

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

August 27, 2008

The Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners held a Study Session on Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at 5:00 P.M. at the Spalding Recreation Center, 910 North Harris Street, 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, Treasurer Gary Wackerlin (arrived at 5:39 p.m.), and Attorney Guy Hall (arrived at 5:25 p.m.)

Absent: Commissioner Newton Dodds

Staff: Bobbie Herakovich, Executive Director/Secretary, Joe DeLuce, Director of Recreation, Jim Spencer, Director of Operations, Terri Gible, Park Planner, and Andrew Weiss, Park Planner

Call to Order

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

Tour of Spalding Park

The Park Board members and officers toured Spalding Park in order to assess its condition and where future improvements might be undertaken.

Action Items

Consideration of the Final Design for Toalson Park

Andrew Weiss, Park Planner, presented the proposed final design for Toalson Park, which is in the Ashland Subdivision. He said the park could be considered as a circulation space as well as a designation for recreation. Mr. Weiss discussed the different trails and exits of the park. He reported that the park would include a shelter, drinking fountain, picnic area, open play area and hard space play area where there would be a half size basketball court. The plan calls for approximately 80 trees and two flower beds. Mr. Weiss reported that there is 23,000 cubic square yards of topsoil and 15,000 square yards of it would remain on site in Toalson Park. He stated that depending on what happens with the soil, there are different opportunities for the area including a prairie area or sledding hill.

Commissioner Griggs raised questions about parking and people being attracted to the park because of the basketball court. Mr. Weiss stated that no parking is called for because it is a neighborhood park. It is anticipated that people will either walk or bike to the park. Ms. Gible stated on-street parking would be available and by installing a half size basketball court hopefully it will attract fewer users. Ms. Herakovich noted that the developer does not want to see parking added.

Vice President Solon asked if there was going to be a sledding hill. Mr. Weiss stated that if all the dirt remains, there would be an opportunity for a sledding hill.

President Kuhl questioned the different widths of the paths. Ms. Gible stated that the circulation route around the park would be 8 ft. A 6 ft. path would surround the playground; and the 4 ft. path would be "take offs" from the sidewalk going to a destination. Ms. Herakovich reported that the 6 ft. path around the playground was to make the playgrounds more accessible for all citizens and to contain materials used underneath the playgrounds. President Kuhl expressed a concern about the 4 ft. paths.

President Kuhl questioned the amount budgeted for the project. Ms. Herakovich stated that \$425,000 is budgeted for the project. She stated that with the grant, the Park District was able to use the donated land as the 50% match for funding so that out of pocket costs are minimal.

Vice President Solon questioned the timeline for the project. Ms. Gible stated that the timeline keeps getting adjusted due to different situations. Ms. Herakovich stated that the design is underway now, and that the remainder of the project will be completed starting in the fall of 2008 through the summer of 2009.

Mr. Spencer reported that the topsoil will become the property of the Park District if the developer does not use it within four years.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the September 10, 2008 agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of a Request for an Easement from Parkland College

Mr. Spencer reported that Parkland College has requested an easement to install a fiber optic line from their main campus to their east campus through Dodds Park. He showed the Commissioners a drawing depicting the easement. Mr. Spencer stated that the line will be buried 3 ft. deep. He stated that staff recommends Board approval granting the easement and waive the fees in recognition of the Park District's relationship with Parkland College.

Attorney Hall questioned whether anyone had concerns about Section 3, Page 3, where it calls for the communication lines to be not less than twelve inches (12") below the surface of the easement area. Mr. Spencer responded that this does not present a problem and that the specifications called for the line to be buried 3 ft. He stated that Parkland College would be responsible for repairing any damages. Ms. Herakovich suggested that Attorney Hall amend the agreement to reflect a 3 ft. depth requirement.

Attorney Hall stated that Parkland's attorney questioned language that he added to the agreement regarding ceasing use or abandonment of the line. He asked if there were any comments or concerns regarding the language in Section 3(c), Page 3, which addresses cease use or abandonment of the line and who should pay for removal of the line in that case.

Vice President Solon suggested Attorney Hall include language that gives the Park District the option for the line to stay or be removed.

Commissioner Petry questioned the width of the easement. Mr. Spencer responded that 25 ft. is the Park District's standard which allows for 12.5 ft. on both side of the easement area. This makes it suitable when Parkland College needs to dig.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the September 10, 2008 agenda for Board consideration.

Consideration of an Agreement with Fountain Head Drainage District

Mr. Spencer reported that the agreement allows the Park District an easement to install a bridge over the Copper Slough in Ironwood subdivision as part of the Pipeline Trail. He stated that staff recommends approval of the agreement.

Attorney Hall stated that he has questions regarding Item #3, where it states that the Sub-District has a right-of-way along the ditch. He stated that he has not been able to confirm that this information is accurate. Attorney Hall expressed his concern with the Park District agreeing to the language as written as it may have an affect on Porter Family Park. Ms. Herakovich stated that court orders have established the right-of-ways.

It was suggested that Attorney Hall include language to protect the Park District in the future.

President Kuhl questioned the timeline for the bridge project. Attorney Hall stated that the legal description had been received and that the easement has been forwarded to the developer's attorney. The Park District is to receive a contribution of \$31,500 toward this project from the developer through the Champaign Parks Foundation.

Discussion ensued about the timeline for the project. The construction of the bid was included in the bid for the Pipeline Trail. Staff stated that the Park District was waiting to finalize the agreement with the Fountain Head Drainage District and waiting for easement language from the Ironwood West Subdivision developer that allows the Park District to occupy the area.

It was the consensus of the Board that this item be placed on the September 10, 2008 agenda for Board consideration.

Mr. Spencer updated the Commissioners on the Pipeline Trail. He reported that seeding should begin tomorrow. Ms. Gibble stated that letters were mailed today to the residents. Mr. Spencer reported that staff has been receiving reports of vehicular activity on the trail and that ballards will be installed to help with this issue. He stated that the planner is working on decorative planting. Staff is working with homeowners whose yards are within 3 ft. of the trail.

Discussion regarding the Pipeline Trail continued. Ms. Gibble stated that minimum landscaping will be completed to "soften" the initial stark appearance of the trail. She reported that in the letter that was mailed to residents, it asks them to call Mr. Spencer or her with concerns. Ms. Gibble stated that a certified letter was mailed to all adjacent homeowners.

Discussion Items

Hallbeck Park

Ms. Gibble stated that staff was seeking input from the Commissioners on what portion of the proposed plan should be constructed for Hallbeck Park. This project was encouraged by Rick Hallbeck who is working with the Park District on the Thompson Tract. She reported that staff proposes taking the north half of development and extend the walking path, adding a small shelter, picnic benches, playground equipment and trees.

Ms. Gibble stated that what staff is proposing would cost \$60,000 to \$70,000. Ms. Herakovich commented that staff will need to meet with the neighbors before finalizing a proposal.

Vice President Solon expressed her concern about the drainage problems at the park. Mr. Spencer stated that it may be possible to do some mitigation, including raising the trail and adding drainage tile.

President Kuhl questioned whether staff was suggesting a connector path be installed. Ms. Gibble stated that it is being suggested at this point and that the width would be a maximum of 5 ft. due to the narrow location. She stated that there were challenges including ownership issues, drainage and access issues. Ms. Gibble stated staff does not want to make any improvements without making improvements to the drainage. Ms. Herakovich stated that the staff will ask the City for assistance with the drainage issues.

President Kuhl stated that she was in favor of limiting resources since the park is not accessible to many people.

Ms. Herakovich questioned if there was a consensus for staff to move forward with a portion of the design. She stated that the design would be brought back to the Board for consideration after which

staff would solicit input from the neighbors.

Commissioner Griggs stated that he liked the idea of a passive park with trees, trails and benches using limited resources.

Vice President Solon stated that she is not in favor of the elaborate design and would not suggest spending more than \$50,000.

Commissioner Petry stated that the Park District received the park as a donation which is something that the Park District is trying to encourage. He noted that another potential donation is pending as a result of this proposal. Commissioner Petry stated that he would not limit the dollar amount. He stated that he hopes that the connection to the neighborhood park can be completed.

It was the consensus of the Board that it is interested in pursuing additional development to Hallbeck Park.

Trails Plan Priorities

Ms. Gibble reported that staff has compiled a list of proposed trail projects based on various considerations. She stated that maps showing current and proposed trails, and connector path were included in the Board packets. The maps also show the locations for the proposed paths. Ms. Herakovich encouraged the Commissioners to take time to visit the parks and let staff know if they have any questions. She stated that the proposed trails plan is an important part of the Park District's goals.

President Kuhl suggested that the Commissioners review the proposed high priority trails. There were no objections from the Board about the following proposed trails: Pipeline Trail; Curtis Road Trail; Greenbelt Trail to O'Malley's Alley Trail; Boneyard Greenway; and Johnston Park Path.

President Kuhl questioned the proposed path in Powell Park, and she addressed the Park District's philosophy for providing paths in park.

Ms. Gibble discussed the different paths. She stated that some paths are new, some are constructed using existing paths, and some are loop paths. Ms. Gibble stated that loop paths connect to amenities and neighborhoods. She stated that the proposed paths have several different purposes. Ms. Gibble reported that the proposed path in Powell Park is to provide a connection to the neighborhood, and to provide accessibility to amenities within the park.

President Kuhl commented that when paths are added the Park District has to maintain them. She noted that Powell Park has a sidewalk on two sides and that the playground is more to the east but does not have a path to the playground. She questioned whether the Park District wanted to add paths to all playgrounds and in every park.

Ms. Gibble stated because of ADA requirements, the Park District should not only provide access to playgrounds, but to amenities in parks as well. She noted that in the proposal for Powell Park the recommendation is to make the connection.

President Kuhl stated that she would not consider the proposed path for Powell Park a priority. Vice President Solon questioned the cost to construct the path in Powell Park.

Ms. Herakovich suggested that staff put together cost estimates to build a playground, the paths and connectors and provide this information back to the Board.

The Board discussed the proposed new park paths for the following parks: Dodds Park, Spalding Park, Heritage Park, Kaufman Lake, Centennial Park, and O'Malley's Alley.

President Kuhl commented that sidewalks currently exist around Centennial Park and that the City is responsible for maintaining the sidewalks. She questioned whether staff wants the Park District to take on that responsibility.

Discussion ensued on the proposed path for Douglass Park, Zahnd Park and the Landfill. It was noted that Hallbeck Park was discussed earlier in the meeting. The proposed trail for Garden Hills Park was discussed.

The Board discussed the current drainage problem in Garden Hills Park. President Kuhl stated that Ms. Herakovich and she met with the City representatives and the project was discussed.

Discussion ensued on the proposed path for Noel Park, Hazel Park, Eisner Park and Clark Park. Currently there is no sidewalk around Noel Park. Also, there is no access into Hazel Park. The basketball courts are used a great deal in Hazel Park. The playground in Hazel Park is next on the replacement schedule.

Ms. Herakovich stated that the proposed trails will be brought back to the Board with costs that would be incurred for each park. She stated that she feels strongly about providing access to playgrounds, and that parks add to healthy neighborhoods.

It was noted that the standard width for regional trails is 10 feet, and that the standard width for Park District trails is 8 feet. Finally, President Kuhl noted areas of concern about water with the Roby Trail.

Commissioner Griggs suggested a park tour for next spring after all the details have been finalized.

Closed Session

Commissioner Petry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Griggs 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, Par. 120/2(c)(5) the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, and Par. 120/2(c)(6) the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body. 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.

Discussion Items (Cont'd)

Ms. Herakovich updated the Board on discussions that took place between Unit 4 School Board president and staff, City staff and Park District Board president and staff regarding adding additional seats to meet the requirements of the consent decree. She presented preliminary proposed scenarios for B. T. Washington and Garden Hills Schools. Ms. Herakovich stated that there is no use of park land proposed at Garden Hills. However, it would mean the loss of tennis courts paid for by the Park District. She reported that all scenarios would require passage of the one cent sales tax and must be formalized into a plan by November 1. Ms. Herakovich discussed the pros and cons of the proposed sites.

Ms. Herakovich stated that she recommends that staff move forward and meet with the architects to better understand the scenarios and that the Board adopt a position of support for joint use of facilities at Douglass and Garden Hills Parks at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Herakovich updated that Board on a Park District staff who had an accident on Mattis Avenue. She stated that PDRMA is handling this matter.

Ms. Herakovich updated the Board on a Prairie Farm volunteer who contracted a bacterial infection. She reported that this matter has been resolved.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Petry made a motion, seconded by Vice President Solon to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Approved:

Barbara J. Kuhl, President

Bobbie Herakovich, Secretary