

**Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
Recreation Program Advisory Committee
November 10, 2010**

Minutes

Members Present: Peggi Braden, Caryn Clothier, Sara Griffin, Jerry Holisky, Sharon Hoyle-Yap, Juan Moran, Mercedes Rivera, and Della Steele

WPD Representatives: Greg Petry, Alicia Mentell, Jay Lerner, and Julie Schneider

Welcome: Greg Petry called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

Introduction of Committee Members: Committee members and staff introduced themselves to each other. This was the first official meeting for Hoyle-Yap and Moran.

Waukegan Sports Park:

Construction Update: Greg Petry stated that 99% of the project was completed. The storm water grates need work. Permits with Beach Park are being settled. Signs need to be put up. Money is being held back with a sub-contractor. Plans were to open up late summer, but the strike held work up six weeks. The delay was probably for the better.

The Grand Opening will now be held next May or June with June being Parks Month. The project is \$500,000 under budget. There have been change orders along the way as sometimes contractors have to be settled up with on the fly. Prior to the fall there was lost time due to rain.

The Astroturf was used for youth football and soccer and the ball diamonds for fall baseball. There were a few complaints about the parking fee, but it was needed for the budget. A soft opening was held and all went well.

Caryn Clothier asked if the facility was locked up. It is locked up doing the day as there have been some thefts. Sharon Hoyle-Yap asked if there was any signage as she could not find it. Petry responded that there would be an 8' x 15' huge sign that would be lighted. For now there is a smaller vinyl one. If field lights are on, then games are going. Parking lights are on until 2 am for security.

Events, Programs, and Operations: Jay Lerner, Manager of Sports and Fitness, gave an update on events and operations conducted at the Waukegan SportsPark this past fall.

Highlights from the soft opening on September 25, 2010, included a regional NFL Flag Football Tournament on the Championship Field with approximately thirty teams from the region. There were eight teams from Waukegan in the tournament. All were sponsored by the Waukegan Park District. There was also an interactive trailer at the event with games and giveaways for children. On the softball fields there was a National Softball Association Men's Softball Tournament with eight teams from the area.

Lerner also reported on other activities that were held at the SportsPark this fall which included the following: Waukegan Youth Football Association played games on weekends and practiced nightly on the Championship Field. Robert Morris University played games and practiced throughout the fall on the Championship Field. Men's and Coed Softball Leagues played games

on the softball fields on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Lerner mentioned that games are played on the fields until 10:15 pm and sometimes perhaps until 10:45 pm if games are unusually long.

Lerner reported that MiLena's ran concessions on a trial basis this fall and things went well. Clothier asked how many concession stands there were at the Sports Park. Lerner replied that there were two major permanent concession stands, but that temporary ones could be set up if needed. He added that there were seven to eight restroom facilities scattered around the area. He also noted parking admission was charged on the weekends and although there were a few complaints at the start, things went well and groups were very pleased with the facility.

Janet Kilkelly asked if there were any plans for cross country skiing this winter. Petry said no. Petry said that there had been problems with Wadsworth regarding horses, trespassing, and vandalism. Hoyle-Yap noted that there had been comments regarding this in Talk of the County. Petry stated that police are responding to calls, two of which were bogus regarding noise being too loud and lights too bright. All complaints came from Wadsworth residents who lived on the three or four streets that dead-end to the SportsPark.

Sara Griffin asked if residents were being charged the \$5 for parking. Hoyle-Yap stated that the youth already pay \$500 for football and the fee would be much higher if the youth football association had to pay for field use too. She said that the \$5 was not that much considering all things. Alicia Mentell stated that 70% of park districts charge their youth affiliates to use the fields.

Petry stated that a company has been hired to have their border collies chase the geese away. The dogs visit the SportsPark a couple times a week for a couple of times a day. The dogs may have to be used again in the spring to keep the geese from eating the grass.

Petry noted that the park district's philosophy is to work out the logistics so that Waukegan residents and/or teams are given priority first. The district will wait to book big tournaments. Pegg Braden expressed concern over the traffic. Lerner responded that a flow pattern will be worked out to reduce congestion.

Petry stated that the park district cannot issue any more bonds right now for Phase II. It needs to wait until there is economic recovery or the park district could lose 50% of its assessed evaluation. It will probably be three to five years before new bonds would be issued.

Special Recreation of Northern Lake County: Julie Schneider, Manager of Special Recreation, opened her presentation with an introduction of her position with the Waukegan Park District and how it relates to Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County (SRSNLC). SRSNLC is a cooperative agreement with the Lindenhurst, Round Lake, Waukegan, and Zion Park Districts.

Schneider ran a Video CD created by the Special Recreation Association Network of Illinois. This video outlined the basic requirements to form a Special Recreation Association within the State of Illinois and touched on overall programs and services provided by a Special Recreation Association.

After the video, Schneider gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting SRSNLC-Waukegan programs and services. The presentation was categorized into the following: Introduction of SRSNLC-Waukegan staff; basic philosophy of Special Recreation having therapeutic benefits; populations served; approaches to providing programs and services; highlights of active collaborative efforts; fundraising efforts; promotional items; and details on program categories offered on a year round basis.

Clothier asked if there were any programs during the day. Schneider said some with most of them being Leisure Education programs with the Waukegan School District. Most of the participants are either in school or a work during the day, except for summers when camps are held. Della Steele asked how many residents registered for the programs. Schneider said there are about thirty that live at home while others live in one of three group homes or at the Ann B. Kiley Developmental Center. Kiley rotates about seventy-five residents through the programs.

Braden asked what coordination there was with teachers. Schneider said that the coordination was mainly with the Leisure Education Program. Jerry Holisky asked what grades did the staff work with at the schools. Schneider replied that they work with students preschool on up to high school.

Kilkelly asked if the brochure still came out three times a year and to whom it was distributed. Schneider answered that it did come out three times a year and is distributed to people on the mailing list. In addition, copies of the brochure are placed at the different park district facilities.

Clothier asked if there was a lot of turnover at the Kiley Center to which Schneider responded yes. However, the group homes and the center all have a waiver for participants that is good for one year so that the guardians or relatives do not have to be contacted for each individual program. Braden asked if it was electronic. Special Recreation participants cannot register online because of the unique items that are needed. Door to door transportation is provided for residents of Waukegan Park District.

Griffin commented that the Resource Fair was great and acknowledged that it is not easy for family members to find out information regarding programs and services. The information booths were great for families, especially with it all at one location at one time.

Handouts were given of the PowerPoint presentation, fall SRSNLC program brochure, SRSNLC trifold, and Polar Bear Plunge Pledging Program and event flyer.

Strategic Plan: Petry stated that several of the Recreation Advisory Committee members participated in the focus group for the Strategic Plan. Everyone was given a copy of the Strategic Plan and Petry highlighted portions of it. He focused on the goals through the budget sections. Petry stated that the Strategic Plan will help the Board of Commissioners make decisions going forward. Kilkelly asked if this was different than the Master Plan. Petry said it was as the Master Plan dealt with facilities and parks whereas this was providing strategic directions.

Clothier asked if the park district would be doing the beach front. Petry said he sent the Mayor a framework for consideration. There are legal issues and there are certain requirements that PDRMA stipulates. PDRMA is the risk management agency for park districts. Petry stated that the city needs to jump on board full heartedly. There are many liabilities to the beach.

The park district will not be involved with the beach unless the city commits funds to it. There are three options the first being that the park district does it with some financial support from the city, the second being the city does it with its own financial support, and the third being that the park district does not do it at all. Holisky stated that the city will probably not to do anything with it if it cost money.

Petry said that currently there would be difficulty getting in an ambulance, that cars have to back up to get out of the parking lot, and little children are running all around without supervision. He also stated that boaters like to come up right to the North Beach and buoyed off. Mentell mentioned that there was no trash pickup and this really caused a health concern. All of these situations create safety issues

Holisky commented that how much better Ganster Pool is run compared to the beach. Kilkelly asked if there was not a new comprehensive plan. Petry stated that that was a different deal. The issue regarding the beach needs to get resolved in the next few months.

Priorities for Next Meeting: Braden asked about the park district offering Treibel for dogs and commented that it was the latest rage. One uses an open area like a soccer field and the dogs heard balls into a net or fenced in area. Petry stated that the dog park would be expanded with different areas for dogs 25 pounds and under and those over. Plans are also proposed to install an outdoor agility course at the dog park. Some fundraising has been going on like at the K-9 Trace and Pace. Hoyle-Yap mentioned that she had attended a fund raiser that was a pool party for dogs. There will be further discussion of dog programs at the next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.