

WESTERN SPRINGS PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2010 (Board approved 10-12-10)

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Jim Havlat
Janet Gassmann
Wendy Bastyr
Bob Daman
Jennifer Cromheecke

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Kristin Keese
Damian Marshall

OTHERS PRESENT

Robert Ekroth, Park District Attorney
Craig Himmelmann, Director of Parks
Maribeth Newell, Park Board Secretary
Tracy Alden, Rec. Dept. Director
Deb Lyons, Village Trustee
David Phillips, Spears Financial
Jamie Secord, Resident
Doug Secord, Resident
Michelle Gurgis, Resident
Ann Joyaux, Resident
Dan Caplice, Resident
Kathleen Tomitz, Resident
Heidi Hanner, School District
Paul Parisi, IMRF

President Jim Havlat called the September 14, 2010 Western Springs Park District Board Meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Treasurer Bastyr moved with a second by Commissioner Daman to approve the August 17, 2010 meeting minutes, with corrections as noted, which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

DISCUSSION OF FINANCES

Treasurer Bastyr introduced Mr. David Phillips of Speers Financial. Mr. Phillips comes before the Board this evening to discuss financing options available to the Park District. He introduced three possible scenarios:

- 1) Refinancing of Bonds
- 2) Referendum for a specific amount of revenue
- 3) Take a loan for a small amount and pay it out of operating fund. It wouldn't go against our lending limits.

Bonds Mr. Phillips gave an overview of Illinois Bonds.

General Obligation Bonds. The lower the risk, the lower the interest rate. General obligation bonds are the least risky. We are at debt service extension base.

Debt Certificates. They are an annual appropriation. They are looser and not tied to specific contract or cash amount.

Alternate Bonds have a geo levy on file. It is a security pledge, not a revenue stream. That levy is removed every year and replaced by the revenue stream.

All are really the same term, but different interest rates.

The debt service schedule of our currently outstanding bonds from 1998 and 2007:

\$118,211.31 is the 1994 debt service. \$115,065.00 is the current 2010 levy. The \$118,211.31 goes through 2025 before it falls away.

There was legislation in 2009 for arms of government in a capped environment to add the CPI increase to the debt service extension base. CPI increased 2.7% in 2010 which would increase the debt service extension base to \$121,524.32. Using 2% as a conservative CPI adjustment, we will begin to get a little room in the debt service extension base.

Debt Limits. The debt service extension base is filled 2010 - 2025. From the 2026 through 2030 levy, it is not billed. We could do a borrowing ahead to reach that 2026 level with a capital appreciation bond.

From a cost benefit standpoint, it is not very cost effective to borrow \$500,000.00 and pay back \$1,000,000.00 because of deferred payments and interest.

The call provisions for the existing bonds are:

2007A issue was at 4.5% and are not callable until 2017. 2007B are not callable until 2016. It is not cost effective to reach ahead.

Mr. Phillips went on to explain the referendum options.

A 19 year model based on the equalized assessed value of \$732,000,000.00 for the district would generate approximately an \$8.00 annual tax bill increase per \$250,000.00 of a home's value.

A 20 year model would generate approximately a \$9.52 increase per \$250,000.00 per year.

A 10 year model would generate approximately a \$12.57 increase per \$250,000.00 per year. It would also drop our interest on \$1,000,000.00 down to \$187,000.00.

From a ratio value, the Western Springs Park District's outstanding debt is very low. We do not have a lot of debt out there because we have been very frugal.

President Havlat inquired about refinancing options for the bonds. Mr. Phillips explained that it is probably not an option because the investor who purchased the bonds on the open market is probably very happy with the 4.50% rate or return on the bonds.

Mr. Phillips noted that if the referendum is approved, we would have added to our asset base and added expenses come along in operating costs to the Park District. He explained that we can issue a Limiting Rate Referendum, which is ongoing. This is the type of referendum he prefers, because it takes into consideration the ongoing increase in capital expenses. The drawback to this type of referendum is the language on the ballot question is similar to reading a tax code. It is very heavy legalese. Thorough public education is essential in this case.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS AND PERSONS TO BE HEARD FROM THE FLOOR: Comments from the residents present have been recorded in the OLD BUSINESS section under EDIBLE GARDEN. Drainage issues for the Secords have been recorded under NEW BUSINESS.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

Director Himmelmann did not have any communications to report.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Lyons reported that the T-LU funds are hung up with IDOT. As a result, the project will be delayed until at least the Spring of 2011. Commissioner Daman informed her that he has not been contacted about the underpass project. Trustee Lyons explained that the committee has his name and they will contact him when the time comes.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director Alden reported that they are working on the Winter/Spring 2011 book. The deadline is October 11, 2010. The focus of the cover is the Quasiquicentennial of Western Springs. Let him know if there is anything the Park District would like to have included in the book.

Most outdoor activities are coming to an end and football is in full swing.

OLD BUSINESS **EDIBLE GARDEN**

Heidi Hanner, Western Springs School District, came before the Board to finalize plans for the Edible Garden. Ms. Hanner distributed a drawing of the final layout and new location of the garden. The change of location was generated from a community meeting, held by the school district, which had about 20 people in attendance. All were

in support of the garden, but they voiced concern about vandalism due to lighting of the original location. The new location is off Hillgrove, about 12 feet from the sidewalk. It is also 40 feet from the driveway in consideration of visual clearance and shade from trees. Lighting from the street and Field Park School should keep the garden well lit.

The plot will be 28' x 40' and the P.E. teacher confirmed that the area is not used for soccer or other school activities. All the beds will be still be raised 12". Ms. Hanner stated that this is an Eagle Scout project and they would like to begin construction the 2nd week of October.

Resident Gurgis expressed concern with the location. She suggested roping off the area for a period of time to see if it interfered with the children's play areas. Resident Tomitz expressed concern with who would be held accountable in the case of neglect of the garden. President Havlat explained that there will be an IGA in place between the Park and School Districts with specific rules governing restoration of the space in the event that the garden is not successful. Ms. Gurgis asked about tapping into water in Field Park B as an alternate location. Director Himmelmann explained that would require the children to cross the street and there were many objections to that in a prior location. Vice President Gassmann explained that the site was considered, but it was too shaded and not conducive to growing.

Commissioner Daman expressed that perhaps everyone was underestimating children's ability to adapt to open space. They will adapt to playing with the garden. No matter where the garden is placed, there will be residents with objections. Additionally, part of this program is for summer school curriculum and Field Park School services the entire district for summer school. Commissioner Cromheecke agreed that it comes down to having a garden and trying to consider every possible user group while incorporating a new group of park users. There is a strong bias toward the parks being used for sporting activities. Not all children are interested in sports, or physically able to participate. They need to be considered in allowing another type of activity that involves them as well. Ms. Hanner added that the garden will be used by other community groups such as the Girl Scouts, Garden Club, and possibly individual residents.

Resident Joyaux stated that she felt the area is used and Resident Caplice asked what percent of the Park District's green space would be used for the garden. Ms. Hanner said that the entire project would be approximately 2,700 square feet. President Havlat also noted that the planting area would still be considered green space. Ms. Hanner estimated that the planting area will be approximately 350 square feet. Mr. Caplice explained that the term play space would be a better term to address his concern. He is against losing any play space. He asked for some consideration to be given toward how far out the plot goes into the park. Ms. Hanner said that the teachers will have some bench seating and a table at the front end to enable them to hold classes outside in the garden. In conclusion, Ms. Hanner explained that this has been a 10 month process. The location has been

moved and the plot redesigned a few times. The school district has taken resident's concerns into consideration and they feel that this is the best location and size. She asked the Commissioners to make a final decision this evening.

President Havlat stated that the Board has heard all comments and asked for a motion to approve the Edible Garden in its current redesign of 28' x 40' in Field Park.

MOTION

Commissioner Cromheecke motioned with a second by Commissioner Daman to approve the 28' x 40' Edible Garden in Field Park, which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

IMRF

Mr. Paul Parisi of the IMRF (Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund) addressed the Board regarding accumulation of sick days for Park District Employees. Mr. Parisi explained that accrued sick days are charged on retirement reserve. Accrual of 41-60 days would increase the employee's retirement benefit by about \$29.00 per month and the increased cost to the employer would be \$4,627.58. Accrual of 181 - 200 sick days would increase the employees retirement benefit by \$91.00 per month and the additional cost to the employer would be \$14,619.97. It is amortized over 30 years. Treasurer Bastyr asked if we could allow employees to carry over sick days but not have them as part of the retirement fund. Mr. Parisi explained that state law requires accrual to be reported to the IMRF. President Havlat asked that if we decide to allow accrual of sick days, does it have to be retroactive for our long term employees such as Director Himmelmann. Mr. Parisi explained that it can be made retroactive, but is not required. It would be up to the Board to decide.

Mr. Parisi distributed a packet explaining the different options and cost scenarios. He also explained that the requirements for retirement will be changing on January 1, 2011. Employees will not be vested until they have reached 10 years of employment, rather than the current 8 years. Additionally, they cannot collect their IMRF retirement pension until age 67 rather than the current age of 55. With the later retirement age, employers will see a cost decrease of 25% to 30% very quickly. There is no impact to the yearly budget until someone actually retires, and then not until 2 years after that retirement.

Vice President Gassmann suggested that the Board take time to digest the information and come up with some parameters.

LT BOND GRANT

President Havlat has not heard anything from Lyons Township regarding the grant money we were awarded.

OSLAD GRANT

President Havlat reported that there are some issues with our application. They are asking for an updated capital improvement plan. Things are not looking favorable for our application.

SAFETY

Director Himmelmann reported that there were no accidents or injuries for the month of August, 2010.

Commissioner Daman inquired about the damage to the Ridgewood Park sign. Director Himmelmann explained that PDRMA is contacting the driver's insurance company and they will reimburse us the \$1,000.00. Treasurer Bastyr asked that we do not spend the \$1,000.00 until we receive it. Tell the sign people that we have \$3,800.00 and ask them to wait for the remaining \$1,000.00.

Director Himmelmann explained that the cost for the new sign is \$2,040.00 and \$4,800.00 is to assemble and install the sign.

NEW BUSINESS

SECORD REQUEST FOR DRAIN FIELD IN SEREDA PARK

Residents, Jamie and Doug Secord addressed the Board regarding drainage issues in their backyard. They distributed a copy of a letter sent to Director Himmelmann on 8/16/2010. There are two pipes running from the northwest edge of their property into Sereda Park. One is a standing pipe and one is a flat pipe which continually has a puddle of water around it. They do not believe that the standing pipe does has water coming through it. Based on their own amateur testing of running water through the flat and standing pipes, the Secords do not believe that either pipe is discharging into the park. Although the drainage does not appear to be coming from their home, in an effort to help correct the problem, the Secords are offering to make a charitable contribution of \$595.00 toward the cost to bury the two pipes into a French drain or toward regrading.

A general discussion ensued regarding the history of the drainage problem and possible resolutions. Other resident's properties in the area were discussed as well as the elevation of Rose Street. Director Himmelmann stated that there is a drain in the detention area. It is meant to temporarily detain water and then it eventually dissipates.

President Havlat asked Director Himmelmann to contact the Village of Western Springs to help identify all other homeowners discharging onto our property that are not up to code. Director Himmelmann agreed to speak to Marty Scott at the Village. He will also

get an unofficial base price for regrading and pitching and report back to the Board. Director Himmelmann will contact Mr. and Mrs. Secord when we have more information. Mrs. Secord stated that it is her understanding that there is approved topography for all of the new homes in the area. She suggested that maybe the other residents would be willing to make charitable contributions toward the cost of regrading.

TREASURERS REPORT

Treasurer Bastyr submitted the August 31, 2010 Financial Report as written.

MOTION

Treasurer Bastyr motioned with a second by Vice President Gassmann to approve the August 31, 2010 Financial Report, with an ending balance of \$1,000,073.18, which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Himmelmann submitted his August, 2010 Director's Report as written.

He suggested that the new Board begin thinking about the Emerald Ash Borer and how we can lessen the impact in our parks. We have 176 ash trees throughout our parks. The Emerald Ash Borers are in Indian Head Park and LaGrange. Director Himmelman suggests that we consider removing more mature Ash trees. It would be a pre-emptive removal and some are located where the Park District employees would be able to remove them on our own. Treasurer Bastyr asked Director Himmelmann if we are treating our trees for this infestation. Director Himmelmann explained that the Morton Arboretum has not embraced any treatment. We are in a quarantined area. We cannot remove any wood without stripping it and disposing of it properly. President Havlat also noted that the Gypsy Moth is in the area and it attacks the Oak trees by defolating them and they die within 2 years of infestation.

President Havlat asked whether or not the Village has repaired the drinking fountain at Laidlaw. Commissioner Himmelmann stated that they have not figured out the problem. There is plenty of flow from the buffalo box. President Havlat also inquired about the scoping of the sewers. Director Himmelmann informed him that the scoping has been completed. They found and removed a large root ball. He has not received an official report yet. President Havlat asked for a status update on the Matt Orth Field grading. Director Himmelmann reported that the plans are on Jeff Ziegler's desk for review. With the flooding issues in the Village, he said that it may take a week and a half before he is able to review them. Once that is done, the project can begin.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

DAMAN: asked Director Himmelmann if there is a book that keeps records of ongoing projects. He wondered if there is anything like a special archive binder that keeps a history of projects. Director Himmelmann explained that there is an abridged file. When

Commissioners complete their terms, they return paperwork to him. The accuracy of the records really depends on the individual. He also tries to keep up with his own files as a historical record.

BASTYR: October is the beginning of the budget process. Everyone should begin thinking about capital projects. Tax bills are being delayed.

KEESE: absent

GASSMANN: the new playground equipment has been redesigned. We removed the ring-a-ling and should have final plan ready in October. Director Himmelmann will go out to bid for the installation cost.

HAVLAT: told Director Himmelmann to contact Jeff Ziegler as soon as possible regarding the drainage issues in Spring Rock Park. MWRD changes are coming and would effect costs. Director Himmelmann also suggested that the user groups be contacted and let them know to get solid numbers from the groups. President Havlat also received a Western Springs Citizen of the Year nominee form. If anyone has a candidate, let him know and he will forward the form.

MARSHALL: absent.

CROMHEECKE: asked to whom she should direct the IGA for the garden and fee sharing for parks at the schools. Vice President Gassmann said that she should send it to Dr. Barnhart so that he may present it to the School Board.

HIMMELMANN: nothing further to report.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Vice President Gassmann motioned with a second by President Havlat to adjourn the September 14, 2010 Western Springs Park Board meeting at 9:50 p.m., which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Maribeth Newell
Park Board Secretary