
WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

To: All Media
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Date: December 11, 2007

For Immediate Release

Waukegan Park District to Build Outdoor Sports Complex at Orchard Hills Golf Course

WAUKEGAN, IL. December 11, 2007. The Waukegan Park District has announced today that it will not be purchasing the former Johns Manville site for development of the Outdoor Community Sports Complex. Both parties met at the Johns Manville corporate center in Denver to review the final outline of a transaction. Both the park district and Johns Manville officials concluded that the transaction was not financially feasible and therefore ended discussions.

With the passage of the referendum in 1997, the park district committed to build an Outdoor Community Sports Complex. In 1998, Orchard Hills golf course was purchased to be developed into that outdoor sports complex. The property was slated to be developed into a housing tract. The district will close Orchard Hills golf course after January 1, 2008.

The golf market in the northeastern Illinois area has been declining. As a result, the golf fund has experienced significant revenue declines over the past several years. There are severe market declines, an overbuilt market and non-supportive local market demographics, all of which have resulted in significant financial losses.

According to Terry Duffy, President of the Board of Commissioners, "It is far more efficient for us to develop a centralized outdoor sports location, similar in concept to multiple indoor courts at the Field House at Hinkston Park. All of our maintenance and scheduling will be at one facility. The sports complex will also allow the district to be the provider and scheduler of the fields. User fees will be implemented to help offset our operating expenses."

Commissioner Wayne Motley who has championed the development of a sports complex for twelve years stated "that the district is now poised to begin development of the project at a site which in the long run will be less expensive to construct and easier to operate"

Now that the Johns Manville site is not available, a motion was passed to direct the staff to bring forward a conceptual site plan and an estimate of probable costs for the development of the Outdoor Sports complex at Orchard Hills Golf Course.

Please contact Greg Petry for additional information.

About The Waukegan Park District

Established December 26, 1916, the district has 47 properties and 720 acres of land, which includes the 18-hole Bonnie Brook Golf Course, 18-hole Orchard Hills Golf Courses, and the 9-hole Greenshire Golf Course. The District operates recreational centers, the Field House Sports and Fitness Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, an outdoor swimming pool, outdoor sports courts and fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, the Waukegan Skate Park and the Waukegan BMX track. A full range of programs and services are offered year round for all ages including special populations. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, the Bowen Park Theatre Company, the Bowen Park Opera Company and the Haines Historical Museum. Sixty-seven authorized full-time staff and over 250 part-time, year round, seasonal and temporary employees. The district is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains IAPD Distinguished Agency accreditation and is also accredited with the Park District Risk Management Agency and maintains a Level A Loss Control Program.