

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Committee of the Whole
September 25, 2012**

The Committee of the Whole of the Waukegan Park District met in a regular meeting on July 24, 2012 at the Rose Administrative Center, 2000 Belvidere, Waukegan IL.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Sarocka at 4:00 p.m. who directed a call of the roll.

II. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Duffy, Motley, Foley, Kilkelly and President Sarocka.
Absent: none. Also present was Executive Director Greg Petry and Board Attorney Charles Smith.

III. Topics

A. Aligning Expectations Commissioner Questionnaire & Discussion. The commissioners reviewed the responses that they had provided to the nine questions prepared by Mr. Petry in May 2012. The written responses were collated and color coded for their review.

The commissioners discussed the problems in communicating with the Hispanic population and formulating a way of facilitating more involvement of the Hispanic community. This was reviewed in all areas of park district services, but with an emphasis on the cultural arts to make sure that the cultural arts program is offering events designed for the Hispanic community.

Mr. Petry offered to provide the commissioners with an update from Claudia Freeman as to the programs and events that the cultural arts program annually offers for the Hispanic community.

Commissioner Duffy pointed out some of the difficulties that the school district is having in addressing the same issue.

B. Golf Management. Various issues were discussed that have arisen with the hiring of a golf management company to manage the golf courses. Missteps in communication were discussed and the commissioners discussed acting as one Board and hiring the correct management company to run the golf courses the way the commissioners want to see them operated.

The commissioners further discussed the importance of not micro-managing the operations of the park district and ensuring that the commissioners do not deal directly with the employees, but rather work through Mr. Petry or a division head. It was stressed that it is the province of the Board to establish policy and it is the responsibility of the executor director to carry out the policy.

Commissioner Duffy stated that the park district has done an outstanding job in being able to accomplish major public improvements while other units of governments have been stymied. He expressed his opinion that the park district has not received enough public acknowledgment for its accomplishments and that it needs to do a better job of marketing itself and what it has accomplished with the construction of the FieldHouse and the SportsPark. The park district has not only addressed the recreational needs of its constituents, but has further been an economic stimulus to the entire Waukegan and Lake County area and noted that the recent tournament at the SportsPark resulted in almost every available hotel room in Lake County being rented and the additional boost to the local economy.

The commissioners reviewed the future operations of the park district. Commissioner Motley noted that in the past there was a heavy emphasis on strictly baseball and golf. The park district is now far more in tune with its constituents in providing a wider range of recreational facilities and opportunities. In particular, the construction of the SportsPark has accommodated a long standing need for a soccer facility.

Mr. Petry advised that he has recently been contacted by members of the soccer community wishing to see the park district expand to an indoor facility for year round play. The staff is going to meet with those interested in such a facility and explore how the park district might address that need.

The commissioners discussed the priority established by the 1997 bond referendum for an aquatic facility. President Sarocka commended the efforts of the commissioners in working cooperatively and stated that the construction of a new aquatic facilities must be the first priority of the park district. The commissioners agreed with this point of view.

At 5:05 p.m., Commissioner Foley left the meeting due to a prior commitment.

Commissioner Kilkelly addressed the issue of the park district continuing to be a transparent organization in its dealings with the public and noted that the park district, and many other governmental agencies, are required to do more with less.

While there is a commitment to completing the construction of facilities using funds from bond referendum, Mr. Petry advised that there is still the need to address the operational costs of new construction. As an example, the suggestion of some sort of inflatable bubble or dome for an indoor soccer facility may sound good, but it still presents a significant issue with the cost of heating and cooling such a facility, along with the intense labor needed to re-inflate such a structure if it is damaged by the elements.

The commissioners further discussed the possible decline in revenue due to decreasing equalized assessed valuations of property. Property values have been

deflated in the Waukegan area and in two years this will have a significant impact on park district funds.

The commissioners discussed the necessity to listen to the voices of the Hispanic community in designing programs. Mr. Petry pointed out that there is an event on September 29, which he will attend, with the Hispanic community.

IV. Closed Session

There was no motion to move into closed session.

V. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Duffy, seconded by Commissioner Motley, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles W. Smith
Secretary