

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF DUPAGE
DARIEN PARK DISTRICT
COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WHOLE**

August 22, 2005

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Simester moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Christensen to appoint Frank Noverini as President pro temp.

Upon roll call the following Commissioners voted:

AYES: Christensen, Noverini, Simester

NAYS: None

The motion was thereby carried.

Acting President Noverini called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 5 of the Marion Hills Community Center, 133 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois.

ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Upon roll call the following Commissioners and staff were present:

PRESENT: Nancy Campagnolo (7:38 p.m.), Frank Noverini, Neil Christensen, Dick Simester

ABSENT: Shari Gillespie

STAFF: Chris Katsougris, Acting Executive Director; Stephanie Gurgone, Superintendent of Finance/Acting General Manager-Sportsplex; Robert Strickler, Superintendent of Parks

GUESTS: Gloria Andersen, Darien
Sharon Poteraske, Darien
Erin Sauder, *Suburban Life*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Acting President Noverini welcomed the guests to the meeting. There was no one wishing to present public comment.

COMMUNICATIONS

Superintendent Gurgone reported that correspondence was received from the parents of the figure skaters and their disappointment regarding the fall contract ice schedule and rate increase. She reported that when Seve Ghose was General Manager, he negotiated a contract with the Huskies for the fall and winter and that they needed additional ice time. Superintendent Gurgone reported that the figure skaters lost a total of five hours of contract ice. She stated that Ms. Cindy Foggia, Skate School Director was notified that the Huskies have a contract entitling them to the hours. Superintendent Gurgone reported that nothing can be done but that next year consideration will be noted for the contract figure skaters. She stated that Ms. Foggia is looking into possibly offering off ice training in the interim.

Commissioner Christensen questioned the total number of contract skaters.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that there were approximately 20-25 skaters.

COMMITTEE TOPICS

A. Long Range Goals

1. Posejpal Property Update

Superintendent Gurgone reported that she is scheduled to meet with the City of Darien Administrator, Bryon Vana to discuss if the City is interested in jointly acquiring the Posejpal property.

Commissioner Christensen stated that the Board needs to look at the money available for Capital Expenditures. He stated that although he would love to see the District own the land, the money is quite limited.

Superintendent Gurgone stated that there was no way that the District can solely purchase the property.

B. Short Range Goals

1. Discuss issuing a GO Bond

Superintendent Gurgone reported that the Board received information regarding the GO Bonds and where there is ability to issue bonds. She reported that at the calendar year the District can issue a bond with payment, interest and fees up to approximately \$330,000. She stated that if the Board chooses to not issue the bond this year the money will be lost. Superintendent Gurgone stated that if a bond is issued staff can provide a ranked list of what the money would be used for and include it as part of the bond documents.

Superintendent Gurgone stated that she would check with other Park District's regarding bond counsel.

Acting Executive Director Katsougris reported that Commissioner Gillespie was out with a broken foot and that President Campagnolo would be joining the meeting by telephone.

C. Operational Issues

1. Sportsplex

a. Huskies Lease

Superintendent Gurgone reported that the Board received a summary of the Huskies. She stated that it appears that the Huskies will be building their own rink. Superintendent Gurgone reported that she and President Campagnolo met with the Huskies President, Joe Pedota and Jim Nolan and that they informed her that they are going to Romeoville but that it is not a done deal. She reported that the Huskies still have a lot going on but eventually they need to build a rink.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that the Huskies want to keep communication lines open. She stated that Mr. Pedota stated that ideally they would like to have a rink by September and that they would like to buy spring and summer ice for next year.

Superintendent Gurgone stated that she will provide all the answers by November regarding the final outcome.

Commissioner Christensen stated that the high school clubs could easily absorb ice time.

b. Update on Soccer Issues

Superintendent Gurgone reported that she heard from MVP United and that they are sending a payment schedule for paying off approximately \$5,000. She stated that they would like to play in the fall league and that they were told that they cannot play unless they pay it off.

c. Concession Stand Update

Superintendent Gurgone reported that the renovations are almost complete and that approximately \$4,100 has been spent. She stated that Mr. Steve Stimac has been very instrumental in doing handyman work and has saved the District a lot of money.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that the owner is ready to open and that she is meeting with them to set a date. She reported that the goal is September 1st.

Commissioner Christensen questioned if there was any interest in corporate advertising.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that there is a lot of interest but nothing firm yet.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that she included the Sportsplex financials.

Commissioner Christensen stated that the financials looked good for the first three months and that the revenue was up and the expenses down.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that there is no firm commitment from the Storm. She reported that the Storm may be looking into a couple of hours a week. She further reported that staff would be taking off the sign in front of the building.

2. Parks and Recreation

a. Meyer Woods Barn

Superintendent Strickler reported that Dean resubmitted a new proposal for \$650 to do the mill work. He stated that he would be getting someone in house to install and replace some of the lumber on the barn.

b. Snow Plow for Truck

Superintendent Strickler reported that he has budgeted \$3,500 for a plow and received three proposals. He reported that Mr. Tim Wallace was the lowest bid at \$3,331.68. He stated that he would be looking for approval at the next meeting.

Superintendent Gurgone reported that Commissioner Gillespie contacted her to question why a snow plow was needed or if the District was short a snow plow.

Superintendent Strickler stated that if the District goes with the Vehicle Replacement Program a third plow will be needed.

c. Ballfield Renovation

Superintendent Strickler distributed a breakdown on the ballfields. He reported that \$41,000 was budgeted to do renovation on the five ballfields. Superintendent Strickler reported that with the drainage \$41,676 would need to be spent. He stated that maintenance improvements can be made to the ballfields by eliminating the drainage and spending \$29,186 for a savings of \$12,490 that can be used elsewhere.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he can put a bid packet as a total package or do each field individually.

Superintendent Gurgone stated that she received an email from Commissioner Gillespie. She stated that Commissioner Gillespie was not in attendance because of a broken foot. Superintendent Gurgone stated that Commissioner Gillespie questioned the baseball renovations. She asked which fields are having problems and when have there been complaints. Superintendent Gurgone stated that Commissioner Gillespie questioned if there was a drainage problem and although the fields are wet they are playable after a rain. She stated that in the past the DYC maintained the fields and improved Eisenhower, Lace, Cass Jr. High, Fairview, Hinsbrook, Community and Westwood and received a grant at one time to maintain them.

Commissioner Gillespie stated that when Westwood Park was built in 1991-92 a 6 inch corrugated perforated pipe was put in. She stated that she informed Superintendent Strickler that the pipe needed to be flushed out every year and that he informed her that doing this was not the answer. Commissioner Gillespie stated that the drawings were

still on file and that the cost was approximately \$25,000. She stated that she did not feel that it was in the taxpayer's best interest to spend any money on Westwood Park when it is being considered a site for a Community Center. She further stated that of all the parks Community Park remains the most important.

Commissioner Gillespie stated that she spoke with Park Supervisors from three other park districts and that the only other District that uses turf assistance is Naperville and as a last resort for a certain field. She stated that after looking at other and larger park districts with more revenue and that she does not understand why it is needed in Darien.

Superintendent Strickler reported that there is a drainage problem in the outfield at Westwood Park. He stated that the Field is flat and baseball fields are not supposed to be flat and that if the field was crowned the drainage in the outfield would work.

Superintendent Strickler reported that Hinsbrook looks like an upside down coffee saucer with a slit cut into it to let the water out. He stated that the water has not been bad because it has been a very dry season.

Superintendent Strickler reported that Community Park has lights and a little crown and will cost the least amount to maintain. He stated that the most expensive would be Westwood west.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he felt it would be in the best interest of the District to improve the appearance of the ballfields. He stated that all the fields are used by the NYC.

Commissioner Christensen questioned how often a field needs to be crowned.

Superintendent Strickler stated that crowning can be done 3-5 years depending on the maintenance of the field. He stated that in the past ballfields are dragged in a circle and that a different process would be used to regrade and maintain the crown longer.

Superintendent Strickler stated that Hinsbrook and Westwood no doubt hold water.

Commissioner Christensen stated that he would not want to invest money in drainage and Hinsbrook because it is a leased field.

Acting President Noverini stated that the fields are susceptible to players incurring injuries. He stated that the fields should be pitched and that would improve the field without installing drainage.

Commissioner Simester stated that he would only like to see money spent at Community Park.

Commissioner Christensen questioned the timing of the work.

Superintendent Strickler reported that the work would begin this fall.

At 7:38 p.m. President Campagnolo joined the meeting by telephone.

President Campagnolo questioned the Board's thoughts on a package versus each field individually.

Acting President Noverini reported that the Board agreed to make a decision on a field by field basis and that they preferred to do the maintenance without drainage.

President Campagnolo asked Superintendent Strickler for his opinion.

Superintendent Strickler reported that he would prefer to do the maintenance without drainage and save the District and the taxpayers money.

d. Holly Park Update

Superintendent Strickler reported that the City requested a sidewalk from 71st Street to the park entrance. He stated that the sidewalk would be 19 feet and 6" and ADA accessible and a new program that the City is doing. Superintendent Strickler stated that this cost factor was not included in the original plan and that Kenneth Company would be providing the costs. He reported that the City also requested that two berms can no longer be left on site and that they prefer to have the material from the playground site excavation removed. He further reported that the City wants water tolerable plants and that the playground surface will not float away.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he will be meeting with the City Engineer Dan Lynch to address the issues.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he talked to the contractor and the work will begin August 29th and the playground scheduled to be delivered September 5th. He stated that he picked out the landscape material and that a complete list would be available soon.

Commissioner Simester questioned if a background check was done on Miracle Playground. He stated that they had five or six recalls and injuries to children.

Superintendent Strickler reported that Miracle Playground Equipment is in the parks now. He stated that they are a major reputable manufacturer and if a piece of equipment is recalled it is immediately removed. He further stated that there is no equipment that will burn a child and that the seats are rubber and the slides plastic. Superintendent Strickler reported that the company has been in business for 35 years.

e. Skatepark Lighting Update

Superintendent Strickler reported that the pole and light fixture have to be ordered and that it is on the schedule.

Commissioner Christensen stated that it appears that there are fewer problems over the last 4-6 weeks.

Superintendent Strickler stated that the police department has done more to monitor the area.

3. Administration

a. Executive Director Search Update

Acting Executive Director Katsougris announced that there would be a special meeting on Saturday, August 27, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. for the purpose of conducting interviews for the Executive Director position. She stated that the agenda would be posted.

President Campagnolo stated that Attorney Murphey would be available after the interviews to allow the Board to have a discussion about the applicants and issues relating to the Executive Director search.

b. Website Update

Acting Executive Director Katsougris reported that each Board member has an applicable email address with a form.

Commissioner Christensen suggested announcing this information at the Board meeting.

Acting Executive Director Katsougris reported that the website has all the information for the fall brochure with updated calendar information, organized trips, Board minutes through July 11th and staff email addresses.

b. Establish consent agenda for 9/12 meeting

Acting Executive Director Katsougris reported that the following would be on the consent agenda:

Approval of Snow Plow for \$3,331.68
Warrants
Minutes

Commissioner Christensen suggested keeping the minutes separate if there are changes that need to be made.

Acting Executive Director Katsougris suggested keeping the minutes on the consent agenda and if changes need to be made they can be taken off the consent agenda and the corrections made and approved as corrected.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Gloria Andersen applauded Superintendent Gurgone on seeking out the Trust for Public Land. She stated that they have a great reputation. She also applauded Commissioner Simester for bringing up Miracle Recreation Equipment Company and concerns regarding safety.

Ms. Anderson stated that Miracle Equipment Company had six recalls including the Consumer Product Safety Commission on animal swings. She stated that the swings caused two deaths and 42 head injuries along with skull fractures, concussions, brain damage, serious lacerations and contusions as well a child who lost site in an eye.

Ms. Anderson reported that Miracle Equipment Company had recall on the Flying Gym Swing where a 10 year old died, 201 solid metal decks where children were burned on hot metal playground equipment, tornado slide where the hood strings of jackets got caught, children hurt from exposed metal edges.

Ms. Anderson stated that she did research on dozens of playground equipment companies and that Miracle had the most recalls. She stated that the Park District needs to take a look at the companies that are chosen and not go on recommendations. She further stated that she wished a background was done prior to the project because she does not want to see any child hurt.

Superintendent Strickler stated that animal swings were discontinued in 1983 and 1984 as well as the Flying Gym. He stated that PDRMA directed the District to remove all recalled equipment. He further stated that the injuries occurred 20 years or more ago.

Ms. Anderson stated that some of the injuries occurred in the last couple of years.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he would have a representative out to verify the findings. He stated that Tornado Slides are now built with one piece and safety training conducted so that children's strings do not get caught.

Ms. Anderson stated that the incidents occurred and that the company has a bad reputation.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he would check into the incidents.

Commissioner Christensen suggested contacting PDRMA and IAPD to see if they have had any problems with Miracle Equipment.

Commissioner Noverini, Commissioner Christensen and Commissioner Simester asked for copies of Ms. Anderson's research.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he would not let the information go to the wayside and that he will be contacting PDRMA, IAPD and Miracle Equipment as soon as possible.

Commissioner Christensen stated that it is important to know if the company is viewed as a reputable company.

Superintendent Strickler stated that he would not have brought the proposal to the board if it was unsafe.

Ms. Sharon Poteraske, Darien questioned if the company replaced recalled equipment with new equipment and if the equipment was tested.

There was no one else wishing to present public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Simester moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Christensen that the meeting be adjourned. Upon voice vote the Motion was thereby carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Frank Noverini, Acting President
Darien Park District

Richard Simester, Secretary
Darien Park District