

VILLA PARK

New park earns officials gratitude of skateboarders

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When a group of skateboarders from Villa Park came to a Village Board meeting in mid-October, it was to voice concern over the future of the 2-4-8 Skate Park at Jefferson Park and complain about the park's condition.

When 10 young skaters showed up at last week's meeting, it was for a completely different purpose — the young men wanted to thank the Village Board and the Recreation Department for working with them to find a solution.

The boys considered presenting the Village Board with a plaque, said Paulina Jimenez, mother of a skater and member of the Villa Park Skate Park Committee, but that didn't seem very creative.

"They gave them a skateboard signed by all the committee members," Jimenez said. "It was meant as thank you. They felt this was a big accomplishment.

"I think (the board) was almost expecting us to complain," she added. "It's a good idea to be grateful."

The accomplishment that spurred the boys' gratitude was finding a new location for the skate park after determining that its current spot is too isolated and draws people who aren't coming to skate, she said.

"We found the best possible location, just west of the Iowa Community Center," said Carrie Karl, the Parks Department's superintendent of recreation.

The boys like that spot.

"They were so happy," Jimenez said. "It's a



Submitted photo

Members of the Villa Park Skate Park Committee present a skateboard to village trustees for their efforts in finding a new location for the skate park.

good location for that."

But the next step for the Skate Park Committee, made up of skaters and community members, is to get funding to build the new skate park, Karl said. There's no funding available for it right now.

"Funding is currently what the committee and myself are looking at," she said. "We have some potential grant opportunities."

Overall, Karl is happy with the committee, which formed after rumors circulated that the Parks Department was going to close the skate park.

"I'm very pleased with the work of the committee," she said. "We're all working for the same common interest. ... It's extremely rewarding for me as a professional to work with youth and adults who are so enthusiastic."