

Port poised to go off-road with new bike trail

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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Committee will consider urban mountain-bike path

Port Washington may become a destination for mountain bikers this summer.

The Parks and Recreation Board on Wednesday was expected to approve plans for a mountain bike trail that would extend from Guenther Park north to Hales Trail just east of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.

This trail would be in addition to a mountain bike park the city is constructing on Moore Road adjacent to the skateboard park.

“It really is neat,” Parks and Recreation Director Charlie Imig said. “I think it’s going to be kind of cool.

“This is good for Port Washington. I think it will bring people into the city, and while they’re here maybe they’ll have lunch or just explore.”

The proposed trail would be about two miles long and make use of an existing trail that’s been overgrown, Imig said.

“Kids over the years have created the trail,” he said.

Imig said he walked the trail last fall and inspected it.

“Portions of it are leaf-blower ready,” he said, noting it will take little work to clear those parts of the trail and put them into service.

Other areas, however, must be completely built, he said.

The trail would be accessible off the existing bike trail or at trailheads at Guenther Park or the bluff, Imig said.

The Ozaukee County Mountain Bike Club, which has developed a trail in the Town of Cedarburg, has offered to develop and maintain the trail at no cost to the city, Imig said.

The trail wouldn’t be limited to mountain bikes, he said, but also would be open to pedestrians.

It would likely be open year-round, he added, noting that the fat-tire bikers would probably use it in the wintertime.

Although Ozaukee County ran into a significant amount of controversy when it proposed developing a mountain bike park on 36 acres of county-owned land between Lake Drive and Dixie Road in the Town of Port, Imig said he doesn’t anticipate that happening in the city.

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When the board discussed the concept at its last meeting, more than 20 people showed up to support it, he said.

“This is really a gung-ho group,” Imig said of the mountain bike club. “They’re going to watch out for their own and take care of this. It’s really neat it has this much support.

“For them, it’s a win-win.”

The trail wouldn’t be excessively challenging, Imig said, nor would the mountain bike park, which will be developed on Moore Road south of the skateboard park.

However, they would provide enough of a challenge that users are likely to come back time after time, he said.

Organizers said the trail could be used as a place where young mountain bikers could go to train, Imig noted.

That project, which was approved last year, will have nine features, including a pump track. Work on the park is expected to begin when the weather breaks, Imig said.

If approved by the board Wednesday, both the path and the park could be open by summer, he added.