

WESTERN SPRINGS PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2010 (BOARD APPROVED 6/8/10)

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Jim Havlat
Janet Gassmann (left at 7:18 p.m.)
Wendy Bastyr
Bob Daman
Jennifer Cromheecke
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
Jim Maragos, Village Trustee
Bill Nelson, Asst. Village Manager
Jeff Zeigler, Village Engineer
Paul Parise, IMRF
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Barber, Residents

President Jim Havlat called the Mayh 11, 2010 Western Springs Park District Board Meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Commissioner Bastyr and Vice President Gassmann noted corrections to be made to the April 13, 2010 meeting minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Commissioner Bastyr moved with a second by Commissioner Daman to approve the April 13, 2010 meeting minutes, with corrections as noted, which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF VISITORS AND PERSONS TO BE HEARD FROM

THE FLOOR: Mr. Jim Maragos, Village Trustee and Chairman of the Public Works and Water Committee, stated that the Village of Western Springs has received Federal Funding for the west under pass. He also noted that it will take a long time to come to fruition; approximately two years. The Village is considering four sites for the west underpass and is seeking input from the Park District Board regarding the location. Trustee Maragos gave an overview of the four sites under consideration. The Village is really looking for connectivity for the parks, pool, recreation department and school children. Overall, what is best for the community. There is \$2 million available for this project and they must keep focused on overall construction costs in conjunction with the best location. The Burlington Northern is requiring that the at grade crossing be closed. Regardless of whether or not the Village installs a new underpass, the railroad will be removing the Central Avenue crossing.

Village Engineer, Jeff Zeigler, gave an in depth explanation of each of the four sites under consideration and their pros and cons. These included, construction methods, connectivity issues, and soil conditions.

Mr. Bill Nelson, Assistant Village Manager, also noted that the Village will conduct traffic studies to determine the number of commuters and Village residents that use the crossings on a daily basis. Their initial focus will be on the sporadic use during the

summer months for the park, pools and recreation center. He asked for initial reaction from the Park District Commissioners as to any preference they may have. These are strictly preliminary considerations to stimulate further discussion.

President Havlat noted that the further west the underpass is placed, the more specific the user group would become. He also noted that the Board should be cognizant of the amount of impervious coverage an additional sidewalk would have in Spring Rock Park. This could negatively impact future projects in the park. At this point, his preference is the site furthest west.

Commissioner Daman feels that location three would be the most beneficial to Village residents and children and they would cross at a controlled intersection. Of course, cost should be a major concern, but public safety should be placed first and foremost. He also liked locations two and four since they also feed into the park and cross at a controlled intersection.

Director Himmelmann noted that location three may present a safety concern since it feeds into the Park District's Shop parking lot and driveway. Commissioner Bastyr suggested that fencing could be considered there. Director Himmelmann prefers location number two which offers a vast network of paths in many directions. It would be a universal crossing for disbursing people.

Commissioner Cromheecke asked if it was the hope of the Village that people would not cross tracks in town near Oberweiss. She feels that, if the underpass is place farther west, it will promote that crossing. Mr. Nelson stated the impetus was Burlington Northern's requirement to eliminate the at grade crossing. We are not trying to push people west, but it is the safest.

Commissioner Keese feels that the further east the location is, the safer it is for children and teenagers.

Mr. Nelson asked that the Commissioners contact him with any additional input they may have. He also asked that they each take the survey on the Village's website. There is a video presentation on the project available for viewing on the website as well.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Barber, 46-year residents of Ellington Street in Western Springs came before the Board to express their concerns regarding the planting of a garden at Field Park School. While they acknowledged the many educational and life lesson benefits for students participating in the project, the School District has set a questionable precedent in the area of maintenance. They feel they have not followed through with their wild flower garden that they planted. It is not kept in an aesthetically pleasing manner and, in fact, appears to have been abandoned by the school. Mr. Barber feels that, based on principle, the park Board is the custodian of green space and park land should be left as parks. His main concern, is that the decision seems to have been made without input from the residents whose properties border that park land. President Havlat informed Mr. and Mrs. Barber that the Park Board has given a conditional

approval to the school for the garden. In regard to the notification for the residents in the area, the school was asked to distribute the notifications. He further explained that Field Park was chosen because this project is a summer school program and Field Park School houses all of the Village's summer school students.

Mr. and Mrs. Barber were given a drawing of the plot which is currently planned to be 100' by 70'. The Commissioners agreed to review the size and determine if the project could be downsized and still accommodate the school's curriculum.

President Havlat assured Mr. and Mrs. Barber that a written agreement will be in place between the Park District and the School District which will specifically outline maintenance expectations, as well as the requirement that the School District restore the property, if and when the project ends.

Mr. Parise, IMRF (Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund) Representative, appeared before the Board to field any questions they may have regarding employees accumulating sick days and applying them toward their retirement benefits. Employees earn service credits for every month they work. Accrued sick days would be applied as service credits and the maximum credit allowed is one year. Mr. Parise noted that he emailed a few hypothetical scenarios to Director Himmelmann. As an example, if an employee accrues 3 months of sick leave it would increase his monthly retirement payment by \$29.00 per month, 10 months would be approximately \$91.00 more per month.

Director Himmelmann has contacted other Park District's in the area as well as the Village of Western Springs, and they do allow employees to accumulate sick days toward their IMRF retirement. Mr. Parise also noted that the incentive to the employees, seems to result in fewer sick days being used.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

Director Himmelmann did not have any communications to report. He did inform the Board that an employee witnessed three juveniles jumping on top of the backstop in Spring Rock Park. He was able to catch the juveniles and called the police. Damages have been estimated to be \$2,492.00 and we will be seeking restitution from the individuals. Commissioner Bastyr inquired whether we could turn this in to our insurance. Director Himmelmann told her that we could, but it would still cost the Park District our deductible, and it would go against our record. It could cause the rates to increase permanently. The Police Department is in the investigative phase. Our employee has given his statement and is clear about which of the three juveniles was jumping up and down on top of the backstop. The parents did come out to the park to see the damage. They did not believe that the damages should be that expensive to repair. Director Himmelmann will forward the estimates to the Police Department to show to the parents. Attorney Ekroth would like PDRMA to be notified and the Board agreed that he should also contact Mr. Mike Kane, Village Prosecutor.

TRUSTEE REPORT

Trustee Lyons reported that there will be a public meeting held on June 9, 2010 to unveil

the downtown plan for public review. Nothing will be finalized until August or September and it should be on the Village website soon. The French Market is open again from 2:00 until 7:00 each Thursday. Pending finalization, Julie Hummel of Ridgewood will be sworn in as a Village Trustee.

The sidewalk installation in Forest Hills requires the Village to go around two trees. This would put the sidewalk into park property, but would not infringe upon any useable space. President Havlat asked that the Board get a presentation from the Village and that it includes permeable vs. impermeable impact as well as repair/replacement agreement in written form. Trustee Lyons stated that the Village has taken on the onus for all sidewalks in the Village. They no longer expect homeowners to split the cost of the sidewalks and the Park District would be considered "owner" in this case as well. They have not addressed snow removal. Director Himmelmann stated that the Park District could incorporate snow removal into their schedule.

Trustee Lyons felt that the Village is nearing the presentation point, and will keep the Board informed.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT REPORT

Director Alden reported that the May, 2010 Recreation Department Meeting minutes and were included in the Park Board packets.

The Tower Trot is scheduled for May 29, 2010 and has been relocated to Forest Hills School.

Tennis begins next week. Director Himmelmann noted that the courts at Forest Hills are done, but Spring Rock Park maintenance has been on hold due to weather.

Safety Village will paint the parking lot on May 22, 2010. When the program ends, they will repaint the lot with yellow stripes for parking.

Girls Lacrosse and Little League scheduling conflicts are being resolved. They seem to be working it out amicably.

OLD BUSINESS

LYONS TOWNSHIP BOND MONEY

President Havlat reported that he spoke with the Township Attorney and was told an award letter was sent to the Park District approximately a month and a half ago. He will send a duplicate. Reimbursement can be on an as needed basis, or upon completion of the project. Funds can only be used on the project for which it was awarded.

A general discussion ensued regarding possible financing of the shortfall for the artificial turf project. The possibility of an OSLAD grant was discussed and Director Himmelmann noted that we would need to investigate restrictions. We did receive money for SRP and there may be restrictions on applying a second time.

Commissioner Bastyr stated that we need a referendum to have any borrowing capacity. It would be similar to what the Village did with the road project. It would be a specific project and time frame and would be based on EVA. It would be approximately \$25.00 per year per household.

ORGANIC GARDEN

Commissioner Keese reported that the Intergovernmental Agreement has been reviewed by Dr. Barnhart and he will present it to the School Board.

The Board agreed that Commissioner Cromheecke should contact the school and cut the plot down to approximately ¼ of its present size. She will also discuss the condition of the wildflower garden at that time.

SAFETY

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

NEW BUSINESS

TREASURERS REPORT

Treasurer Bastyr submitted the April 30, 2010 Financial Report as written.

MOTION

Treasurer Bastyr motioned with a second by Commissioner Cromheecke to approve the March 31, 2010 Financial Report, with an ending balance of \$1,308,929.00, which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Treasurer Bastyr discussed the comments in the annual report. All funds on deposit are in collateralized accounts, except for those on deposit in the Illinois Fund. We need to review alternatives.

We have two checks that are over 6 months old. She will review these on a more consistent basis. Commissioner Keese asked if we could have "void after 90 days" printed on any new checks we order. Treasurer Bastry will check to see if the current checks have this printed on them. Treasurer Bastyr also noted that she gave Pat Schramm a copy of the budget.

MOTION

Treasurer Bastyr motioned with second by President Havlat to receive the 2010 Auditor's Report and place it on file, which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Himmelmann reported that we received a \$9,620.00 check from Sprint Nextel.

On May 4, 2010 a young able bodied girl was swinging in a handicap swing at Forest Hills School and flipped out of the swing. The school nurse checked her and she went to the hospital. She has been diagnosed with whiplash and the incident has been reported

to PDRMA.

Daniel Stevens of the Western Springs Police Department has written and requested Spring Rock Park from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the annual National Night Out.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

DAMAN: nothing further to report

BASTYR: nothing further to report

KEESE: nothing further to report.

GASSMANN: no longer present.

HAVLAT: noted that the Board needs to begin its transition for next year. New members need to begin phasing in to positions that are held by Commissioners that will be moving on next year.

MARSHALL: nothing further to report.

CROMHEECKE: nothing further to report.

HIMMELMANN: nothing further to report.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN: Treasurer Bastyr motioned with a second by President Havlat to adjourn the May 11, 2010 Western Springs Park Board meeting at 9:25 p.m., which motion was carried by all on voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Maribeth Newell
Park Board Secretary