

Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

RECREATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES April 18, 2012

Members Present: Peggi Braden, Caryn Clothier, Sara Griffin, Karen Harris, Sharon Hoyle-Yap, Diane Kajfez, Dulce Ortiz, Odie Pahl, Mercedes Rivera, and Della Steele,

WPD Representatives: Wayne Motley, Greg Petry, Alicia Mentell, Jay Lerner

Members Absent: Jacklyn Giron, Jerry Holisky, Juan Moran, David Motley, Martha Padilla-Ramos, and Doris Richter

Welcome: Wayne Motley called the meeting to order at 7:04pm. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their time.

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

Aquatics Study Results: Jay Lerner presented a power point presentation produced by PHN, the architectural firm hired to conduct the aquatic study. The results included the preferred amenities, features and location of both the indoor and outdoor pool. Caryn Clothier asked where the aquatic center would be located.. Greg Petry said that the project was still in the conceptual stage. However, the survey and focus groups indicated that Hinkston Park was the favored site for the Indoor facility and Belvidere Park for the Outdoor facility.

The park district is trying to be shovel ready when grants become available to help finance the project. Diane Kajfez commented that she did not think a “wow” factor was needed for the Fitness Center. Alicia Mentell agreed that this was true, but that the indoor facility would be open to the public and not limited to Fitness Center members. It is not intended to be only a water element for the Fitness Center, but to be a leisure pool that the whole community could enjoy.

Petry said that concepts would be developed for small, medium, and large facilities. A tour of area aquatic centers will be scheduled for two days in June and committee members will be invited to come. Motley stated that tours were also done of sports facilities prior to the design of the Waukegan SportsPark and it is a composite of around eight different facilities. He said that the park district could not afford everything at the SportsPark so there was a process to see what could be afforded.

Kajfez asked if grants could push the project forward. Petry said that the park district needs to know next year’s tax assessment evaluation and that it needs to stabilize. The park district needs to be able to project fifteen years in the future regarding the tax assessment evaluation as well as pay off the existing bonds. In a perfect storm, Petry said

it would be possible to move ahead in two or three years. Clothier asked what was happening at the beachfront. Petry replied that the park district would not be taking over its management as an agreement could not be reached with the City of Waukegan.

Waukegan SportsPark Update: Lerner gave an update on the Waukegan SportsPark by highlighting the 2012 tournaments for soccer, softball, baseball and lacrosse. Copies of the schedules were distributed. Lerner shared how pleased he was with the full schedule of activities for 2012. He recapped 2011 saying the season was a success. Although five soccer fields did not open until August 2011, the overall revenues for the year were still close to budget. Revenues were good with parking and concession fees adding to the total.

Lerner was asked if the community was concerned about the parking fee. He said there have been very few comments about it and that it has become routine for the user groups to pay the fee. Mentell reminded the committee that parking was used as a major revenue generator so that the youth affiliate groups could use the fields at the SportsPark without being charged rental fees and the fields would also still be prepped by the park crews as was the custom at other park district fields.

Mercedes Rivera asked why there were fences at the ballfields. Lerner replied that it was for youth games that required a smaller outfield. Clothier asked how Milena's did. Lerner said that it did better at the ballfields than the soccer fields. Clothier asked about having a traffic light. Lerner said the traffic flowed okay without it. Petry stated that the park district would evaluate the situation with the major tournament the weekends of June 23-24 and June 30-July 1. Sharon Hoyle-Yap asked if flyers would be distributed regarding the tournaments. Lerner said that the park district is working with the Lake County Visitors and Tourist Bureau who is promoting the various area restaurants, hotels, and attractions.

Clothier asked if there had been any complaints from the neighbors just north of the SportsPark about the ballfield lights being on. Lerner answered by saying there have not been any calls in regards to the lights. She then asked if there were any dates for starting on Phase II. Motley reminded the committee that Robert Morris College was supposed to provide some funds towards Phase II, but that its state funding fell through. Mentell stated that Phase II is secondary and that the first priority at this time is the aquatics center.

Field House Sports and Fitness Center Update: Mentell gave an overview of Field House operations stating that the park district is at a crossroads regarding the Fitness Center. There is a current discussion underway as to what should be the district's philosophy regarding its operations, specifically what direction should be taken in the future regarding membership fees and usage. The objective is to maximize revenues, but to also maximize usage.

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Lerner reviewed the roundtable discussion that was held with area park district fitness center directors on April 11, 2012 at the Field House. He recapped the main points from the meeting with the major conclusion being the Fitness Center membership fees are too high compared to area competition, having no pool and the below average household income of residents. Lerner said staff is creating a new membership fee structure which should result in lower fees and most likely more members. Lerner also reviewed the summary of Field House operations over the past five years that shows that membership revenues have declined while all other areas have maintained or grown in revenues. Committee members agreed that it would be best to implement a lower fee structure.

CAPRA – National Accreditation: Petry informed the group that the park district is in the process of seeking national accreditation by collecting documentation that demonstrates the park district is in compliance with national standards. The CAPRA Visitor's Team will review the supporting materials in August.

Priorities for Next Meeting: There were no priorities identified for the next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles W. Smith
Board Secretary