Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) Recommendation

HPC received this Request Form on: _____ Reviewed Request on: _____
_____ The HPC recommends Approval of local designation (any qualifications are to be attached)
_____ he HPC recommends Denial of local designation at this time (any qualifications are to be attached)

Signature of HPC Chair or designee date of signature

Name – printed

Note: Applicant may appeal HPC recommendation directly to the City Council.

5. City Council Certification

City Council received this Request on: _____ and reviewed Request on: _____
_____ The City Approves this local designation (qualifications may be attached)
_____ The City Denies this local designation (reasons are to be attached)

Signature of HPC Chair or designee date of signature

Name – printed
ATTACHMENTS:

6. Historic Site Data

Enter information for each category below

Ownership of Property

(Check as many as needed)

- private
 public – local
 public – state
 public - US

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- district
 building(s)
 site or landscape
 structure(s)
 object

List number of resources by Category:

1 (WPA wall)

_____ total of 1

Property Dimensions and/or Area 236 yards long x 110 Yards wide (less NE corner); 5 acres (w. culs-de-sac)

Date of Original Construction 1934-35

7. Historic Site Description

Historic or Original Functional Uses:

(List Uses chronologically if known)

1855-1933: open pasture forming the city's western edge; used informally as park for for ice skating and sledding
1882 ? : future park purchased by J.S. Way
1933: land offered to city by Way sisters
1939: hospital erected on south end

Recent and Current Functional Uses:

(List chronologically if known and appropriate)

1939 – 2005: hospital expands on south end;
2009: north end used as park with a toddler play area and a small ball diamond/ skating rink
2006-09: south end remains undeveloped park
The toddler play area is also used by special-needs children from Longfellow School.

Describe Architectural Features and Characteristics

The original Morell & Nichols designs of 1934 and 1939 favored a garden park in the Beaux-Arts tradition. The plan called for a reflecting pool on the north end, a sunken garden next to the hospital, and a great variety of plantings. Most of the formal features and plantings are gone now.

Describe Historic/Original and Current Materials

Constructed with WPA and city funds prior to 1939, the limestone wall is the only remaining structure from the park's original design. The south half of the park is currently undeveloped; the north half contains a play lot, a ball diamond/skating area, an old warming house, a small basketball court, and several picnic tables on a concrete pad. The current sidewalk connecting St. Olaf Ave. to 1st Street is not part of the original plan but follows an older dirt path. 1st St. was closed in October 2009 as part of the 1st Street reconstruction project, and a new serpentine sidewalk connects the east and west halves of the park following the new park design.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Local Designation Criteria

Indicate the criteria applicable to the property that qualify it for Local Designation as an Historic Site.

More than one Criterion for Significance may be selected. Selected Criteria must be supported by information provided.

- A. The site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history.
- B. The site is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. The site embodies the distinctive characteristics of a building type, time period, or method of construction; or the site represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or the site represents a significance and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. The site embodies distinctive characteristics that are representative examples of local historic contexts, and/or its developmental history, and thereby important for continued public understanding of our heritage.
- E. The site has yielded or is likely to yield information important to pre-history or history.

Description of Significance

Complete the following descriptions of Significance utilizing expanded space for each, or by Section 8 Continuation pages so indicated.

Type of Use and its Significance:

1. From ca. 1882 to 1933 the land was part of a small farm belonging to John S. Way and descendants, one of Northfield's earliest settlers.
2. Prior to ca. 1882, the five-acre pasture marked the western edge of the city, separating the lower West Side from the developing St. Olaf community further west. 1st and 2nd Street stopped on the east edge of the park until the 1919 street project.
3. Located in the natural drainage swale from the St. Olaf Hill to the Cannon River, the land was used informally for sledding, skating, and kite flying even before becoming park.
4. The land became park in 1933 and development began in 1934-35; a design by the noted landscape firm of Morell & Nichols combined Beaux Arts with picturesque elements.
5. In 1939 a new Northfield Hospital was erected on the south end of the park, and Morell & Nichols created a revised landscape plan.
6. The north half of the site contained a reflecting pool; the south end featured an ornamental sunken garden. CWA, FERA, and WPA funding supported park development until 1941.
7. The north end has been in continuous use for neighborhood activities and community events as one of two centrally located Northfield parks since 1933. Hospital parking lots and building expansion gradually took over the south half.
8. The hospital was demolished in 2005; the south end was returned to grassy space and awaits redevelopment.

Time or Period of Significance: 1855 to present

List Significant Persons and/or Events associated with the site:

1. John S. Way (1822-1909), one of first Northfield settlers, farmer, Morgan horse breeder, state legislator, county commissioner, township supervisor
2. Lucile Way (1877-1966), with sister Laura, donor of the land for park; as a young adult Lucile Way was an active Northfield leader, creator of community drama and pageants, and a teacher at St. Olaf College.
3. Prof. Leal A. Headley (1884-1965), Carleton professor, longtime member of Northfield Improvement Association; benefactor and planner of Way Park (together with Harriet Marston Headley); for many years president of Northfield Hospital Board; plaintiff in Headley vs. City of Northfield, 1949, to preserve Central Park.
4. Dr. Fayer M. Babcock (1886-1944), city alderman and chair of the Public Grounds Committee; Hospital Board member, 1939; creator of Tourist Park; member of Northfield Improvement Association; called the "patron saint" of Northfield parks.
5. Myrtle Blesener Houston, RN (1907-2008) superintendent of Northfield Hospital beginning in 1934; lobbied Northfield organizations to help fund new hospital.

Architect and/or Builder:

1. 1934: Morell & Nichols
2. 1939: Morell & Nichols; updated 1950
3. 2007: Spencer Jones (design based on the 1939 Morell & Nichols plan)

Narrative Statement of Significance:

(Describe the significance expanding on the above summary items, and additional topics of interest.)

See Sections 7 and 8 Continuation below.

9. Important Bibliographical References

Include bibliographical references in the Historic Significance narrative as part of Section 8.

Primary locations of this property and historical data used for this request:

- City of Northfield HPC Files
- Northfield Historical Society
- Rice County Historical Society
- Northfield Public Library
- Carleton College Library and Archives
- St. Olaf College Library and Archives
- State Historical Society Archives
- State Historic Preservation Office

10. Property/Site Graphics

This information may be included as part of the Historic Significance narrative as part of Section 8

Illustrations of the site are required to include: historic, developmental, and current. Indicate those included:

- Historic Photographs
- Historic site drawing and/or plat map location
- Photographs of key developmental changes to the property or site, if any
- Current photographs
- Current site plan and/or plat map location
- Drawings or renderings of the original site, property, building, or object (if available)

**City of Northfield
Historic Designation Form 2009**

Continuation Sheet: Section 7

Way Park
Name of Property

7. Historic Site Description

A. Present Day Topography

Present-day topography of the West Side shows a moderately rolling downward slope from Manitou Heights (St. Olaf Hill) east 0.4 mile to Way Park and then 0.5 mile from the park down to the Cannon River (map 1). Way Park is thus midway in the natural drainage swale from Manitou Heights (elevation 1065 ft.) to the Cannon River (elev. 895 ft.). The drop from Manitou Heights to the low point of the park is about 100 feet, from the park to the river another 70 feet for a total of 170 feet.¹

Within the park, the high point is found at the southwest corner, elevation 984 feet, the low point of 965 feet is found at the east margin at 1st St. The total drop from west to east is 19 feet, the slope forming a natural amphitheater on the south end of the park. The terrain on the south side of 2nd Street also falls 13 feet north to the street and park, creating a lesser decline from south to north.

Extrapolating from these present-day observations, we visualize a more pronounced pre-1855 ravine, or draw, through the middle of the park that drained water from Manitou Heights, and from the slope above 2nd Street to south, toward the river. The remnants of that draw are quite visible where the ground drops off sharply into a low vale immediately east of the park through backyards toward the river. Buried beneath the swale at 101 Plum St. South, an old, now unused, twenty-four-inch concrete drain system angles southeastward through the draw angling toward the corner of 2nd Street and Linden.²

B. The Prehistoric Landscape

The geology of Northfield's old West Side serves as an historic palimpsest for the town's natural history. 14,000 years ago the Cannon River formed the easternmost edge of the massive Des Moines Lobe of the Late Wisconsin Glacier.³ Between 250 to 1000 feet in depth, the glacier ground slowly over the top of Manitou Heights from the northwest and stopped its eastward progress at the Cannon, where it began to melt back. The southward progress of the glacier continued southwestward to Des Moines, Iowa. Before the glacier struck Manitou Heights, the Hill would have been perhaps twice as tall and the surrounding terrain more sharply defined with ridges, gullies, and ravines. The glacier scraped the top off of the Hill, partially filling the gullies with glacial till as it passed toward the river. "The removal of such tremendous amounts of materials has left the hills as mere stumps . . . of their former selves."⁴

¹ All elevation and distance measurements are taken from Google Earth image of the park environs, November 2009.

² Conversations with Lynne Young, City Librarian, 24 November 2009, and engineer Steve Bennett, 7 December 2009. Lynne and Rev. Jim Young own the house at 101 Plum St. S., one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood, dating from the early 1870s.

³ See especially the beautifully illustrated book by John Fraser Hart and Susy Svatek Ziegler, *Landscapes of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2008), 23-41. Also "Geology of Rice County" in US Department of Agriculture, *Soil Survey of Rice County* (2000), 14-15, 27, http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/Manuscripts/MN131/0/rice_mn.pdf.

⁴ Edward W. Schmidt, *The Geology of Manitou Heights* (Northfield: Mohn Printing Co., 1945), 12. See also Joseph M. Shaw, *Dear Old Hill: The Story of Manitou Heights, The Campus of St. Olaf College* (Northfield, MN: St. Olaf College, 1992), 13.

Supporting such a rounding-off process is the fact that the Hill's composition, just below the surface, is mostly St. Peter Sandstone, a fine, yellow-white crumbly rock, deposited over 400 million years ago (photo). Excavation of 2nd Street at the corner of Orchard and 2nd this summer also exposed a beautiful St. Peter deposit three or four feet below the surface (photo). Sandstone this close to the surface reveals that the sediment layers normally deposited on top of the sandstone, such as Decorah shale, Galena limestone, Maquoketa shale, and Platteville limestone, had been ground away by the glacier down to the sandstone, filling in gullies and leaving the terrain below the hill covered by glacial drift as the glacier melted. Earlier excavation at 118 S. Orchard, hardly fifteen yards away from the St. Peter deposit at 2nd and Orchard, exposed deep black soil with old roots at a depth of about nine feet, pointing to an earlier ravine filled in by glacial till and/or post-glacial erosion (and perhaps street grading). According to the *Soil Survey of Rice County*, the dominant material in the belt from St. Olaf Hill through the park to the river is glacial till.⁵

In the 13,000 years or so after the glacier melted, drainage from the Hill would have continued the process of filling the gullies with eroded soil, creating a more gently downward rolling terrain east of Manitou Heights. To begin with, spruce forest revegetated the land, but in time an oak-elm-basswood forest took root and the spruce forest retreated northward. Ultimately, the land west of the Cannon River became part of the Big Woods ecosystem, while that east of the river upland prairie flourished and northeast of the river partially open areas of oak savanna took root. The Big Woods was apparently well established on Manitou Heights. Edward Schmidt observes that "in the eighties and nineties of the last century the woods on the hill were as wild, dense, and jungled as nature had built them up during the centuries." In 1856 the forest north and south of the park reached down to the Cannon, and sawmills along the Cannon harvested wood from the West Side for local construction.⁶ However, the swale from the Hill through the future park down to the river seems to have been grassy.

Summing up, the land that became Way Park lies directly on two immensely important pre-historic landscape boundaries ("transition zones") with the Cannon River as the dividing line: glaciated west, unglaciated east of the river, and Big Woods west, prairie east.⁷ The geology of the park and neighborhood is seamlessly connected to that of the St. Olaf Hill.

B. The Historical Landscape

While the current Way Park dimensions remain exactly the same as in the pre-park era, the topography and soils in the neighborhood have changed rather dramatically as a result of filling and grading. Edward Schmidt wrote:

....

G. The Limestone Wall, the Built Elements, and the Plantings

The demolition of the hospital and parking lots in 2004-05, restored the boundaries of the park to their original dimensions. Over the years, however, the built elements in the '34 and '39 plans had been removed. The city filled in the ornamental pool, shown on the '37 aerial view, in the 1950s and the concrete eventually removed. The sunken garden by the hospital was eliminated in the 1980s to make way for more parking. A few of the trees on the north end may still belong to the original park; otherwise, the plantings on the south end disappeared during hospital expansion; new landscaping was added to the hospital additions in the '80s and '90s (landscape architect, Spencer Jones). That is now

⁵ USDA, *Soil Survey of Rice County, Minnesota*, 27, on the glacial formation of soils (1996 PDF document at http://soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/minnesota/). Also Scott Anfinson, "Giants in the Earth Revisited: The Archeology of Northfield," in Clifford Clark and Carole Zellie, *Northfield: The History and Architecture of a Community* (Northfield, MN: Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission, 1999), 38.

⁶ Schmidt, 28; Anfinson, *Northfield*, 38-39; Edward D. Neill, *History of Rice County, [etc.]* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Historical Co., 1882), 403 ff.

⁷ Anfinson, *Northfield*, 39.

gone, too. The walkways, the oval driveway, and the old 1st Street boulevard gave way to hospital expansion. All that remains at present of the original park design is the limestone wall with twin steps descending to the reflecting pool. The wall, built with WPA support, is constructed of local rough-hewn limestone laid in mortar; it is about six feet tall, fifty-four feet wide, and set back about fifty feet from the sidewalk along St. Olaf Avenue (cover).

The planting guides for the 1939 plan and the revision of 1950 have survived along with the 1939 Morell & Nichols landscape plan. The trees in the plan include a mixture of hardwoods and spruce:

1950 Planting List for Way Park: Trees and Shrubs

Pfitzer Juniper (10)	Black Hill Spruce (12)	Colorado Spruce (10)
Sugar Maple (6)	Canoe Birch (3)	Hopa Crab (3)
Laurel Willow (3)	American Elm (8)	Siberian Pea Tree (14)
Red-osier Dogwood (32)	Russian Olive (5)	Winged Euonymus (12)
Alpine Currant (468)	Ural False Spirea (17)	Garland Spirea (98)
Arrowwood Viburnum (32)	Boston Ivy (2)	American Linden
Rosy Tatarian Honeysuckle (30)	Minnesota Snowflake Mockorange (51)	

The sunken garden of the 1939 plan featured a semi-circular perimeter of flowering shrubs or shrubs with colorful fall foliage: Winged Euonymus, Morrow Honeysuckle, Alpine Current, White and Red Rugosa Rose, punctuated by ten Swiss Mountain Pines.⁸

Since the 1950 plan is missing, how this plant material was distributed around the park can only be surmised. The 1939 plan, however, shows mostly spruce in a stringently geometrical pattern on the north end. The north section landscaping is incomplete in the '39 plan, and in all likelihood the 1950 plan would have shown more variety on that end. On the '39 plan American elms lined 1st Street and 2nd Street. The south (hospital) end favored sugar maple, white ash, willow, birch. The choice of shrubs reveals a variety of textures and colors. In bloom, the park would have been a stunning sight.

Clues to the actual plantings at Way Park come from two newspaper articles. In a 1941 article, "City Grounds Made Attractive thru Landscaping Plan Financed with PWA Grant," we learn that a Ninebark hedge ran the entire length of the block along 2nd Street. This was a change from the Honeysuckle of the 1939 plan.

To the north the hospital grounds are left open in order to give the impression of unity with Way Park. . . . With the exception of the north half which faces the park, the whole block belonging to the hospital is surrounded by a dense mass of shrubbery. This effect has been secured by planting some 1,700 separate shrubs. Inside of this area are scattered a number of evergreen and deciduous trees. At the southwest corner of the hospital, where the bank has been cut down some five feet [,] stands an extensive clump of Colorado Spruces and pines. Scattered over the open lawn area are many deciduous trees including [L]indens, Sugar Maples, Birches and Ashes. . . . [The sunken garden] is surrounded by large banks of various kinds of roses and other shrubbery including the interesting euonymus bush. The flat area surrounded by the shrubbery will be covered with grass and paths interspersed by ten mountain pines.⁹

⁸ The 1939 Landscape Plan is discussed below in Section 8. A copy is at the Northfield Historical Society. The 1950 planting guide comes from the Northfield Improvement Association file at the Northfield Historical Society. The planting key (1931) for Morell & Nichols comes courtesy of William Sanders of Sanders, Wacker, & Bergley, Landscape Architects, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁹ *Northfield News*, 4 December 1941. The Public Works Administration (PWA) funded 45% of the hospital. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) helped fund the park development.

The huge landscaping task at the hospital-park was the major project of the Northfield Improvement Association in 1940-41 with support from the Community Chest and WPA.¹⁰

World War II brought park beautification to an abrupt halt in 1941, and it did not resume again until 1950: "After a lapse of many years work on the improvement of Way Park has been renewed. During the past week 10 Phitzer Junipers, 10 Black Hill Spruce, 10 Colorado Spruce, 6 Sugar Maples, 3 Canoe Birches, 8 American Elms, 3 Hopa Crabs, and 3 Willows have been planted. The work on the project has been done by groups of high school boys under the direction of Mr. C. M. Larsen."¹¹

. . . .

¹⁰ See photo of the hospital with caption, "Beautifying and landscaping the hospital grounds has been as major project of the Northfield Improvement association this year. The Improvement association is supported by the Northfield Community Chest." *Northfield News*, 31 October 1940, 1: c 6-7.

¹¹ News release prepared by Dr. Leal Headley for the *Northfield News*, 29 May 1950, found in the Northfield Improvement Association file at the Northfield Historical Society. A similar release appeared in the *Northfield Independent*, 1 June 1950.

**City of Northfield
Historic Designation Form 2009**

Continuation Sheet: Section 8

Way Park

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

General: Way Park is one of just two centrally located parks in Northfield. Central Park on East Side appears on the original town plat, while Way Park, a gift of Way family in 1933, is the centerpiece of the older West Side neighborhood. The park's claim to designation as a Local Historic Site rests in part on its central location in the neighborhood and its service as an oft-used, much-loved public space for generations of children (and their parents). But it also forms part of the historic glacial watershed leading down from the St. Olaf Hill to the Cannon River; prior to 1885 the Way property marked the western terminus of the city and continued to provide a natural buffer between east and west until the streets went through in 1919-20; the noted landscape firm Morell & Nichols designed an elegant garden-park plan, some of which was built; the south end of the park became home for over sixty years to the now demolished 1939 Northfield Hospital; in the larger West Side landscape the park serves as an approach to the St. Olaf College Campus: together these aspects confer historic value. We cannot imagine the development West Side of Northfield without taking into account the park at its center. Way Park meets all five of the Local Designation criteria to some degree. Each of these claims is further supported below.

The previously cited 1992 guide by consultant Carole S. Zellie recommends elevation of Central Park to the status of a Local Heritage Site and nomination to the National Register. Although not so recommended in Ms. Zellie's guide, Way Park is nonetheless listed as #203 in the "Northfield Historic Resources Survey."¹² The HPC survey, further, singles out the Way house across and to the east from the park for possible historic site designation. Zellie's 1990s review of historic sites preceded the demolition of the old hospital and the rediscovery of Way Park history. In 2009 the community took up the challenge of rebuilding the park along the lines of the original Morell & Nichols plan. The new developments clearly strengthen the case now for designating Way Park a Local Heritage Site. It is hoped the designation will help preserve the park's historic integrity, raise public awareness of the park's significant role in the community, and aid the effort to obtain funding, as the city and neighbors move forward to realize the original vision as "one of the most beautiful spots in southern Minnesota."¹³

C. The New Way Park

The historic significance of Way Park is based in no small measure on its architects, the elegance of an original plan that combines neoclassical with pastoral features and the common "beautification" vision. The new Way Park Plan of 2007-2009 creatively recaptures and advances the original vision. Designed by landscape architect Spencer Jones, in concert with the Park and Recreation Advisory Board, park neighbors, and city council, the new plan reestablishes the original features of the original garden park and unifies both halves of the park; at the same time the new design updates the park's traditional uses (Section 10).

....

¹² Carole S. Zellie, *Northfield Heritage Preservation Plan*, 44-45, 51, 77.

¹³ "Improvement Association Launches Tree Planting Project at Way Park," *Northfield Independent*, 1 June 1950.

City of Northfield
Historic Designation Form 2009

Continuation Sheet: Section 10

Way Park

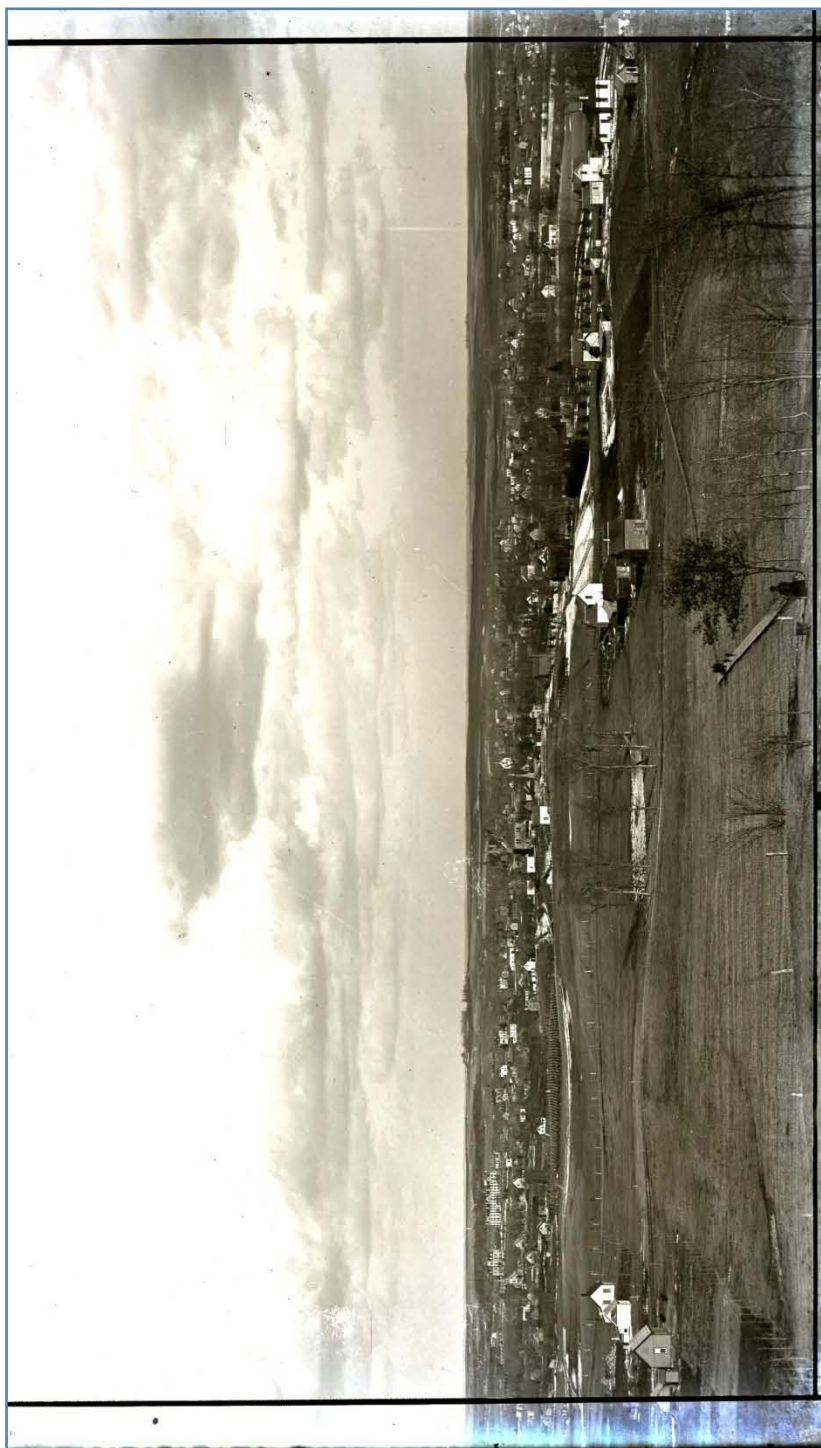
Name of Property

10. Property/Site Graphics (Sample)

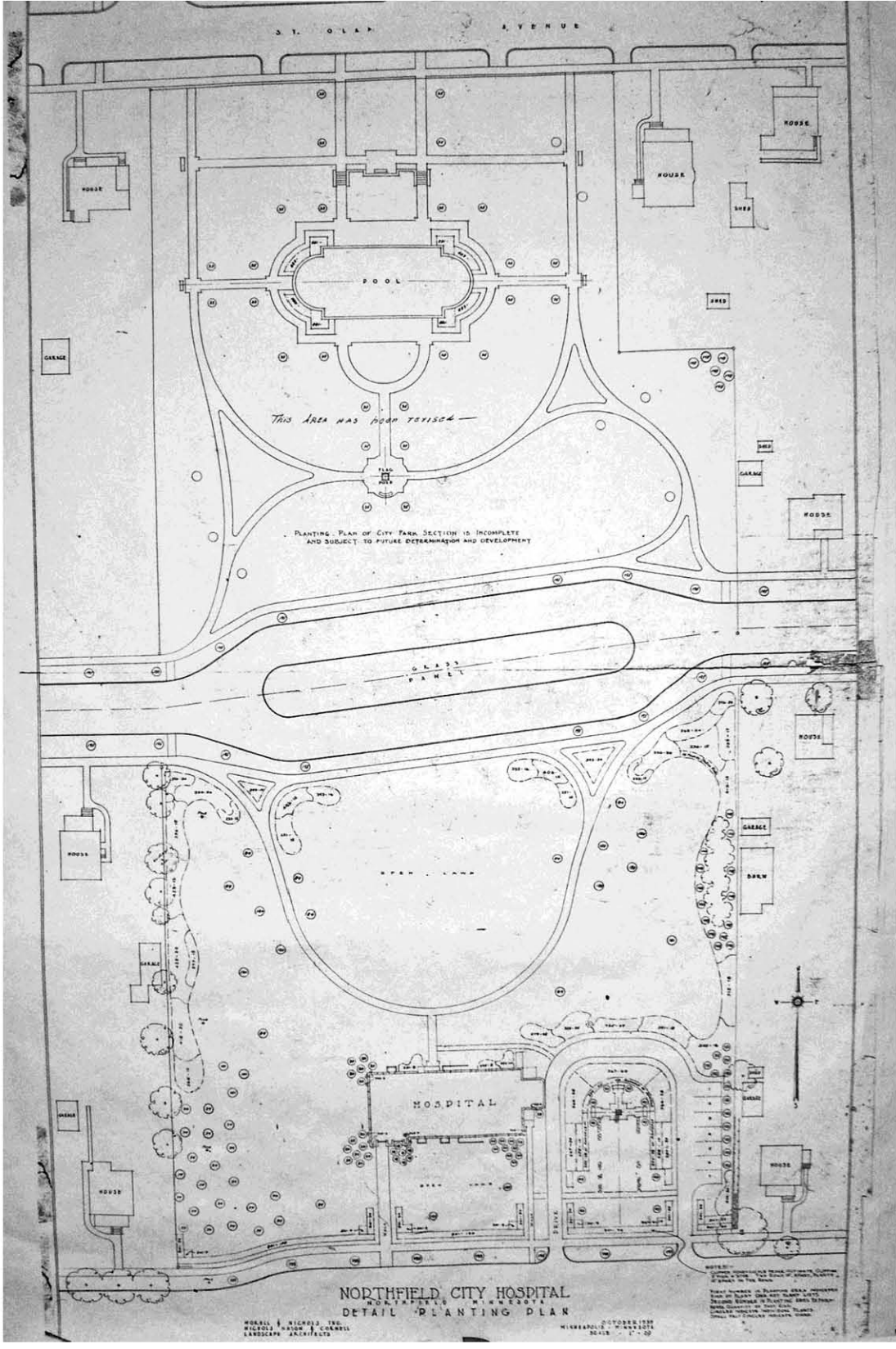


Google Earth Image with Way Park Outlined 2007

O.G. Felland. View of West Side from Old Main, 1887
Printed by permission of St. Olaf Archives



Morell & Nichols 1939 Plan for Way Park



MORELL & NICHOLS, INC.
NICHOLS, HAYDEN & CARROLL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
OCTOBER 1939
MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL
SCALE - 1" = 50'

Sec. 34-516. Reports.

The city council, upon request of the heritage preservation commission, may direct the city staff to prepare studies which catalog buildings, land, areas, districts, or other objects to be considered for designation as a heritage preservation site.

(Code 1986, § 250:15(1); Ord. No. 844, 6-19-2006)

Sec. 34-517. Criteria.

The heritage preservation commission shall recommend to the city council areas, buildings, districts, or objects to be designated heritage preservation sites. In considering the designation of heritage preservation sites, the commission shall apply the following stated criteria for evaluation and other applicable criteria that may be established by the Secretary of the Interior from time to time:

Criteria for evaluation. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- (1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (2) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (3) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (4) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
- (5) That have a unique location or singular physical characteristics representing established and familiar aspects of a view, vista, site, area or district in the city.

(Code 1986, § 250:15(2); Ord. No. 844, 6-19-2006)

Sec. 34-518. Intracity communication.

The heritage preservation commission shall establish and maintain communications with other city boards and commissions and others interested in or affected by a heritage preservation site designation.

(Code 1986, § 250:15(3); Ord. No. 844, 6-19-2006)

Sec. 34-519. Findings and recommendations.

The heritage preservation commission shall determine if a proposed heritage preservation site is eligible for preservation as determined by the criteria established by this article and applicable Secretary of the Interior standards, and current procedure as recommended by the state historic preservation office.

(Code 1986, § 250:15(4); Ord. No. 844, 6-19-2006)

Sec. 34-520. Council designation, hearings.

The city council, upon recommendation of the heritage preservation commission, may by resolution designate a heritage preservation site. Prior to such designation the city council may request review and recommendation by the planning commission for the designation's conformance with the comprehensive plan, and the council shall hold a public hearing, notice of which shall have been published in the official newspaper at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing and mailed notice sent to the owner of property which is proposed to be designated a heritage preservation site and to all owners of property lying within 350 feet of a proposed heritage preservation site. The council shall adopt findings in support of any decision to designate a heritage preservation site.

(Code 1986, § 250:15(5); Ord. No. 844, 6-19-2006)

Sec. 34-521. Communication with state historical society.

Prior to designating a proposed heritage preservation site, the heritage preservation commission shall forward information concerning the proposed designation to the state historical society for comment within 60 days. The decision of the heritage preservation commission and city council shall be sent to the state historical society in accordance with applicable state statutes.

(Code 1986, § 250:15(6); Ord. No. 844, 6-19-2006)



MEMORANDUM

*Public Services Department
Public Works Operations Engineer*

**Park & Recreation Advisory Board
February 8, 2010
Agenda Item #6**

Item: Northfield Code – Chapter 54
Requested By: Brian Erickson
Submitted By: Brian Erickson

Background:

Since the City Council has changed their normal meeting days to Tuesday from Monday there is a conflict with the current Park and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) regular meetings. At the December meeting a change of day discussion was held where the PRAB decided to meet on the second Monday of the month.

Action Required:

Review existing Chapter 54 information to see if additional changes may be warranted.

Attachment:

1. Existing Chapter 54 – Park Board
2. Draft Ordinance No. 907 – Amend Section 54-30/54-31.

[ARTICLE II. - PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD*](#)

***Charter reference**—Boards and commissions, § 3.2.

***Cross reference**—Boards and commissions, § 2-281 et seq.

[Sec. 54-26. - Established.](#)

[Sec. 54-27. - Composition; terms; appointments.](#)

[Sec. 54-28. - Officers.](#)

[Sec. 54-29. - Bylaws.](#)

[Sec. 54-30. - Meetings; quorum.](#)

[Sec. 54-31. - Liaison.](#)

[Sec. 54-32. - Duties.](#)

[Secs. 54-33—54-60. - Reserved.](#)

[Sec. 54-26. - Established.](#)

A park and recreation advisory board is established.

(Code 1986, § 265:00)

[Sec. 54-27. - Composition; terms; appointments.](#)

(a)

The park and recreation advisory board shall consist of seven voting members appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council for three-year terms. Terms are to run from January 1 through December 31 and are to be staggered so that there will be continuity on the board.

(b)

Vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the mayor with approval of the council to fill any portion of an unexpired term.

(c)

An appointee shall continue on the board until his/her successor is appointed. A retiring appointee may be appointed to succeed himself/herself.

(Code 1986, § 265:05)

[Sec. 54-28. - Officers.](#)

At the first meeting of each calendar year, members of the park and recreation advisory board shall elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary, each to serve throughout the year and until a successor is chosen.

(Code 1986, § 265:10)

[Sec. 54-29. - Bylaws.](#)

The park and recreation advisory board may set up its own bylaws.

(Code 1986, § 265:25)

[Sec. 54-30. - Meetings; quorum.](#)

(a)

The park and recreation advisory board shall hold its first meeting on the second Tuesday of each calendar year and shall at that meeting designate a regular monthly meeting time.

(b)

For transaction of business at any meeting, four members shall constitute a quorum. The votes of a majority of those present shall be required for the adoption of any resolution.

(Code 1986, § 265:15)

Sec. 54-31. - Liaison.

The director of parks and recreation shall serve as the city's liaison to the park and recreation advisory board.

(Code 1986, § 265:00)

Sec. 54-32. - Duties.

The park and recreation advisory board shall act in an advisory capacity to the city council regarding the public parks system and all public recreational facilities and programs of the city. All reports, resolutions, recommendations, and policy statements of the board shall be addressed to the city council. The board shall assist in the long range planning for land acquisition for parks, as well as detailed plans for park development and use. The board shall make a written report annually in December, and additionally when it so desires or is requested, to the city council.

(Code 1986, § 265:20)

Secs. 54-33—54-60. - Reserved.

ORDINANCE NO. 907

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD, MINNESOTA,
AMENDING NORTHFIELD CODE CHAPTER 54, ARTICLE II

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHFIELD DOES ORDAIN THAT
NORTHFIELD CODE CHAPTER 54, SEC. 54-30 and 54-31 ARE HEREBY
AMENDED AS FOLLOWS (deleted material is lined out; new material is
underlined; subsections which are not being amended are omitted):

Sec. 54-30 – Meetings; quorum.

~~(a) The park and recreation advisory board shall hold its first meeting on the second Tuesday of each calendar year and shall at that meeting designate a regular monthly meeting time.~~

(a) Regular meetings of the Board shall be held as prescribed by resolution, which resolution shall state the days, time and usual location of all regular meetings. The chairperson may call special meetings of the Board and must do so upon the request of four voting Board members or at the request of the council. Notice of all meetings of the Board shall be given in compliance with the law.

Sec. 54-31 – Liaison.

~~The director of parks and recreation shall serve as the city's liaison. The designated representative of city staff shall serve as an ex officio, non voting liaison~~ to the park and recreation advisory board.

Passed by the City Council of the City of Northfield this 2nd day of March, 2010.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor

VOTE: BUCKHEIT DENISON POKORNEY POWNELL
 ROSSING VOHS ZWEIFEL

First reading: _____

Second reading: _____

Published: _____