

# Recreation partnership shares with CAP committee

By Tom Lindfors Sep 25, 2017



Citizen members of the Community Action Plan (CAP) committee met last Wednesday, Sept. 13, in the main terminal hangar at the New Richmond Regional Airport to share updates on their progress with City Administrator Mike Darrow, Community Development Director Beth Thompson, and project consultants Todd Streeter and Brad Scheib.

Prior to presenting their committee updates, members heard a brief discussion, "Creating Quality of Life," by representatives of the New Richmond Recreation Partnership (NRRP). The Partnership consists of four local organizations, The City of New Richmond, The New Richmond Area Community Foundation (NRACF), The New Richmond School District and the New Richmond Area Centre.

The partnership began three years ago by asking two questions, "Why would someone move to New Richmond? and what is there to do in New Richmond?" They refined the issue down to a single question, "What makes New Richmond a destination?"

The partnership dedicated the first year to the process of discovery, the second to collecting data and planning and now in the third year to implementing action.

The discussion initially centered around recreational and athletic opportunities including more than 240 acres of parkland and 16 miles of trails. At the urging of the NRACF, the definition of recreation and athletics expanded to include not just team and youth sports but more lifestyle activities including biking, hiking and running.

"There are all sorts of studies out there that talk about the importance of active lifestyle and recreation in building a strong community. It's actually proven to be a really good economic driver," said Tim O'Brien, Chair of the NRACF.

It became evident in the first year that activities that attract people to New Richmond expanded well beyond athletics and traditional recreation to things like music, theater, entertainment and food, and venues like a new library.

An extensive survey further defined a vast array of activities and venues, identified a large and diverse group of users and estimated the demand for the venues and resources.

"If we did our job right, most of you probably saw our survey last year. A great number of you completed our survey, so the data and feedback that we have access to really helped us as a group to take this information and run with it. We think a lot of positives will come out of it," said New Richmond School District Superintendent, Patrick Olson.

The partnership came to a consensus that an efficient, comprehensive, centralized way to communicate all of the information was needed. An operations team was formed and charged with building a website to broker all of the information.

All four partner organizations have contributed funding equally to complete the construction of the website. According to Operations Team member and City Operations Manager Mike Mroz, they are in the process of evaluating software now with the goal to have a nuts and bolts website up and functional by early 2018.

"For the past couple weeks, we've brainstormed all the different organizations that would be able to use this platform to let the community know what was going on. We came up with 50 different organizations on our whiteboard. We're currently evaluating software from several different recreation software companies in terms of facility reservations, programming, map trials, a number of different capabilities," said Mroz.

Following the NRRP discussion, Darrow pointed out the communication and collaboration, the ability of four organizations and many individual boards to work together as a model to be emulated by the CAP Committee.

"The goal is to work together, to get along, so there's not ten different groups failing to communicate with each other. It's about creating lasting partnerships that transcend a website, that get into big issues like annexation, water quality, infrastructure and land use planning. It's about coming to the table and not being afraid to have an opinion and not being afraid to make a mistake," said Darrow.

The afternoon continued with brief updates from each of the CAP sub committee chairs sharing work priorities, challenges and research objectives. Members then broke down into their five sub committees to continue work in their areas of focus: Creating Community, Economic Prosperity, Community Connectivity, Quality of Life and Community Pride.

The next CAP meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11 at the New Richmond Regional Airport. For questions or information about joining the committee, contact Darrow at 715-246-4268 or [mdarrow@newrichmondwi.gov](mailto:mdarrow@newrichmondwi.gov) or Beth Thompson at 715-246-4268 or [bthompson@newrichmondwi.gov](mailto:bthompson@newrichmondwi.gov).