

Residents Weigh in on park plan

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Residents told park district officials that a plan to move playground equipment in Fetzner Park in Crystal Lake near basketball courts was a mistake, and they agreed.

The 19-acre neighborhood park is being updated and planners had thought moving the equipment from the north side of the park to the south would improve safety, but residents saw it differently. They said teens use the basketball courts and would deter kids from the playground.

"I don't know if I'd want my kids hanging out by the teenagers," Rita Gore said. "There are always teens playing basketball and just hanging out in that area. If you put a playground there, school-age children are going to be intimidated."

Ann Vigor, park planner, saw their point and said the plans would be changed.

"We are definitely going to go with what they recommended," she said. "We never would have known that without talking to them."

Contractor Todd Stanton said keeping the new playground near its previous location would also save money.

"We wouldn't have to build a completely new shaded area because a shelter is already located on the north side," he said. "We'll remove the entire old playground, and use the same design on the other side."

The dialogue was part of a park district effort to update such neighborhood sites.

"Parks generally are obsolete after about 15 years," Vigor said. "Pieces that can't be replaced are wearing out at Fetzner and safety is becoming an issue."

The park, which opened in 1993, is situated on Woods Creek, between Bridgedale Road and Alexandra Boulevard. The current playground is situated on the north side of the creek, along with a shelter and soccer fields. Basketball courts and practice fields are located on the south side.

The new plan, designed by Design Perspectives of Naperville, also includes new walkways and landscaping.

The park district has budgeted \$150,000 for the project.

Vigor said park district officials are currently working with the contractors to finalize the design. Once complete, the project will go out to bid, which could take up to four weeks.

"We are hopeful to begin construction by mid-October," she said. "Our plan is to have the majority of the project finished before the snow flies, and come back in early spring to finish it up."

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