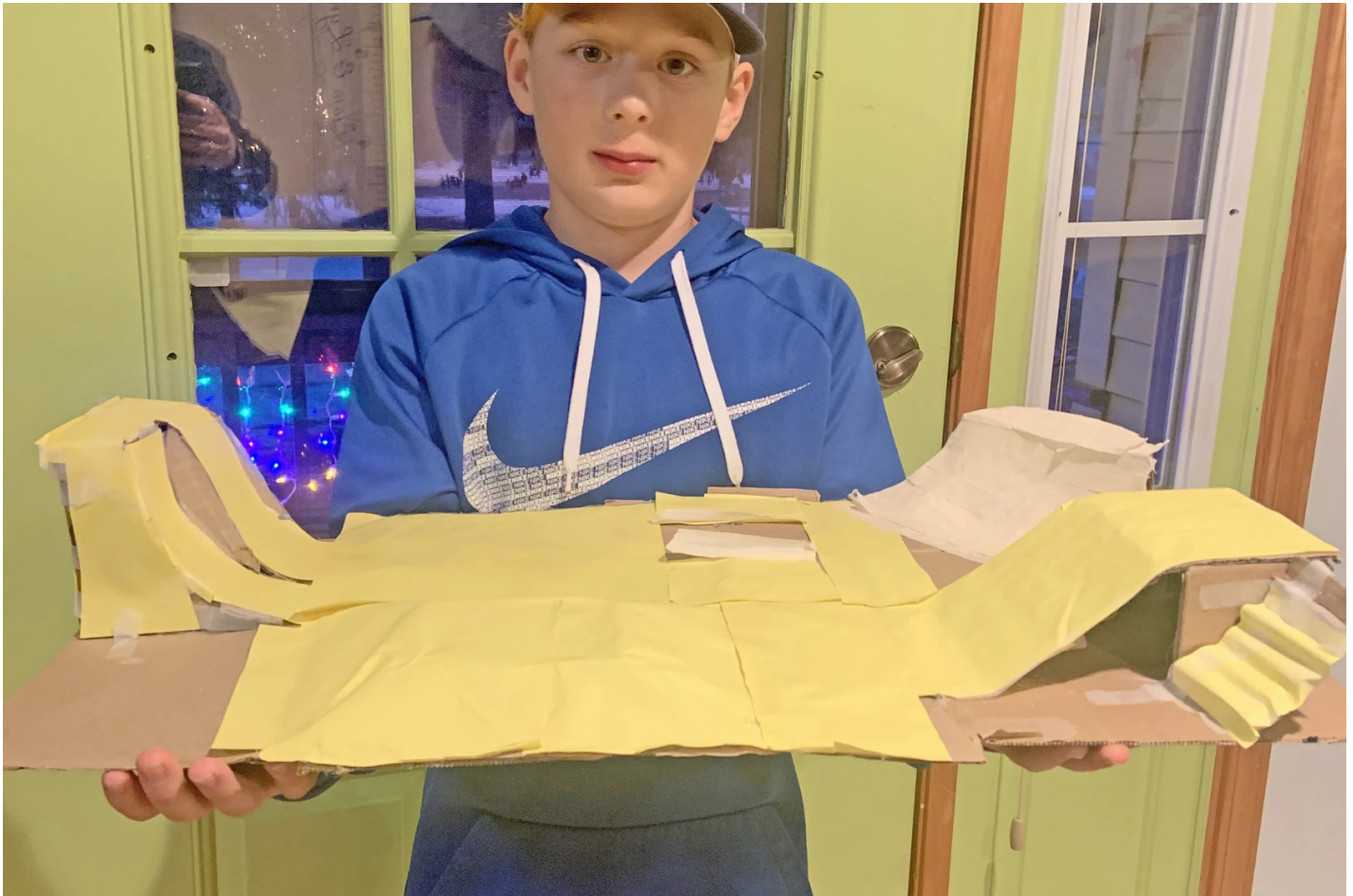




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Skatepark brainstorm

Nevis youth brings skatepark idea to city council.



Liam built a 3-D model of the skatepark he hopes will become a reality in Nevis one day. The Nevis Council is exploring a possible site that might work for a skatepark and will discuss options at their January meeting. Contributed/Nate Gustafson.

By [Lorie Skarpness](#)

December 17, 2021 05:00 PM

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Liam Gustafson hopes there will one day be a skatepark in Nevis. The 11-year old brought his proposal for a skatepark to the Nevis Council Monday night along with a letter and a model of his proposed skatepark.

a skatepark in Nevis.”

In the letter Gustafson presented to the council he explained how a skatepark could benefit youth in the community.

“I think a skatepark will give kids in town new opportunities and a new way to play,” Liam wrote. “This summer I witnessed kids who were bored, who made poor choices and littered in our town. A skatepark would give kids a safe place to play where they wouldn't get bored.”

Gustafson learned that some of the land he was hoping could be used for a skatepark belongs to the Department of Natural Resources.

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However, there is a possibility a skatepark could be placed between the ice arena and where sledding stops. City maintenance supervisor Don Umthun asked Gustafson to bring more information about the size of the skatepark.

Council member Sue Gray asked how the skatepark would be funded. Mayor Jeanne Thompson said the city would not be able to fund the project.

Liam's dad Nate told the council he has reached out to Grand Rapids and Wadena to find out how they raised money for their skateparks and talked to friends and neighbors about fundraising in the community.

Thompson said the first step is for the Gustafson's to look at spots in town with Umthun that might work for a skatepark. The next steps are to look at the size of the skatepark, getting bids and fundraising.

Thompson said the city would need to explore what liabilities the city would have if a skatepark is installed on city property and how it may impact their insurance.

“This is a great experience for you, to bring an idea and work on it to its conclusion,” she told Liam.

The council will explore the idea of a skatepark further at their January council meeting.

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In a phone interview with the Enterprise after the meeting, Liam’s mom Heidi said the Walker Area Foundation has agreed to be the fiscal agent for his skatepark, and donations toward the proposed project may be sent to the Walker Area Foundation; P.O. Box 624; Walker, MN 56484.

“He kept talking about wanting a skatepark, so we told him if we wanted it he should do something about it and he took the initiative from there,” she said.

Liam said after the meeting that he was happy to hear the council is considering a skatepark.

“It will be exciting if we get one and can go to the skatepark whenever we want,” he said. “Scooters, skateboards, BMX, rollerblades. It’s kind of open to anything that’s non-motorized. I have quite a few friends from my hockey team and a couple of other friends, and we all ride scooters a lot.”

He has already thought of two possible names for the skatepark: Tiger Power Park and Birchwood Skatepark.

In other action, the council:

- Adopted a resolution to accept the redistribution of unrequested Coronavirus local fiscal recovery funds established under the American Rescue Plan Act in the amount of \$717.
- Approved end-of-year transfers as presented.
- Accepted Blair Reuther's continuation on the council through 2022.
- Approved Gary Nicklason for another three-year term on the planning commission.
- Approved a variance as requested for a new home build.
- Heard flooding the ice rink in town is on hold until colder weather arrives.
- Reported general fund revenues for November totaling \$2,896 and expenditures totaling \$21,147.
- Reported that municipal liquor store receipts in November totaled \$63,185 and disbursements totaled \$70,323.
- Heard the Nevis Fire Department has responded to 11 medicals and 1 vehicle fire.
- Approved a report from the Fire Relief Association, which ended 2020 with \$426,414 in their retirement fund.
- Received an activity report from Hubbard County Deputy Josh Oswald's that listed the following call stats: 1 alarm call, 5 animal calls, 4 arrests, 14 attempts to locate, 1 burglary/theft, 6 citations, 3 civil processes, 3 disturbances/disorderly calls, 1 domestic issue, 6 medical calls, 7 "other," 5 public assists, 46 traffic stops and 14 business/facility checks.
- Heard Oswald responded to a burglary at a business and is addressing vehicle parking issues during snow plowing this winter.

The next council meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 10 at city hall.

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1/2: Liam Gustafson, 11, hopes a skatepark will become a reality in Nevis so he and his friends won't have to get a ride to Bemidji or Park Rapids to have fun on their scooters. Contributed / Heidi Gustafson.

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