

**MINUTES OF JOINT STUDY SESSION
CHAMPAIGN PARK BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND
CHAMPAIGN CITY COUNCIL**

July 25, 2007

The Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners and the City of Champaign City Council held a Joint Study Session on Wednesday, July 25, 2007 at the Bresnan Meeting Center, 706 Kenwood Road, Champaign, Illinois, pursuant to notice duly given. President Kuhl presided over the meeting.

Park Board Members and Officers Present: President Barbara Kuhl, Vice President Jane Solon, Commissioners Newton Dodds, Alvin Griggs and Joseph Petry, Treasurer Gary Wackerlin, and Attorney Guy Hall

Park District Staff Present: Bobbie Herakovich, Executive Director/Secretary, Joe DeLuce, Director of Recreation, Jim Spencer, Director of Operations, Terri Gible, Park Planner, Mary McGrew, Human Resources Manager

City Council Members Present: Mayor Gerald Schweighart, Deputy Mayor Michael La Due, Council Members Vic McIntosh, Tom Bruno, Ken Pirok, Marci Dodds, Deborah Frank Feinen, and Karen Foster

City Council Members Absent: Gina Jackson

City Staff Present: Steven Carter, City Manager, Richard Schnuer, Finance Director, Dennis Schmidt, Public Works Director, Bruce Knight, Planning Director, and Eleanor Blackmon, Assistant City Engineer

Others Present: Lance Theis, Hitchcock Design, Tom Jordan and John Dabrowski, Foth & Van Dyke/Daily, Mike Monson, *The News-Gazette*

Other Park District staff were present as well as members of the public.

Call to Order

President Kuhl called the Joint Study Session to order at 7:00 p.m. On behalf of the Park Board of Commissioners, she welcomed the City Council Members and the audience to the meeting.

Boneyard Creek 2nd Street Detention Project

City Manager Carter reported that staff will update the City Council and Park Commissioners on the designs, issues that were raised, the schedule, and financing of the Boneyard Street Second Street Detention project. He stated that City Council gave City staff direction to consider debt financing to accelerate project completion, and to begin construction next year. Targeted completion date for the project would be within three to four years. Richard Schnuer, Finance Director, was in attendance to answer any questions regarding financing.

Assistant City Engineer Blackmon reported that the discussion would be about financing, cost, scheduling, concept visualization and the next steps of the Boneyard Creek 2nd Street Detention project.

Ms. Blackmon reported that the City Council at its July 17, 2007 Post Council Study Session, discussed financing five large major capital projects including the Boneyard Creek 2nd Street Detention Project. Different options were presented by City staff to finance improvements to the 2nd

Street Reach project including “fast” and “medium” construction alternatives requiring debt issuance. The Net Debt Service for the two options is approximately the same. The project will cost \$17.7 million to complete. Staff recommended the fast option for the 2nd Street Detention Project which will allow for a more rapid construction schedule.

Ms. Blackmon reported that the schedule would allow for construction of Scott Park drainage improvements in 2008, and Scott Park improvements, related viaduct storm sewer improvements and the 2nd Street Detention basins in 2009 and 2010.

Ms. Blackmon presented the modified Concept A for the 2nd Street Detention Project that was selected by the City Council at its January 23, 2007 meeting. She reported that the City and Park District are working together on coordinating construction of drainage improvements across Scott Park. Ms. Blackmon stated that the Park District has developed a master plan for Scott Park improvements that will be constructed when drainage improvements are constructed.

Ms. Gibble discussed the Scott Park master plan briefly. She stated that the Park District used the same designer as the City for Park District proposed improvements to Scott Park. Ms. Gibble reported that this is an opportunity for the Park District to complete a face lift of an old park.

Ms. Blackmon presented and reviewed the conceptualizations of the South Gateway, South Basin, White Street and Viaduct Culvert and North Basin. She also reviewed and updated the City Council and Park Commissioners on North Basin Traffic questions. Ms. Blackmon reported that in January questions were raised on whether the business truck traffic was adequately accommodated in the design. She reported that as a result several changes have been made to the design to allow semi truck turning movements into and out a nearby alley, and to ensure that truck traffic could move through to Clark Street.

Ms. Blackmon reported on the question that was raised about keeping Clark Street open as a through street. She stated various designs were reviewed and that it was determined that the truck count did not warrant keeping the street open.

Ms. Blackmon reported that several changes were made to the North Gateway configuration which includes a wider area for semi truck movement and a gateway at the northwest corner of Springfield and Second.

To assist in further visualization, Ms. Blackmon presented illustrations of perspective views in the North Basin area including a view from the alley south of University Avenue close to the back of the Habitat ReStore, a view into and across the North Basin toward the west from Second Street, and both the proposed North Basin and an artist’s concept of project improvements that property owners could make on First Street properties. Additionally, views from the end of Clark Street and aerial views of projects viewed at the same scale were presented.

Ms. Blackmon reported that the next steps, assuming no major changes are made to the project, include completion of the final design and permitting tasks, finishing property acquisition, and coordination with the Park District, other City Departments, neighborhood stakeholders and utility consideration.

Councilmember Bruno questioned whether electric would be under or above ground. Ms. Blackmon responded that this issue has not been addressed yet. She stated that it would probably be underground unless cost prohibited. Councilmember Bruno stated that he would prefer underground utilities.

Attorney Hall questioned whether there would be a stop sign or yield sign on White and Springfield to aid with pedestrian traffic, particularly at Springfield Avenue. Consultant Tom Jordan responded that this issue has not been addressed yet and that this issue would be discussed with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Commissioner Dodds inquired about the maintenance projection plan for the decorative concrete walls. Ms. Blackmon responded that there was the potential for protection of the 50 to 100 year flood. She commented that the same seepage and water erosion would not be expected. Commissioner Dodds expressed a concern with graffiti. It was suggested that graffiti resistant coatings be explored which would make removal much easier.

Commissioner Solon questioned whether the drainage improvements would help to alleviate flooding near Christie Clinic. Ms. Blackmon responded that the intent is to help reduce flooding, not eliminate it.

Councilmember Dodds said that she still has issues with the proposed 2nd Street Detention Project plan. She expressed her concerns with the possible chipping and corroding of the concrete wall, the collection of litter and plastic bags, potential for graffiti on the concrete retaining walls, and that the landscaped detention area could attract crime.

Commissioner Petry echoed Councilmember Dodds statement, particularly on the safety side. He commented that he would love to see the City take advantage of this opportunity to provide a great detention basin.

Councilmember Pirok stated that he supported the concept design that has already been decided and was disinclined to reconsider his position.

Councilmember Bruno agreed with statements by Councilmember Dodds and Commissioner Petry. He voted for Concept C which called for a more urban, parklike setting on the north end of the detention area.

Councilmember McIntosh stated that the City Council has voted in favor of Alternate 1 (Concept A, modified) in the past, and that he supports Alternate 1 (Concept A).

Councilmember Feinen stated that she thinks that the project will help to revitalize the corridor and will be a good thing for the community. She also said this will be a great opportunity for the City and Park District to work together.

Mayor Schweighart called for a vote of the City Council on Alternate 1 (Concept A, modified), for staff to proceed with the project final design. A roll call vote was taken; City Council Members voted 6-2 (Dodds, Bruno) in favor of the motion. No vote of Park District Commissioners was taken.

Development of a Master Plan for a Community Park for the Former Champaign Landfill Site

Bruce Knight, City Planning Director, reported that staff is looking for direction from the City Council and Park Board to proceed with development of a master plan for the former Champaign landfill site into a community park. He reported that staff interviewed and pre-qualified three firms to complete the master plan. Of the three firms, staff recommends that the City Council and Park Board provide direction to staff to work with the Hitchcock Design Group.

Mr. Knight provided a brief update on the 90-acre site. He reported that the cost for the study would be \$60,000 which would be shared by the Park District. Mr. Knight stated that part of the scope of services would include input from the public. He discussed the many potential opportunities for this site, including trails, native prairie and greenbelt, saying that it was an opportunity to create uses for

the park that don't currently exist in the community. Mr. Knight reported that the study would be completed by late spring of next year in time to pursue grants.

Commissioner Dodds questioned whether environmental liability could cause problems. Dennis Schmidt, Public Works Director, said that the landfill is required to be monitored on a continuous basis, and the monitoring has confirmed that the site can be developed as a park. He stated that it is inspected on an annual basis and that it was not a landfill that presented significant environmental issues because Champaign does not have industries that produce the types of waste that can be particularly harmful.

In response to a question by Commissioner Petry, Ms. Blackmon responded that the post-closure plan and other paperwork required for the state to certify the landfill as completely closed is close to being completed. Commissioner Petry commented on serious issues with the Urbana landfill. Mr. Schmidt responded that there is no active stream (which caused problems in Urbana's old landfill) in the Champaign landfill. He also noted that not all of the site was used for a landfill, which opens the possibility of uses that can't be put on top of areas that were used for a landfill.

Ms. Herakovich commented on the number of questions raised. She stated that this is an opportunity for joint collaboration between City and Park District staff. She commented that limited research has been completed on the unique potential uses for the site.

Further discussion ensued. President Kuhl commented that the Park District has many things on its priority list.

Larry Windingland, a Board member with the Champaign County Radio Control Club, provided a handout on the Radio Control Club and described the history of the Club. He reported that the Club has utilized the landfill site since 1981 and currently has 154 members. Mr. Windingland stated that the Club members are very interested in remaining on the landfill site.

Mayor Schweighart called for a City Council vote on Alternate 1, directing staff to negotiate a scope of services and fee proposal with the Hitchcock Design Group to complete a Master Plan for the former Champaign Landfill site and submit the contract to City Council for approval. A roll call vote was taken; the vote was 8 ayes and 0 nays. There was no vote taken of Park District Commissioners.

On behalf of the Park District, President Kuhl thanked City staff for the updated information.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Dodds made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Petry to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Approved:

Barbara J. Kuhl, President

Bobbie Herakovich, Secretary