



Rachel Tharp/Index

Kirksville resident Dan Flannery plays a game of baseball at North Park.

City to revamp North Park

BY JULIA HANSEN
Staff Reporter

A Kirksville ad hoc committee will step up to the plate with plans to improve North Park.

North Park, a 65-acre park close to Wal-Mart, is only about two-thirds developed and is designated to undergo changes within the next few years. The Lakes, Parks and Recreation Commission is encouraging citizen participation through a committee but already has started a plan for the park.

"The plans [the LPRC already has created] are extensive master plans, and they're doable," said Steve Bell, Kirksville community services director. "They're sustainable. It's not a wish list, it's what we can actually do out there," Bell proposed the creation of an ad hoc North Park committee at the council meeting. Bell also proposed authorization from Mayor Martha Rowe to appoint committee members.

The committee of about nine people will work together to make plans for the park, but if there are more citizens interested in getting involved, the committee will take as many as necessary, Bell said. Currently the park has softball and baseball fields. Organizations such as Kirksville Baseball and Softball Association, KATZ, A.T. Still University, Truman Intramurals and the Kirksville Public Schools, which use the eight fields in the park, will make up the committee, according to the Kirksville City Council Web site.

The national baseball trend is decreasing, but in Kirksville the trend is growing in popularity, so improving the fields is a valid investment, Bell said. Last season 602 people played on Kirksville Baseball and Softball Association teams.

One improvement already completed is an extension of Emmett Road that was finished last baseball season to minimize traffic issues around the park. Before

the Emmett Road extension there was only one exit from the park, which was a problem for departing traffic. Another extension of Emmett Road will be built on the northern perimeter of the park this year or early next spring. This expansion of the road will create a third exit from the park extending to Lincoln Street, Bell said.

Heidi Templeton, Kirksville resident and potential ad hoc committee applicant lives near the ballpark and said she already has seen improvements in traffic problems.

"This last year they opened up that one piece of Emmett, and that was so helpful because it created a second exit," Templeton said. "Also, the eventual extension of Emmett street will take a tremendous load off of people trying to get on 63."

The Lakes, Parks and Recreation Commission has drawn up preliminary plans for the park.

These plans include two outdoor soccer fields, a shelter, parking lots, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, a skateboard park, pitching mounds and two ponds. The citizens of Kirksville also have shown interest in creating a community room, but building this type of structure typically costs in excess of \$300,000, Bell said.

The committee will work with Bell to research possible infrastructures that are of long-term interest to the community.

"The last thing you want to do is put a lot of money into [an] infrastructure that in three years from now there's no interest in," Bell said. "That's why [we are] bringing the whole group together: to brainstorm, to look at research and to go out into the community and find out what the community wants, will sustain and will use."

Members of the community have approached the LPRC with interest to bring more sports tournaments to Kirksville.

These tournaments would bring business and money to the Kirksville economy.

Debra Boughton, director of tourism, said she is optimistic about what park improvements can do for Kirksville.

"It would be wonderful to have several baseball and softball tournaments because that brings not just the players in but their families," Boughton said. "They come, they stay overnight in our hotels, eat in our restaurants. That would bring a ton of money into the community. [Tournaments] are wonderful, wholesome events, and we're a perfect community to host those kinds of activities."

The plan is to make North Park a destination park, a place that people from both big cities and small towns are willing to travel to for tournaments.

"The only way to bring them here is to create a park where the facilities are good enough that it becomes a destination that people are willing to travel to," Bell said.

Throughout the season, many Kirksville families travel to cities like Columbia, St. Louis and Springfield, Mo., to play in baseball or softball tournaments. With improvements to the park, Templeton said she would like to see more tournaments come to Kirksville.

"We have a beautiful park," Templeton said. "We have some issues that we need to improve, but all in all as I travel to some of these other locations and I come back to Kirksville I think, 'We have the facilities here, we just need to figure out how to put a group together to bring tournaments to Kirksville.'"

The committee will be put together soon, but for now Bell and the LPRC are keeping options open for the improvement of North Park.

"I came to Kirksville [because] there's a lot of opportunity," Bell said. "There are a lot of unmet [sic] needs that require creative solutions. I'm excited about the opportunities at North Park."

Haven for music lovers opens in Kirksville

BY ANSHU THAPA
for the Index

Music lovers and frequent concert-goers have a hot spot in Kirksville.

A new music venue is opening at the corner of Jefferson and Main Street.

Dillon Lara, one of the stores co-owners, said he and his friends, Brad Burger and Zach Perkins decided to open the venue because of their passion for music.

"We started talking more about this project and later decided to have a music venue for local bands to play," Lara said.

He said the whole thing started as an idea for establishing a new record label and opening a recording studio and has developed from there.

Lara said the plan for this project is to have

local bands from southeast Iowa, northeast Missouri and other places in the Midwest come to Kirksville and perform.

"Our focus will be on local bands," Lara said. "We are more than willing to have interested people with bands or no bands to come join us. We want to offer these prospective bands a place to play their music all the time."

Lara said he and his partners will take ownership of the building Oct. 1.

Construction will begin with replacing all the tile floors, which are bad for recording, with carpets, setting up the stage and installing the sound system, he said.

Lara said he and his friends will try to focus their work on the recording studio first and on offering good equipment to make it better than other recording studios in Kirksville.

"We will also have varieties of music equipment like guitars, drum sets, amplifiers, that people who record with us can use," Lara said.

The opening on Oct. 26 will include a concert featuring Engaged, a band from Columbia, Mo., and Lara's band, Please Please Please. The show will cost \$3.

"We are going to host several shows a week," Lara said. "We want our price to be affordable so that everyone can come to our shows."

For the first few months the venue will be open only on weekends after 5 p.m., he said.

"First couple months will be a trail more than anything. If things go well, we'll start doing more with it," Lara said.

Garrison Frick, a music education major, said he is excited about the new venue.

"It sounds like a very neat idea that Kirks-

ville could have used for a long time," Frick said. "There are not many places in Kirksville where people can play and listen to live music. It will probably result in a lot more musicians to come out and play."

Circle M music store owner, David Daniels said he is not worried about his store's new competition.

He said he is looking forward to a venue for local bands to play in Kirksville.

"I don't mind," Daniels said. "I have been here for 35 years, and I have seen it come and go."

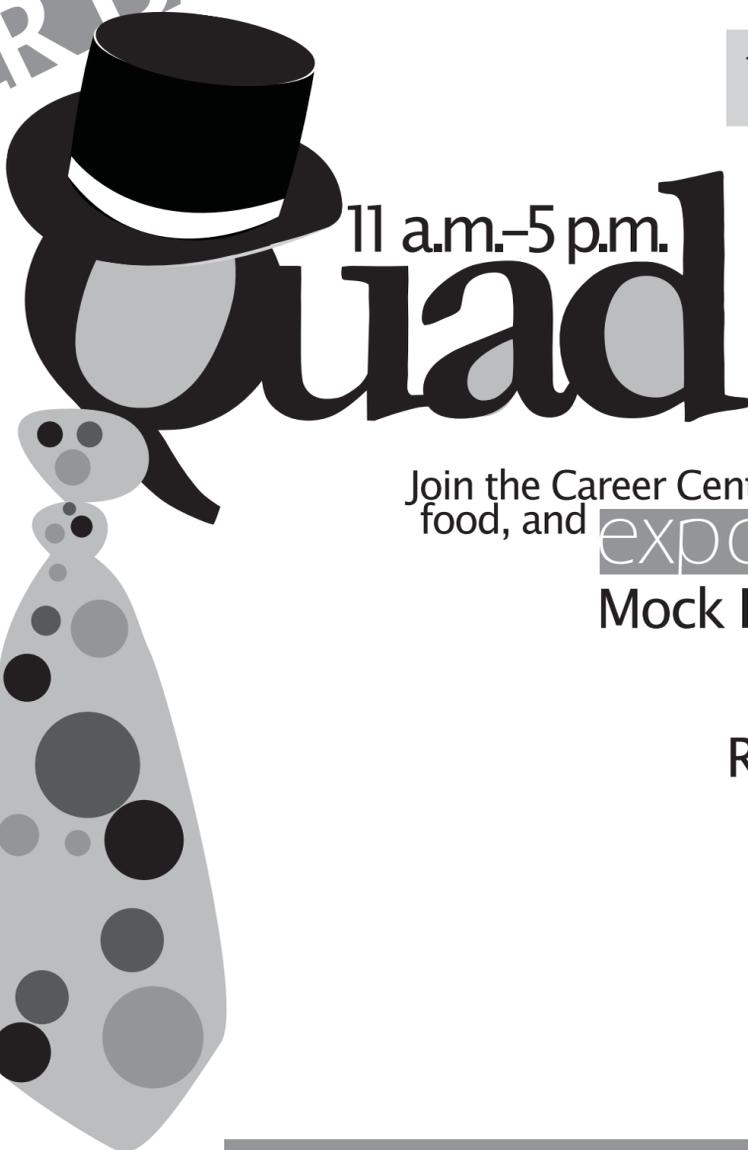
He said the amount of competition will depend on what the new store has to offer.

"Cheaper is not always better," Daniels said. "What the finish product will sound like is what really matters."

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Join the Career Center on the quad for fun,
food, and

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Mock Interview sign-up

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