

RECREATION/LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN EMPORIA 1975, updated 1997, updated 2006

The League of Women Voters of Emporia supports emphasis on providing facilities and programs for recreational and leisure time activities for citizens of all ages in Emporia.

Parks:

There are adequate large multipurpose parks. Parks should be included in the planning for new residential developments. New parks could be adjacent to schools to utilize parking and equipment.

Signs should identify ALL parks. Landscaping and aesthetics should be well-planned which would include some areas where “nature” can be enjoyed. Nature/walking trails and bicycle paths should be developed. A walking trail connecting Peter Pan Park and Soden’s Grove should be considered (along the river).

Facilities and equipment for all ages should be maintained and updated. All parks should have a picnic tables(s) and/or benches along with some open spaces. There appears to be a need for additional equipment for young children in some of the parks.

Improved publicity as to the location of the parks is needed.

The Recreation Center: (updated

The Recreation Center provides many services for Emporia and the area outside of the citizens. Multi-use areas are important. Expansion of swimming pool is needed to handle the increasing use. A room for use by young children should be considered and perhaps babysitting be available for parents participating in Recreation Center activities. Planning for activities to attract usage by whole families (not necessarily in the same activity) should be considered.

The League of Women Voters of Emporia strongly supports the establishment of an interagency agreement between the Emporia Recreation Commission, the School Board for USD 253 and the City of Emporia. This **written** agreement should establish clear lines of authority and sources of revenue for the maintenance and improvements of the parks and recreation facilities. This would allow for scheduled replacement of equipment and better planning for the future recreation and park needs for everyone. This agreement should include a provision for periodic review. We also believe that patrons who use the Recreation Building and the Aquatic Center or participate in programs sponsored by the Recreation Commission who live outside the tax base area should pay higher fees than those whose taxes support the Recreation Commission.

Aquatic Center:

The members of the League of Women Voters of Emporia recognize the need for a center in Emporia that would provide a variety of outdoor water activities for families. The center should serve the community rather than those driving by on the highway. The scheduling of competitive swimming activities should be considered in advance as closing the pool to the general public might create ill will. Use by all segments of the community should be allowed as much of the time as possible.

The location should be made accessible to all parts of the city. A shuttle bus service should be made available to all areas of the city (for example, a bus that stops at summer playground areas and other appropriate spots). Taxi coupons could also be available. Adequate parking should be available at the site. There should be a safe route for bicycles.

Coordination of Leisure Time Activities:

There should be continued cooperation between all groups working to provide recreation and leisure time activities. Cultural as well as athletic activities should be encouraged. Improved cooperation by the governmental bodies is encouraged with the Emporia Arts Council, the Community Theater, ESU "Arts" activities, etc., to enhance the health and well-being of our community. It appears there is good cooperation with sports groups such as Kids Wrestling Club, Aquatic Club, TRYSA, etc.

More publicity is needed on how to check out equipment for use by citizens and how to reserve shelter houses in the parks and zoo rest areas. Cooperation is encouraged with the gardening groups and individuals to assist in the improved aesthetics and landscaping throughout the city.

Additional financial support should be sought by government entities for funding recreational and leisure time activities. These entities should include groups like the Emporia Arts Council, the Emporia Senior Center, the Emporia Public Library, the Lyon County Museum, etc.

Desirable Future Development Includes the Following:

- Signs identifying all Parks and Bicycle paths in the city.
- Walking/hiking trails in parks and other parts of the city. The development of nature/walking/hiking trails in Jones Park and a trail along the river between Pan Park and Soden's Grove should be established.
- Skateboard/Rollerblade areas.
- More facilities for teen activities are needed. Research in the area should include a survey of the high school youth as to what they would like.
- Improved landscaping throughout the city.