

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Committee of the Whole
July 28, 2008**

The Committee of the Whole of the Waukegan Park District met in a regular meeting on July 28, 2008 at the Bonnie Brook Club House, 2800 N. Lewis Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by President Motley.

II. Roll Call

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

III. Topics

A. Discussion on Outdoor Community Sports Complex. Greg Petry explained that this matter will likely be on the August 12, 2008 agenda for a vote. Mr. Petry stated that there have been questions from the public concerning whether the Park District is planning on using its eminent domain powers to take property for the widening of Beach Road. Mr. Petry responded that the Park District has no intention of using eminent domain powers in connection with the sports complex issue. He also advised that the Illinois Department of Transportation is looking into improvements of Green Bay Road from Sunset north to Route 173, but no time table has been set for the road improvements.

Commissioner Duffy asked about the size of the fields and the ability to accommodate baseball and softball tournaments. Staff advised that they are looking into ways to utilize the fields for tournaments.

A resident who lives close to the proposed site of the sports complex raised a question concerning lighting. She was advised that the lighting that the Park District intends to install will be on the softball, baseball and championship fields.

B. Review and Discussion of Improvements for Bonnie Brook Banquet Facility. Commissioner Duffy expressed his opinion that the Park District has expertise in servicing groups of 50 to 75 people and does not favor a facility larger than is necessary to accommodate larger groups. He stated that he is in favor of fixing up Bonnie Brook by having areas painted and carpet replaced and removal of the fireplace. He feels that this all can be done during the winter months without a loss of revenue.

Commissioner Sarocka stated that he concurs that the work should be done to the extent possible during the winter season to avoid lost revenue.

Commissioner Duffy stated that he favors spending approximately \$35,000 to freshen up the facility rather than update the facility but does not support major renovations. Commissioner Sarocka pointed out that freshening up the facility does not change its basic "L" shape. Commissioner Duffy noted that the cost of renovations as proposed does not make economic sense.

President Motley stated that for years the Park District has been receiving reports from consultants with suggestions for changes at the Bonnie Brook facility and the Board fails to act and that now is the time to make a decision to either remain with the current set up of the building or to make renovations and move forward.

Commissioner Duffy again stated that he does not see the need for major renovations and suggested that something in the area of \$35,000 as opposed to \$1.4 million would be the appropriate amount to spend on this project.

Commissioner Durkin disagreed that there are only two options to the consultant's reports. There are things that could be done to improve the quality and the revenue from the Bonnie Brook facility without a total renovation as recommended by the consultants.

Commissioner Foley spoke favoring the installation of an elevator, if for no other reason than to assist the staff in getting tables and chairs out of storage when events are held at the facility. She also stated that the facility needs a better entrance off of Lewis Avenue with higher visibility. She would like to see a more upscale décor, including tablecloths at the Wednesday night dinners. Commissioner Foley further stated that the staff should market graduation parties and that the entrance again should be more welcoming, better window treatments, and a stair case that would improve the traffic flow from one side of the building to the other. She stressed that the elevator is an important item, even if the public is not going to have access to the basement.

Commissioner Sarocka asked Char Piquette about the need for an elevator. Commissioner Durkin questioned what the cost would be to improve the existing dining area, kitchen and remove the fireplace. Staff advised that this could be done for approximately \$915,000.

Commissioner Duffy questioned the staff and consultants that if renovations were done on the dining room, fireplace and kitchen, how long would the facility be closed. David Olson advised approximately four to six months.

Commissioner Durkin stated that he would like to see more than just painting and new carpet, but he would like to keep the cost below \$50,000.

The Commissioners discussed supporting the renovation of the banquet facility and kitchen remodeling and that the matter would be further discussed at the next Board meeting.

IV. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Durkin, seconded by Commissioner Sarocka, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charles W. Smith
Secretary