

**Waukegan Park District Special Board Meeting
Recreation Program Advisory Committee
April 13, 2011**

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

WPD Representatives: Alicia Mentell, Mike Trigg, Jay Lerner, Jennifer Dumas, Jessica Mitchell, and Karen Nikopoulos

Welcome: Alicia Mentell called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Introduction of Committee Members: Committee members and staff introduced themselves to each other.

Waukegan SportsPark:

Operations: Lerner reviewed operations plans for the Waukegan SportsPark. He reviewed the following areas:

- Athletic Field Usage Procedures, Fees, Rules, & Rental Application
 - Athletic Field Start Dates
 - Anticipated User Groups for Leagues and Rentals
 - Upcoming Tournaments for 2011
 - Parking Procedures
 - Daily Operations
 - ThorGuard – Lightning Prediction System
-
- Sharon Hoyle-Yap expressed concern again about the \$5 parking on weekends for games saying it was expensive for parents. Lerner responded that the fees are there to recover operation expenses and are a vital part of revenue. Mentell noted that the youth affiliates do not pay for athletic field usage which is unlike many other Park Districts in the area. Hoyle-Yap was still concerned and asked what had happened to the idea of having a season parking pass at a reduced rate for residents. Lerner said it would not be done for this season, but that the concept of resident seasonal parking pass is still under review and the feasibility would be assessed after the first year of operations.

Grand Opening: Lerner reviewed the Grand Opening Plans for the SportsPark. He reviewed the following information:

- AT&T gave \$4,000 sponsorship towards the Grand Opening
- Date is Friday, June 3, 2011 from 5pm-10:30pm
- Opening Ceremonies begin at 5pm
- Softball Leagues Games at 6:15pm
- Games and Entertainment begins at 6:45-8:45pm at Championship Field
- Fireworks at 9:15pm end the evening

Dog Programs and Facilities

Outdoor Agility Course: Mike Trigg discussed the current specifications of the Callahan-Franklin Dog Exercise Area and displayed several architectural designs for the future development of the area. These designs illustrated the repositioning of a current fence line and adding new features that include a dog agility playground, small and large dog area, new entryway, parking lot, and future land expansion to the north that would include a walking trail. Trigg briefly discussed general expenses and logistical planning of the project and indicated this projected would be completed in two phases.

Committee members expressed very positive support for this project and looked forward to residents being able to enjoy it even more. David Motley mentioned that the dog park for the Lake County Forest Preserve is its biggest revenue producer. Mentell said that it was the intent of the park district to keep the Callahan Dog Park a free experience to dog owners and their pets. She compared it to all the playgrounds for children in Waukegan that are also free. She also mentioned that fund raising activities were being held for the agility equipment itself.

Dog Agility Demonstration: Judy Warling and Amy Scarbro, volunteer instructors, demonstrated the agility course using their dogs, Liebchen and Lexie. Each of the dogs went through the agility course so that committee members could observe what an agility obstacle course involved. Both dogs worked off-leash through the agility course to demonstrate the effectiveness of obedience training. Karin Nikopoulos, dog program instructor, narrated the demonstration.

Treibball: This is a new program that was suggested to the park district by Peggy Braden a Recreation Program Advisory Committee member. Jessica Mitchell and Karin Nikopoulos described this new dog sport. Mitchell explained that Nikopoulos was sent to California for a two day training workshop to become an instructor for this new program. Volunteer instructor, Amy Scarbro also attended the workshop. Nikopoulos discussed the training experience and how it would be applied to the program here at the park district.

The committee responded favorably to this new program. Motley asked if the park district would promote this program outside of Waukegan, since Treibball has not yet hit the Midwest. Mitchell stated that the program would be on the park district website and in the seasonal brochure, but that there were no plans to aggressively market it outside of the Waukegan area. Nikopoulos was asked if the program would ever be offered outdoors. Plans are to keep the program indoors in a controlled environment until instructors feel an outdoor class would not be too much of a distraction to advanced participants and that safety would not be an issue. Mentell stated that the Bevier ballfield was under consideration for an outdoor site as it was fenced in and the dogs could then be worked off leash.

K-9 Trace and Pace: Mitchell introduced the K9 Trace and Pace fundraising program that began in 2010. The fundraiser is a partnered event with the Beach Park Animal Hospital that involves pet related vendors, hands on agility experience, pet goodie bag, opportunity for micro-chipping, door prizes, socialization, and exercise. Funds raised will be used for the outdoor agility equipment and to help rescue pets receive medical attention from the Beach Park Animal Hospital.

Dog Classes and Special Programs: Mitchell provided information about each dog program offered within the park district. This includes Obedience, Rally, Agility, Treibball, and Pet Wellness. Pet Wellness is a low cost vaccination clinic that is available to dogs and cats. This program is also a success thanks to the partnership with the Beach Park Animal Hospital. Nikopoulos added information about participating dogs that have received titles and won competitions based on the instruction gained from the Waukegan Park District classes. Motley commented that he was unaware of the accolades earned by so many participants. He also mentioned that the city often gets phone calls about pet parades and asked if the park district would consider having a pet parade. Mentell said that it was something to the staff could look into.

Outdoor Recreation and Nature Programs

Children's Garden: Jennifer Dumas presented a power point presentation that focused on the Children's Garden and what this new idea entailed. Dumas also mentioned the youth groups that would be involved in utilizing the garden and maintaining it throughout the summer. Youth groups involved included Waukegan Park District day camps, local Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops, and Midwest Generation employees and its families. She mentioned that Midwest Generation was the project partner in financing and constructing the garden. Dumas discussed the layout of the garden and some of the garden features such as rain barrels that will collect rain water and then be used to water plants, and a Learning Circle for groups to gather in and use as a learning area. She announced that the Children's Garden, located in Bowen Park behind the Jane Addams Center, will have a Grand Opening on June 17 at 10:30am. All youth groups, sponsors, and public are welcome to attend and enjoy a ribbon cutting ceremony, a walkthrough of the garden, and participate in a small garden activity.

Clothier asked if the garden would be organic. Dumas replied yes. Only organic sprays and plant food should be used. Clothier also addressed a concern that the compost box would smell. Clothier was reassured by Dumas and Hoyle-Yap that a compost box does not produce an odor if properly maintained. Committee members were favorably impressed with the project.

Nature Programs Curriculums: Dumas presented information on new nature programs that will be offered this summer. A variety of programs will be offered for families and for youth ages 7-15. Most family programs will meet at the Children's Garden and youth programs will meet inside the Jane Addams Center. These new nature programs will be led by a summer Intern for the Adult and Family program area, Casey Hubner. Dumas noted that these programs are part of the No Child Left Inside Initiative the park district has established.

Sponsorship Program

Dumas provided a review of how the Recreation Sponsorship Committee was established and why it was vital to organize such a committee. Dumas stated the responsibilities of the committee and noted who the committee members were. The committee consists of six Recreation Department staff that includes Dumas, Mitchell, Marilyn Kern, Dayna Niemi, Yazmin Alers, and Errick Beverly. Dumas stated that the committee aims to meet on a bi-monthly basis to remain motivated and engaged in building and maintaining relationships with sponsors.

Dumas then presented a short video on the impact sponsors have on events and programs. Motley asked if the video will be used to draw in new sponsors. Dumas replied yes and that it was a project currently in progress and that it would also be sent to current sponsors to showcase what their support has provided.

Priorities for Next Meeting

Sara Griffin that the committee be provided updates on The Field House Sports and Fitness Center and the Waukegan SportsPark.

Mentell mentioned that she will be distributing information for the recruitment of new members to the Recreation Program Advisory Committee in August and, that hopefully, there would be some new faces at the fall committee meeting. She asked the committee members to think of individuals who they would recommend for the committee and get her the contact information so that she could be sure that they received the materials. She noted that this would be for the Recreation Committee only as Golf and Cultural Arts have their own citizens committees. Griffin commented that the Cultural Arts had not met for a long time. Motley added that it had been quite awhile.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 pm.