

North Brookfield Parks & Recreation Committee

Community Survey 2024

The Parks & Rec Committee published a survey in February with responses due by April 1st. This survey was available on-line and via paper. We received 193 responses.

Our first question asked if the respondent lived in town, which 190 responded yes.

The next question was about the current activities that the respondents participated in; none of the above topped the list with 78 responses. Family activities and playground were next with 73 and 47 responses, respectively. There were 28 who responded with soccer, 16 with basketball, 8 with baseball/softball. There were 28 who answered other which included occasional events, community events, July 4th, Family Fun Day and Trunk or Treat. Only 3 respondents left the question unanswered.

The third question asked which of the following, if added, would be the most valuable to you and your family. This question allowed for multiple responses. Walking track got the most with 111, Open Space/Trails/Recreation Paths got 90, Neighborhood Playground with 81, Senior Programming and Youth Programs and Leagues got 61 responses each. Sports Fields got 43, Badminton/Pickleball Court got 31 and Bicycle Pump Track received 22 responses. Tennis Courts, Beach Volleyball and Rugby got a few responses. Programs for kids, arts & crafts and games were written in and there was only one unanswered response.

What types of activities would you be most interested in attending was next with Community Events leading the way. These included Weekly Farmers Markets, Christmas on the Common, Carnival and Trunk or Treat. Music and Bands came in second with 125 responses, Outdoor Movies with 87, Weekly Yoga with 59, Adult Baseball/Softball Leagues got 32, Adult Basketball Leagues got 20. There were also responses for Leagues for Children and Flea Market.

There was a few comments about better clean up and too much litter after events. People need to be cognizant of their actions and be sure that they dispose of their own trash.

The opinions of what neighborhood parks should have included 147 responses for Passive Use areas such as open lawns, walking trails, picnic areas, 108 responses for more playground equipment, 107 for more programs for kids paid through user fees, 88 for organized sports and paid programming.

The items that prevent you or your family from using the Common included 89 responses that the facility lacks the right equipment and amenities, 62 stated the quality of the facility, 22 do not feel safe, 19 prefer private facilities, 17 chose not accessible for people with

disabilities, 11 were unfamiliar with the Common, 5 found it inconvenient and 15 are regular users. Some of the comments included people who don't clean up after their dogs, aesthetics would help, doesn't offer anything of interest and there are no leagues or games for kids besides soccer.

The improvements regarding the facilities and programs showed that most felt everything could be improved. Only 3 respondents felt it is perfect the way it is and 19 didn't answer. Some of the suggestions were a water fountain/statue, a better playground like Brookfield, a food truck event, a summer basketball league, pickleball, a bonfire, trash barrels that don't get knocked over with trash spilling and finally more organized activities for kids which would bring more adults.

The final question asked how we can encourage volunteers. 93 respondents would love to but have no time and 11 are too busy to help. There were some responses that showed there is interest to help based on the project and some are physically unable to help.

There were many comments in the written surveys that give an insight into some opinions of the Common. There was a statement that the flag needed to be replaced. There was some criticism of people not cleaning up after their dogs or themselves. Citizens need to be aware and clean up after themselves and their dogs. There is a suggestion to plant trees along Grove St to replace the old trees. There were also a couple of responses asking for more of a police presence both driving by and walking through.

The Common is a public space and it is a great asset to the community. With some investment, the Parks & Recreation Committee feels confident that we can make this property a centerpiece of the community for sports, play, events and gatherings.