

**MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION MEETING
CHAMPAIGN PARK DISTRICT BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

July 23, 2008

The Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners held a Study Session on Wednesday, July 23, 2008 at 5:00 P.M. at the Bresnan Meeting Center, 706 Kenwood Road, Champaign, Illinois, pursuant to notice duly given. President Kuhl presided over the meeting.

Present: President Barbara Kuhl, Vice President Jane Solon, Commissioners Alvin Griggs, and Joseph Petry, and Treasurer Gary Wackerlin

Absent: Commissioner Newt Dodds

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

Call to Order

President Kuhl called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Presentations

Trails Plan

Bob Zolomij, Land Design Collaborative, stated that he was working on resolving issues and finalizing the trails plan. He reported that Ms. Gible has reviewed the latest draft in detail for grammatical errors and clarifications. Mr. Zolomij stated that he hopes to have the final trails report to the Park District for the August Board meeting. He apologized for the lateness in getting the report to the Board. Mr. Zolomij stated that Ms. Gible and Ms. Herakovich have been very helpful with the changes to the trails plan.

Mr. Zolomij presented a map of existing trails in the City of Champaign. Types of existing trails include internal paths, on street bike lanes, pedestrian trails and multi-use trails. He reported that the existing trail system consists of approximately twelve (12) trails that range from 6 ft. to 10 ft. in width.

Mr. Zolomij presented a map of existing schools and parks within the City of Champaign. He stated that the report covers opportunities to provide an overall trails system that connects the schools and the neighborhood and community parks, both existing and proposed.

Mr. Zolomij presented a map of opportunities for the development of a trails system. He reported that opportunities exist along railroad corridors, power line corridors, stream and drainage corridors, and pipeline corridors as well as a number of other opportunities.

Mr. Zolomij presented a map showing illustrations of limitations for the development of a greenway/trails system. He stated that limitations include interstate highways and railroad corridors which create barriers and makes it difficult to link trails and limit the Park District in the form of availability.

President Kuhl questioned if railroad could be provided an opportunities. She asked Mr. Zolomij to designated working versus non working railroads in the trails plan.

Mr. Zolomij presented a map of trip attractors and destinations that will effect the location and overall greenway/trails systems. Some of the locations where people want to go include the

commercial district, downtown, University of Illinois area, schools and parks. He stated that connectivity of uses and activity areas is a major goal of the trails plan.

Mr. Zolomij stated that pathways are relative to the County's trail plan. He reported that multi-purpose or multi-use trails are considered recreational paths used by pedestrians and bikes that are usually 10 ft. wide. He stated that trails can be in right-of-ways or streets. Mr. Zolomij stated that the City of Champaign is looking at street trails which are purely bike trails and not for recreational purposes but for people trying to get from point A to point B.

Mr. Zolomij reported that there are five criteria for determining priority of development of trails: providing connectivity and linkages to existing greenways and trails; availability of funding sources; new developments and ability to gain funding support from new developments; reconstruction-upgrading of existing roadways; and maximize use by existing/adjacent users. He reported that the list of projects would be categorized into high priority to be developed within 1 to 5 years, medium priority to be developed within 5 to 10 years, and low priority to be developed within 10 years and beyond. Mr. Zolomij stated that the priorities would need to be evaluated annually based on the five criteria.

In response to a question by Commissioner Griggs, Ms. Gibble responded that the landfill is further northwest and was not included in the report. She stated that the Bloomington trail will run along the landfill and that it will be considered a designation. Mr. Zolomij stated that he will make a note in the final report of the landfill for its future consideration.

Mr. Zolomij stated that Ms. Gibble will forward her final comments to him and he plans to get the final report back to the Park District in time for the August Board meeting.

Discussion ensued on the Park District selecting high priority trails. Ms. Gibble stated that the trails will be chosen based on the five criteria and as opportunities present themselves. Mr. Zolomij stated that the primary two criteria that would be used is does it fit in with an existing path and maximizing use by people. He reported that these two criteria are key factors for determining priority of trails to complete as well as availability of funding.

Discussion ensued on plans for installation of trails in new subdivisions. Future developments and proposed trails will fall within the City's subdivision requirements.

Discussion ensued on the proposed high priority trails. Ms. Gibble stated that working on the Greenway Trail to O'Malley's Alley to Centennial to Roby Trail are high priority and other connections to other trails and existing trails to bike paths.

Discussion ensued about providing paths and trails for recreation and to get to schools. Ms. Gibble stated that the Park District will take the recreation route while the City will take the street approach. Mr. Kuhl stated that sometimes connectivity may not make good sense.

Vice President Solon stated that some railroad tracks are only used at certain times of the year. President Kuhl stated that it would be good to know when tracks are used during what time of year in Champaign.

President Kuhl stated that the Board is looking forwarding to receiving the final copy of the trails plan. She questioned whether the City would take any action on this plan. Ms. Gibble stated that the City is developing its own plan. She stated that she and Park Planner Andrew Weiss serve on the City's committee.

Discussion ensued about trails along the drainage district. Ms. Gibble stated that on street connector routes would have to be used and that a conservation easement would be required. Ms. Herakovich commented that staff would need to work with the City to make sure that this is in their plan.

President Kuhl thanked Mr. Zolomij for his presentation and stated that the Board is looking forward to completing this project.

Bid/Proposal Items

Consideration of a Bid for a Mobile Stage System

Ms. Herakovich reported that this item was discussed at the May 28, 2008 Study Session. She stated that staff recommends that the bid be awarded to Wenger Corporation for the Base Bid and Alternates 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the bid amount of \$102,994.00. Ms. Herakovich reported that the bid came in less than the original estimated amount of \$105,000. She noted that the bid amount does not include a trade in.

In response to a question by Commissioner Griggs, Ms. Herakovich responded that \$125,000.00 has been budgeted for this purchase.

Ms. Herakovich stated that she will review this item with Commissioner Dodds prior to the August Board meeting.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the August 13, 2008 Consent Agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Bid for a 14 Passenger Bus

Mr. Spencer reported that staff is recommending that a 14 Passenger Bus be purchased from Southern Bus and Mobility for the State purchase bid price plus noted additions in the amount of \$38,611.00.

In response to a question by Commissioner Griggs, Mr. Spencer stated that signage can be completed locally more economically.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the August 13, 2008 Consent Agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Bid for a Mini Van

Mr. Spencer reported that staff is recommending that the bid for the Mini Van Bus be rejected and that the van be re-bid in August when 2009 pricing is available to potential vendors. He stated that this item was bid at an odd time and that one bid was not the right color and one was at a higher bid price.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the August 13, 2008 Consent agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Bid for a Chipper

Mr. Spencer reported that staff is recommending that the bid for a chipper be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, Vermeer Sales, in the bid amount of \$40,100.00. He stated that the current chipper is four years old, requires a lot of money for upkeep and has reached its essential life span.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the August 13, 2008 Consent Agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Bid to Replace Concrete at Various Locations

Mr. Spencer reported that staff is recommending that the bid for concrete replacement be awarded to the low bidder, Shaw Brothers Concrete, for an amount not to exceed \$55,000.00.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the August 13, 2008 Consent Agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Bid for Waterline Additions and Replacements at Various Parks

Mr. Spencer reported that staff is recommending awarding the bid for waterline additions and replacements for Option #2 which includes Projects 2 and 3 at West Side Park and Projects 3 and 4 at Morrissey Park to the low bidder, Berry's Garden Center, Inc., at a total cost of \$32,700.00. The \$2,860.00 will be provided through savings in other capital work in fiscal year 08-09. He stated that most of the work is directional boring.

Discussion ensued regarding a well at Porter Park. Staff responded that the water was tested prior to accepting Porter Park and that the water tested for high levels of fertilizer. Staff also stated that the well was not closed with the State and there may be possible future uses.

Action Items

Consideration of an Agreement for Cleaning Services at the Douglass Community Center

Mr. DeLuce reported that the Park District has done business with Environmental Solutions and Services, Inc. (ESS) for several years for cleaning services at the Douglass Community Center and the Tennis Center. He stated that cleaning at the Douglass Community Center has to be completed at night and that ESS does a great job. He stated that staff is recommending that the contractual agreement with ESS for cleaning services at the Douglass Community Center be renewed for one year at a cost of \$24,900.00.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the agenda of August 13, 2008 Regular Board meeting for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Proposal from Hitchcock Design Group for Services Related to Scott Park

Ms. Herakovich reported that staff is recommending Board approval of the proposal from Hitchcock Design Group for final plan and construction documents for Scott Park.

In response to a question by President Kuhl, Ms. Gibble stated that the estimated completion date for the City of Champaign's portion is December. The anticipated construction date is next spring and the project is based on the meandering plan. President Kuhl stated that she is not sure that the demographic area warrants a splash pad. Ms. Gibble stated that she does not want anything but a nozzle above ground and that these items will be refined.

President Kuhl stated that she would not want a basketball court near a pavilion. Commissioner Griggs stated that he agrees with President Kuhl.

Ms. Herakovich summarized that the Board would like to have an urban park to match demographic area, trees moved, look at splash pad as more of a fountain and not have the basketball court next to the pavilion.

President Kuhl commented that the Park District's part should look like a continuous open space that the City of Champaign is completing.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the agenda of the August 13, 2008 Regular Board meeting for consideration.

Consideration of a Flexible Spending Account Plan

Ms. McGrew reported that offering a Flexible Spending Account Plan would be a low cost benefit to Park District employees. She stated that the Park District hopes to break even or save money. Ms. McGrew stated that the Plan would allow employees to set aside pre-tax dollars to pay for medical and childcare expenses. Reimbursement would be made upon submittal of receipts. She reported that the cost to the Park District to administer the Plan would be \$3,066.00 per year.

Commissioner Petry questioned how it was decided that this Plan was a priority. Ms. McGrew stated that the Park District staff have incurred higher out of pocket health insurance expenses. She stated that it is anticipated that the first year about a 1/3 of employees would take advantage of the Plan.

Commissioner Petry stated that he thinks that it is a good benefit for employees but could be a liability for the Park District. He questioned whether employees could only take out what they put in. Ms. McGrew stated that the laws changed such that if an employee plans to pay in \$1,200 per year, they are allowed to use the funds the first month thus making the employer responsible for Park District monies. She stated that Benefits Planning Consultants (BPC) assumes the risk and therefore gets to keep any remaining money.

President Kuhl commented that the proposed Plan is different than plans that she is familiar with. She questioned why BPC would get the money that is not spent since the Park District would be responsible if an employee over spends.

Ms. McGrew stated that she will follow up with BPC.

President Kuhl stated that it will take a lot of effort to educate employees about the Plan.

In response to a question by Commissioner Petry, Ms. McGrew stated that other groups offer plans; however, local companies do not offer good customer service. She reported that BPC has worked out a paperless deduction process with Health Alliance. Ms. McGrew stated that BPC is offering the existing deal to the Park District and that the City of Champaign will sign up with the Plan as of March 1.

Ms. McGrew stated that to educate employees, BPC will offer three sessions to educate employees; two during the week and one on the weekend. She stated that more sessions will be offered if needed.

Ms. Herakovich stated that since co payments increased, the Park District was looking for other ways to help employees and a flexible spending plan seemed to be the most cost effective.

This item will be placed on the agenda for the August 13, 2008 Regular Board meeting for Board consideration.

Discussion Items

Sports Philosophy

Mr. DeLuce reported that there are some issues staff have been dealing with over the past few years relating to sports issues, policies and philosophy that need to be clarified as the Park District moves forward with its strategic planning process. He stated that staff would like to

discuss and come to a consensus on the issues in order to move forward. Mr. DeLuce presented four issues along with staff recommendation for the Board consideration: priorities for sports field usage; recreation sports programs vs. competitive sports; requests for non-profit groups who use our fields to construct amenities in our parks; and sports fields level of usage. A copy of the issues and recommendation for each is attached to the minutes.

Mr. DeLuce reported that the Park District does encourage any group who utilizes Park District fields for the leagues to conduct background checks for their volunteer coaches. He stated that staff will work with the non-profit groups to provide assistance in youth sports training programs, parent information, and information on background checks.

Discussion ensued on background checks. It was decided that the Park District staff show other organizations how to conduct background checks.

Discussion ensued about competitive league and the School District using Park District fields for play. Mr. DeLuce reported that the School District has scheduled 27 games for play on Park District fields.

Treasurer Wackerlin left the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

President Kuhl encouraged staff to review the proposed policy to make sure definitions are correct and that that usage charges are defined.

Discussion about construction of amenities in parks ensued. Mr. Griggs stated that no advertising be allowed on Park District fields. Commissioner Petry stated that #7 seemed redundant in this section.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the agenda for the August 13, 2008 Regular Board meeting for Board consideration. President Kuhl suggested that staff take Board comments into consideration. Commissioner Griggs suggested maybe having the Attorney review the policy.

Finalization and Prioritization of Strategic Plan

Ms. Herakovich stated that she and President Kuhl met and put together list of priorities as discussed at the June 3rd, July 2nd and 9th Board meetings. She stated that the Board needs to set priorities for next year and beyond for the following items.

Ms. Herakovich reported that trails priorities include internal paths at Heritage, Dodds, Johnston ((Spalding, Zahnd, Garden Hills, Centennial to be reviewed with re-master planning process), and interconnectivity a priority (identify trails to connect). Review parks for trails when master planning.

President Kuhl suggested that Spalding, Zahnd and Centennial be removed from under trails because they are included on the list of parks to be master planned.

President Kuhl questioned whether a standard for putting paths in parks was needed. Ms. Herakovich stated that this has been added under park policy and that another workshop would be needed to talk about trails.

Ms. Herakovich reported that parks priorities include Porter Park, updated master plans for Spalding Park, Centennial Park, Dodds Park master plan review, Kaufman Lake Park, Zahnd Park, Gardens Hills Park, and identify others; identify pros and cons of natural areas within parks; provide costs to maintain neighborhood and regional parks; and the landfill. She stated

that staff will work on developing a per acre cost for active and passive parks. Ms. Herakovich reported that the City of Champaign has asked the Park District to adopt the plan for the landfill.

Vice President Solon asked if Boulder Ridge Park and Toalson Park should be added to the list of parks. Ms. Herakovich responded yes and stated that these parks will be added to the list.

Discussion ensued on adding perennials to parks to make them low maintenance. Discussion also ensued about Garden Hills being added to the list due to the attention it is currently getting. President Kuhl stated that it is not a quality park today and has drainage issues. She commented that it may be time to negotiate with the City to make improvements.

Ms. Herakovich reported that aquatics priorities include adding additional features to Sholem Aquatic Center and re-master planning Spalding. She suggested that aquatics be looked at as a whole. Ms. Herakovich reported that there was a letter to the editor in *The News-Gazette* from non-resident complaining about having to pay non-resident fees to get in Sholem Aquatic Center, and that she was interviewed by WCIA regarding the issue.

Commissioner Petry stated that as a taxpayer he thinks that it is very prudent to charge non-resident fees.

Vice President Solon stated that a child fell at Sholem Aquatic Center and that the parent was very impressed with how staff handled the situation. Ms. Herakovich stated that she would pass this information on to staff.

In response to a question by President Kuhl, Ms. Herakovich stated that of the \$650,000 earmarked for Sholem, \$50,000 is specifically earmarked for Sholem, and that the remaining carryover is for flexible use.

Ms. Herakovich stated that swimming is a priority for children and is considered a basic core program. She stated that staff wants to make sure that the Board agrees.

The Board agreed that swimming is important for children and that Spalding serves a purpose. Ms. Herakovich reported that although the national trend has changed, swimming is still number two for participation.

Ms. Herakovich reported that facilities priorities include enhancement/adaptation of existing facilities; exploring new indoor space such as a recreation center, field house, swimming component, and Larkin's Place; and the Virginia Theatre as well as pursuing a Cultural Arts District.

Commissioner Griggs questioned whether a conclusion has been reached about adapting or adding on to existing facilities. Ms. Herakovich stated that the Board approved allowing Neil Strack to proceed with review of existing facilities.

Ms. Herakovich reported that policy development priorities include best practices, core programs, and cost recovery/revenue policy/long range financial plan.

Ms. Herakovich stated that although Commissioner Dodds was unable to attending the meeting, he asked her to share his comments on what he feels should be priorities which are: being cautious and conservative in spending; Dog Park policies and regulations and seeding by September 1, 2008; counting our blessings for donated parkland; and notification to residents when building trails.

President Kuhl stated that the Board will need to decide on issues that are important for the Park District today and prioritize them. She stated that the Board needs to set goals for the Executive Director to accomplish between now and May 1st. President Kuhl stated that Board will need to come up with a timeframe to accomplish the priorities that are decided upon. She stated that she sees priorities that are considered ongoing as ones that will be focused on for the next five years.

Discussion ensued about priorities. Some priorities considered high priority include a master plan for Spalding Park, indoor space feasibility study and enhancement of existing facilities, a long range financial plan, internal paths and working with City to get interconnectivity finalized.

The list of parks in progress includes the 1st Phase of Porter Park, Tolson Park and Scott Park.

The master plan of Spalding Park should be considered as a first priority. Ms. Herakovich stated that staff will provide the Board with a list of current uses and recommendations for Spalding Park.

The pros and cons of natural areas in Heritage and Porter Parks will be a research project for staff.

Ms. Herakovich stated that Kaufman Park could be considered a park in progress. She stated that it would be nice to have a master plan and staff will work on cost figures to present to the Board.

Discussion ensued about having a master plan in place for Kaufman before the City of Champaign approaches the Park District regarding possible use for drainage.

It was suggested that Kaufman master plan be kept on the list of parks in progress. The master plan for Dodds Park already exists. It was decided that there was no urgency at this time in completing a master plan for Zahnd Park. It was suggested that staff talk to the City Manager regarding possible improvements to Garden Hills Park.

Ms. Herakovich commented that acquisition of land will become more expensive and questioned how the Park District would accomplish acquiring additional land.

President Kuhl stated that the cost to maintain regional and neighborhood parks will be a research project for staff.

The Board will need to decide how they want to proceed with the landfill. Ms. Herakovich stated that the report calls for development in 8 to 10 years.

President Kuhl stated that additional features for Sholem Aquatic Center will be an ongoing project while completing a master plan for Spalding will be considered high priority.

President Kuhl stated that completion of an indoor space feasibility study will be considered high priority.

President Kuhl stated that Virginia Theatre/Cultural Arts District will be considered high priority and encouraged staff to continue to work with the City of Champaign.

President Kuhl stated that it will be one of Ms. Herakovich's goals to incorporate best practices and core programs. She stated that cost recovery revenue policy will be considered ongoing and will take time to accomplish.

President Kuhl stated that the long range financial plan is a high priority and that a Task Force has been created to work on this project.

President Kuhl stated that putting together an inclusive list of all public facilities will be a research project for staff.

President Kuhl stated that under parameters for park amenities, the Board has agreed to install three additional paths. Ms. Herakovich stated that staff will bring the Dodds Park master plan back to the Board for review. Commissioner Griggs suggested that staff work with Parkland College to put a trail around Dodds Park. Ms. Herakovich stated that staff has a meeting with Parkland College representatives in August and will discuss this item with them at that time.

Collaborative efforts on the list of priorities include working with the City of Champaign on trails and paths; the School District; University of Illinois; Parkland College to discuss a field house, indoor recreation center and trail; and companies for naming rights.

President Kuhl stated that staff should put together a philosophy regarding land acquisition. Ms. Herakovich questioned whether the Board wanted to maintain a national standard ratio of parks per 1,000. She stated that the Park District need to have an inventory of property adjacent to parks, and follow up with major land owners to see if they would be interested in donating land.

President Kuhl stated that mandatory land dedication should be added to the priority list even though the Park District does not know where this issue is headed. Commissioner Petry expressed his desire to get the land cash ordinance finalized.

President Kuhl asked Ms. Herakovich to clean up the priority list and bring it back to the Board for approval at the August Board meeting. She asked the Board to continue to think about the priorities and to make sure that what they think is important is included on the list.

Ms. Herakovich reported that an agreement with the Fountain Head Drainage District may be brought to them for consideration at the August Board meeting. Mr. Spencer updated the Board on the issues with the Drainage District.

Ms. Herakovich thanked Mary McGrew, Human Resources Manager, for almost eight years of service to the Park District. She stated that most park district are not fortunate to have a human resources person. Ms. Herakovich stated that Ms. McGrew was responsible for developing the Park District's human resources division. Ms. McGrew has taken a position with Gill Athletics and her last day will be July 31st.

Mr. Spencer updated the Board on the Pipeline Trail. He reported that the Park District is receiving fewer calls. Mr. Spencer stated that staff met with the Pipeline engineers to discuss plant material. He reported that Ms. Gible is working on a design for the trail. Mr. Spencer stated that the Park District is still waiting on shop drawings for the bridge and signatures from the Fountain Head Drainage District on the easement.

In response to a question by President Kuhl, Mr. Spencer responded that motorized scooters are not allowed on the Pipeline Trail. She suggested that staff add signage stating that no scooters are allowed.

Closed Session

Commissioner Petry made a motion, seconded by Vice President Solon to recess into Executive Session under the Illinois Open Meeting Act, specifically 5 ILCS, Par. 120/2(c)(1) for the

discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, dismissal, performance, or personal status of employees, officers and legal counsel for the park district. Upon roll call vote, the vote was as follows: Commissioner Petry – yes; Vice President Solon – yes; President Kuhl – yes; and Commissioner Griggs – yes. The motion passed 4-0.

Return to Regular Meeting

Following the adjournment of the Closed Session, the Board reconvened in open meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Vice President Solon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Petry to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Approved:

Barbara J. Kuhl, President

Bobbie Herakovich, Secretary