

Special Board Meeting/Recreation Program Advisory Committee

May 27, 2010

Minutes

Members Present: Peggi Braden, Caryn Clothier, Sara Griffin, Carolyn Jackson, Janet Kilkelly, Martha Padilla-Ramos, Doris Richter, Mercedes Rivera, and Della Steele

WPD Representatives: Wayne Motley, Greg Petry, Alicia Mentell, Jay Lerner, Mike Mayfield, and Amy Springman

Guests: Miranda Laffredi, Juan Moran, Sharon Yap, Amber Gensler, and Megan Richter

Welcome: Greg Petry called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Introduction of Committee Members and Guests: Committee members and staff introduced themselves as did guests and interns.

We Can! Program: Mike Mayfield, Recreation Supervisor for Youth Programs and Services, explained that We Can! (**W**ays to **E**nhance **C**hildren's **A**ctivities & **N**utrition) is a national public education program developed by the National Institute of Health to help youth and families maintain a healthy weight.

During an eight-week period, Bowen Park Rangers and Belvidere Park Explorers campers will be led through a fun and interactive journey that will help them learn about making healthy food choices and engaging in physical activities.

The We Can! curriculum has thirty-two lessons and physical activity sessions that focus on fruits and vegetables; choosing foods lower in fat; learning about fiber; lessons about the new My Pyramid, and hands-on snack preparation and taste testing. The ultimate goal of the program is to see changes in the camper's knowledge about more healthful food selections and types of physical activity.

The We Can! program is supported by North Shore Gas \$3,500 sponsorship and the \$1,000 Power Play grant received from the Illinois Association of Park Districts. The \$4,500 will be used to purchase back packs for each camper, activity kits, and healthy snacks and supplies for the program.

Swim Smart: Amy Springman, Recreation Specialist for Fitness and Aquatics, provided an overview of the SwimSmart program. It is designed not only to teach swimmers how to improve their skills but to develop skills of how to safely equip themselves around any body of water. Its training principles focus on safety skills around any body of water and providing a wide range of classes for all ages and abilities. More attention is given on how to handle water safety issues by teaching safety bobs and survival floating in emergency situations

New additions to the brochure include a new section in the class description detailing background skills with detailed explanations about which level is appropriate for participants. There is also an enrollment assistance section that gives helpful tips for the first class and what to bring for the first day.

Class Levels: There are eight class levels. These include Parent with Infant or Toddler-Sharks and Minnows, Preschool 1-Jellyfish, Preschool 2-Starfish, Level 1-Turtles, Level 2-Goldfish, Level 3-Sea Horses, Level 4-Dolphins, and Adults

Safety Items: Attention is given to all factors that involve an individual's safety in the water. There is a personal water safety focus where building up the child's endurance and increasing swimmer strength is priority. Instruction is also given on recognizing rules of the pool and authority of lifeguards, how to respond to emergencies, and how to use safety equipment properly.

Swim Smart Patches: At the completion of each skill level, participants are recognized by being given a SwimSmart patch. Each level is identified by its own color.

Kick off Day: On June 5 Howard Ganster Pool officially opens its season. There will be games, prizes and other giveaways.

Martha Padilla-Ramos asked if swim classes could be held at the beach. Alicia Mentell responded that the cost was prohibitive as there were many extra measures that were required at a beach setting that are not at a pool setting. She also reminded the group that the beach was owned and managed by the City of Waukegan, not the park district.

Petry mentioned that the City has asked the park district if it would like to take over the beach, but that two months notice is not enough time to plan properly. At one time the park district had a management contract with the city, but Mayor Dick Hyde did away with it and hired Dave Hewitt instead. A Beach Committee has been formed and asked the park district for help. Noelle Kischer, City Senior Planner, has also asked for the park district's assistance. There are no lifeguards on duty and trash is building up as it is not being removed.

At this time Petry reiterated that cost was a factor. Everything is up in the air. A budget would need to be prepared and an intergovernmental agreement created. It is unfeasible for the park district to take over the beach this year. However, it is willing to work with the City to provide assistance and engage in discussions regarding the management and improvement of the beach next year.

Janet Kilkelly asked if there was not money generated from use of the beach. The part time employees who use to collect fees were left go. Padilla-Ramos commented that the school crossing guards were also let go. Petry said the city could not hire part time staff per union contracts when full time staff were let go. He noted that there were many things that have to be planned and organized. Sharon Holye-Yap asked if the city could charge a fee for the beach when there were no lifeguards. Petry responded that the fee was for parking access.

Waukegan SportsPark:

Construction Update: Petry said anyone who is interested in a tour of the SportsPark should contact Jay Lerner and make arrangements. Jay said he would gather a list of those who might want to tour the facility.

Petry stated that the project was on schedule and under budget. The roadways are there as are the parking lots. The irrigation is going in for the last four fields. The Concession stand is in place. The outfield fencing is completed. Grandstands are being completed. The change for the infield mix was \$100,000. It is from Wisconsin and is called Louieville Slugger. It is a very nice upper middle class red mix. The mix has a cushion, looks great, and feels good.

The playground is being put in with the water feature to be added shortly. The washrooms have been delivered and only need plumbing to be installed. Two of the soccer fields were seeded last fall and are coming in slowly. Four fields were seeded a couple of weeks ago and two more are being seeded today. The artificial turf field is in progress. Green Bay Road was paved today and the shoulder will be paved tomorrow. Anticipated completion date is between July 15 and August 1.

A Pro Forma was developed for operations. Procedures for revenue collection are being developed. Meetings are being held every week. Walk throughs are held to check on how everything operates.

Caryn Clothier asked if the maintenance building was for that complex only. Petry said yes. Kilkelly asked if the Louieville Slugger will need to be replaced. Petry said not as much as the mix being used at the other fields.

Sara Griffin asked when Phase II would be done. Petry said that Phase II was on hold due to the recession. It will be awhile before the park district can move forward with it. Padilla-Ramos asked what would open now. Four ballfields and four soccer fields plus the Astroturf field will be available. Doris Richter asked if Green Bay Road had been improved. Petry said all the improvements have been done for Green Bay. This includes 200 feet south of the old clubhouse to 500 feet north of Beach Road.

Padilla-Ramos asked if the park district would be applying for tournaments. Lerner said yes and that discussions were already being held regarding softball, soccer, and baseball tournaments. Mercedes Rivera asked if Special Recreation would access to the fields. Mentell replied very definitely yes.

Richter asked if the Field House Sports and Fitness Center was operating as planned. Petry said that there was a little deficit of around \$8,000. Naturally, the park district would like to have more fitness center members, but the recession has had some impact. Mentell stated that the gym has been very popular and could probably use more than the six courts there. Lerner said he has been told by tournament directors that it is the nicest facility in the Chicagoland area. Padilla-Ramos asked if there was a membership with the school district. Mentell said there is a WorkFit program, but that the school district is not part of it. Staff has been unsuccessful in making contact with school administration. Peggi Braden recommended that Karen Cortis with Human Resources and who is the staff responsible for staff wellness and risk management be contacted. She ran a very successful Biggest Loser contest.

Grand Opening: Lerner reported that the Grand Opening event for the SportsPark would be held on Friday, August 27. He reviewed the general schedule for Friday night's grand opening, which included the unveiling ceremonies of Wayne Motley Drive, the ball diamonds, and three soccer fields. Following the unveiling ceremonies a festival type atmosphere with food vendors, booths for various groups, and plenty of sports related games for children and adults will be set-up by the soccer fields. The city playoffs for men's softball will held on the ball diamonds and an all-star soccer game will be played on the synthetic turf field during the evening. In the upcoming weeks more specific details of the event will be available. Petry mentioned that Susie Link with ATT provided \$10,000 towards the Grand Opening and a Youth Soccer Challenge Series.

Clothier asked if activities would be held on the artificial turf and if the lights were permanent. The response was yes. Petry stated that off duty policemen would be hired as needed for traffic control. There are three times the number of parking spaces needed. In addition, the parking lot for the old clubhouse was left and it can also be used although people may have to walk a ways. Wayne Motley is recommending to the Mayor that permit parking only be in place for Beach Road.

Motley also stated that there are 158 adult soccer teams in Waukegan. Tournaments can be huge with big fan followings and this is a wonderful thing. There will be lots of activity. There are adequate restroom facilities. Rivera mentioned that there was a restaurant going up in Beach Park near the complex. Petry indicated that there would be economic impact to the area. Midlane Suites, Ramada Inn, and Marriott are already anticipating.

Motley said that the park district had met with Robert Morris College. It was ready to enter into an agreement, but the college could not get the state funding it needed. If the economy changes, both groups could go forward with an agreement. Maybe by then William Morris can commit.

Clothier asked if there would be sand volleyball courts. Petry said they were in the plans for Phase II. Kilkelly asked about the plans for parking. Lerner stated that there would be a charge for parking on the weekends. The charge would be per vehicle. Motley said that normally the tournament host collected the parking fees, but in this instance this park district will. Clothier commented that Softball City charged a fee per person.

Carolyn Jackson expressed concern that with four fields possibly being used at one time and only one entrance that there would be traffic issues. She asked what the provision for directing traffic was. Petry said that off-duty policemen will be hired to direct traffic. He also mentioned that one could make a right turn. Jackson said it looked like there would be major traffic problems. Kilkelly said it was the same as the beach with one way in and one way out. Juan Moran asked if there would be a season pass for parking. Lerner stated that was being discussed. Petry said that there would also be stagger times for coming in and out.

Motley mentioned how there were many dents in his house from soccer balls. Mentell reminded the group that a main purpose of the complex was to get teams out of the neighborhoods and reduce the traffic and noise there. Hoyle-Yap asked if the local fields would still be able to be used. They would be available, but they would not be maintained or scheduled. Richter worried about vandalism. Petry said there really was not a lot and that it comes and goes.

Priorities for Next Meeting: The group expressed interest in the progress of the SportsPark and an update on the Waukegan Beach.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.