

**Minutes of the Waukegan Park District
Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
December 28, 2009**

The Board of Commissioners of the Waukegan Park District met in a special meeting on December 28, 2009 in the Rose Administrative Center, 2000 Belvidere Street, Waukegan, Illinois.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:45 p.m. by President Bill Durkin who directed a call of the roll.

II. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Durkin, Duffy, Sarocka, and Foley. Commissioner Motley was present via telephone as he could not leave his employment and requested permission to participate remotely. Absent: None. Also present was Executive Director Greg Petry, Board Attorney Charles Smith. **Motion by Commissioner Foley, seconded by Commissioner Duffy, to allow Commissioner Motley to participate in the special meeting remotely. Motion carried unanimously.**

III Review, Discuss, Decide

A. Bonnie Brook Friday Fish Fry – The Commissioners received a memo dated December 18, 2009 from Greg Petry reviewing staff recommendations and information relative to the costs of food service on Friday nights and the cost of the fish fry. Included in the material was a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats Analysis of the Bonnie Brook Friday Night Fish Fry. Potential menus and costs were reviewed.

Commissioner Sarocka commented that there was no accounting in the financial projections of the amount of bar business that would be generated at the fish fry. Mike Steele acknowledged that the bar business would lower the break even point. Mr. Steele also reported that the recently held surf and turf dinner grossed \$1,093 and of that, \$189 was liquor. Mr. Steele stated that 20% of the gross business for liquor would be a reasonable figure. In the past, 30% could be expected. However, people are not consuming alcoholic beverages as much these days.

Commissioner Foley stated that she was of the opinion that expanding the menu beyond a basic fish basket was more than what she was prepared to discuss and further was of the opinion that the menus of other restaurants that have fish fry dinners should have been considered, including Frolic Lounge, Louie's, and Captain Porky's. Commissioner Foley stated that she would like to keep the Friday night fish basket and she wants to support the banquets and golf outings at Bonnie Brook.

Commissioner Duffy stated that the material presented demonstrates that the staff does not feel that enough fish baskets can be sold to cover costs.

Commissioner Motley expressed his opinion that the Park District needs to decide whether it is in the recreation business or the restaurant business. Commissioner Motley reminded the Board that Monday and Friday dinners in previous years were eliminated because of the financial losses. He further expressed his opinion that the clientele at Bonnie Brook is primarily senior citizens who do not purchase large quantities of alcohol. His opinion was that the banquets were the goal of the renovation

of Bonnie Brook and that the Park District should avoid getting into a regular dinner service.

President Durkin stated that the commissioners were there to review options and consider whether there were alternatives that could make food service on Friday nights viable.

Commissioner Sarocka stated that he disagreed with Commissioner Motley about the alcohol sales and felt that there would be sufficient alcohol sold to make the Friday fish fry dinner more than a breakeven. He also felt that there is the potential of increasing banquet business by having people in the clubhouse on Friday nights as they might see Bonnie Brook as an ideal location for a party or wedding.

Commissioner Motley stated his view that the Friday fish fry dinners would indicate that the Park District was going into the restaurant business and did not support that.

Commissioner Duffy stated that he could list eight different local restaurants with Friday fish fry dinners and sell alcohol and that the Park District getting into a Friday night fish fry would be competing with these local businesses.

President Durkin stated that with the new staff and new facility, the Park District should explore every opportunity to show off the facility to the public.

Commissioner Duffy stated that he supported the Wednesday night dinners and suggested expanding the menus for those dinners as opposed to starting a Friday fish fry.

Commissioner Foley stated that she has regularly attended the Wednesday night dinners for the past five years and wants to receive more information concerning the number of dinners sold and the types of dinners sold, whether they are meat, fish, or pasta. In the past this information has not been available.

Mr. Petry stated that with the new computers that it is now possible to provide that information.

Mr. Steele was asked his opinion as to a single item menu for Friday fish fries and he strongly stated his opinion that a single item menu will not work. He stated that there is no problem with making a fish dinner a specialty, but he felt that there needed to be diversity in the menu.

Commissioner Foley stated her opinion that fish baskets should be the only option on Friday nights.

A discuss was held as to whether the staff had presented the type of information and options in their report that the commissioners were looking for. The majority of the commissioners felt that the report was a good one and thorough.

Commissioner Motley again stated that past experience has shown that Friday fish fry dinners will not work.

Commissioner Duffy agreed with Commissioner Motley and stated his opinion that it is unlikely that a Friday fish fry at Bonnie Brook would recapture the old Orchard Hills Friday fish fry crowd. He pointed out that most of the people who attended the Orchard Hills fish fry were from Wadsworth, Zion, and Beach Park and would likely not travel south to Bonnie Brook for a fish dinner, particularly in light of the other options available closer to home.

Commissioner Sarocka stated that all of this is speculation and that the Park District will not know whether the Friday fish fry will work until tried. He strongly urged the commissioners to consider giving this a trial run and seeing how well it does.

Commissioner Duffy stated that he was opposed to expanding restaurant service at Bonnie Brook and did not want to see a full restaurant operation at a public golf course.

Commissioner Foley stated that to her a full restaurant means three meals a day and this is not what is being discussed at Bonnie Brook. She also expressed her opinion that increased signage might attract more customers.

Mr. Steele was asked if he could advise the Board how many fish dinners were sold over the past three Fridays. On December 4, 46 fish dinners were sold; December 11, 38 fish dinners were sold; and December 18, 51 fish dinners were sold. This is less than 50% of what is needed for a break even.

Commissioner Sarocka stated that he sees the Bonnie Brook dinners as keeping the Park District in people's lives and providing employment opportunities for local residents and sees this as a positive form of advertising.

President Durkin stated that the restaurant has never been a moneymaker in his 11 years on the Board, but he does support the idea of getting people familiar with the idea of coming to Bonnie Brook Clubhouse.

Jim Glogovsky stated that if approximately \$200 worth of alcohol was sold with the dinners, this would drop the number of dinners needed to break even from 111 to approximately 80-85.

President Durkin stated that he would like to keep the Friday fish fry dinners at Bonnie Brook for a few more months.

Commissioner Foley questioned Mr. Glogovsky about the alcohol sales and the breakeven point.

Following the discussion, **motion by Commissioner Motley, seconded by Commissioner Duffy, to direct staff to not expand the Friday food service, into a Friday Night Fish Fry restaurant operation.**

Discussion on the motion: Mr. Steele was asked if he thinks that the Friday fish fry dinners will work based on his years of experience in the restaurant business, and whether it would conflict with the golfing and banquet business. Mr. Steele expressed his assessment that the Friday business is going to conflict with some golf banquets.

Commissioner Foley asked about moving the fish fry to other rooms when a golf outing or banquet was being held.

Tim McGovern felt that the fish fry dinners could interfere with golf outings.

Roll call on the motion: Ayes: Motley, Duffy and Durkin. Nays: Foley, Sarocka. Staff was directed to discontinue the Friday fish fry dinners. Motion carried 3-2.

Commissioner Duffy suggested that staff continue to work to promote the Wednesday night dinners and to vary the menu as much as possible.

B. EnerNOC Emergency Electrical Load Program Contract – Mr. Glogovsky presented the proposed contract with EnerNOC, Inc. and explained that this is a company that manages power grids for a good portion of the country. He explained that the program would provide financial income to the Park District in exchange for the Park District's willingness to reduce its electric loads at Bonnie Brook and the Hinkston Field House upon request from EnerNOC. This would likely only be a couple of times a year during peak utility usage and would likely result in a reduction in the use of electricity in form of air conditioning by raising the thermostat when requested by EnerNOC. The maximum number of times that the Park District could be asked to decrease its energy consumption would be ten and the Park District could decline if there was a particular event taking place where increased electricity was needed.

The commissioners were reminded that if the Park District declined to reduce its load frequently that EnerNOC would be able to drop the Park District from the plan.

Motion by Commissioner Sarocka, seconded by Commissioner Foley, to approve the contract between the Waukegan Park District and EnerNOC, Inc. Roll call to the motion: Ayes: Foley, Sarocka, Duffy, Durkin. Nays: None. Absent: Motley.

C. Appointment of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officers – **Motion by Commissioner Duffy, seconded by Commissioner Foley, to approve the designation of Greg Petry, Sally Sandine, Jim Glogovsky, and Tanya Brady as FOI officers in compliance with the amendments to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act to take effect January 1, 2010. Motion carried unanimously.**

IV. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Duffy, seconded by Foley, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles W. Smith
Secretary