

Families turn out to support the Meadow Street Park ^{7/18/07}

By Lynn Sellers-LaBuy
Reporter

BELVIDERE — A week ago, members of the Park and Conservation Foundation walked throughout the neighborhood surrounding the Meadow Street Park handing out flyers letting residents know about the picnic they were planning. The picnic was a chance for neighborhood residents and others in the community to see the plans for the Meadow Street Park.

Their efforts were rewarded on Saturday, as foundation members were pleasantly surprised at the large turnout.

The Parks and Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organized in July of 1992. Land acquisition is a priority of the foundation to ensure that future generations may enjoy open spaces and recreation near their homes.

"I didn't realize how many kids lived in this neighborhood!" was the comment made by Dan Roddewig, a member

of the foundation, as he showed me the proposed plans for the park.

Roddewig told me, "There currently is no park in this quadrant of the city. The closest would be Doty Park, but small children have to cross State Street to get to it."

The Park District does have a Tot Lot on East Avenue, but once again small children in the Meadow Street area would have to cross a busy Logan Avenue to use the facility.

Roddewig added "While older kids and teens can ride their bikes or drive their cars to Belvidere Park or Doty Park, small children need a neighborhood park"

Bob Howells first approached the group about establishing a park in the Meadow Street area and was instrumental in obtaining the land for the park.

The Parks and Conservation Foundation currently is working to create the Meadow Street Park so kids can have a safe place to play in.

Roddewig said that the Meadow Street Park "could not have been done without the help of John R. Cook Associates

who lent their expertise and planning to the project."

The Parks and Conservation Foundation feels that the Meadow Street Park will provide an inner-city park for children in a very under served neighborhood.

The large, flat grassy area would provide an open grassy area to fly kites and kick balls around, but not for formal games of soccer.

Plans for the park include a blacktopped area for basketball hoops that would encourage shooting hoops and practicing, but not in a manner to play a full court game keeping in the idea of young children having a safe place to just have fun and play in.

The corner of Locust Street and Warren Avenue would include two playgrounds. One will be for 2-5 year olds and a second one for 5 -12 year olds children. The areas would include swings and sand play area too.

Future plans would include restrooms, a drinking fountain and a loose, bright colored fabric shelter.

If you would like more information about the park; or if you or your company would like to donate to the project, please contact Dan Roddewig at 815-547 5711.