

Woodglenn Park Summary of June 23, 2009 Open House

The following is not intended to be a verbatim record of the open house from June 23, 2009, but rather an account of the major points of dialogue that occurred between Lisle Park District representatives and members of the public in attendance. While there were 41 individuals who signed the attendance roster, there were an estimated 50 people in actual attendance.

Park district staff explained the proposed development and highlighted the amenities included in the plan, the project cost of \$1.1 million, and the potential to acquire a \$400,000 grant through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Staff stated the plan did not include athletic field lights or a concession stand. Residents began vocalizing their concerns.

Primary among the concerns voiced by many was the lack of transparency and communication by the park district on this project. Several in attendance indicated concerns with the planning of the proposed development and the lack of input from the neighbors. Concerns were voiced about over-use and that the neighborhood was not designed to accommodate the use the proposed three soccer fields would generate. Sample uses were described; including projected number of vehicles and people, and that the proposed development is not an acceptable use of the site. Many expressed concerns over the noise and traffic the plan would generate. The site's zoning was also discussed, and it was suggested that its current zoning would prohibit the development and programming as presented. It was also suggested that the park district establish a consent decree, whereby the current administration and board would set binding restrictions on the site's use that future administrations and boards would be forced to follow. This comment was met with approval from many in attendance.

Park district staff explained it was not their intent to program all three fields at the same time, but rather to show a plan with the potential to move fields around to limit wear and maintain healthy turf conditions. Staff stated the proposed development is providing the necessary support facilities to accommodate the use the site has been receiving for the past several years.

Several in attendance debated with staff this issue and stated the park district is intent on scheduling travel soccer tournaments and generating revenue through this development. Staff stated that while there is a current unmet need for soccer fields, particularly from travel and club soccer teams, it had not considered the Woodglenn Park site as a site to host tournaments.

Comments were made that supported the parking lot, that it is a welcome addition to a site that currently forces people to park on the street and in the neighborhood west of the park.

A comment was made that the proposed development is long over due, and that the site as it sits today is underutilized and not an appropriate use of the open space.

Questions were asked about where is there why the park district feels this project is needed. Staff explained the park district's 2006 master plan and community survey, the results of which in the park district staff and board's opinion, support the amenities in the plan. Staff explained these results indicate a severe shortage of parking in the parks in Green Trails, that there is a current low level of satisfaction in the number of soccer

fields in the park district, and that youth sports programs are the district's most popular programs and among the most important to participants who participated in the survey. Staff also described other benefits of the plan including improvements to the existing natural areas, improvements to overall site drainage, and the improvements to the water quality of the storm water that flows through the site.

A comment was made about how the proposed playground and picnic shelter will block the open view that currently exists across the park.

Other comments were made supporting the parking lot, indicating that parking is a current and ongoing problem at the park now, and a lot is long overdue.

Questions about the need for additional soccer fields were raised again. Staff stated that they are currently receiving several calls a month from local soccer teams requesting field space that they are not able to accommodate. Staff explained the park district currently maintains 20 baseball/softball fields compared to only three bona fide soccer fields. Residents continued to question the need for more fields. Staff explained the over use the fields in Community Park and Surrey Ridge Athletic Complex receive, and the difficulty in maintaining those fields to acceptable standards. Staff explained that having additional, legitimate fields at Woodglenn Park will help relieve the over use other parks receive.

A comment was made about the safety of the kids using the park, and that the current state of the park presents serious safety concerns when it comes to parking.

A question was raised about the size of the proposed pavilion, to which staff replied it would be approximately 28 feet by 44 feet, and would include bathrooms, a small storage area, and a covered picnic area.

Park district representatives asked the group what needed to be done to alter the plans so it would meet with more support from the neighborhood.

A comment was made supporting the plan, but that maybe reducing the number of fields from three to two might be a problem solver. This comment was met with favor from many in attendance. However, serious concerns were raised about the park district's plans to program the site.

A comment was made stating the park district is lying about its plans for the site, it intends to generate revenue by bringing travel soccer to the site, and intends to bring lacrosse and cricket to the site as well. Staff stated again that while there is potential for the park district to generate additional revenue by having the site developed, it would not be any significant amount and that additional revenue is not a primary reason the park district is presenting the plan. A comment was made about preserving the natural elements of the site, and the proposed development will adversely affect the existing trees and natural elements. Staff replied that contracted civil engineers and environmental scientists have surveyed the site and reported that while a flood plain, woodland, and wetland are present, they are "low quality." Staff questioned the validity of the concerns raised, and reiterated the park district intends on enhancing the existing natural areas by planting native, more appropriate plant material. Staff explained that the proposed plan will improve the health and longevity of the natural areas and greatly enhance and improve the storm water function of the property, thereby improving the site's drainage and better filtering storm water as it moves through the site and on down stream.

A suggestion was made to only program one field at any given time. It was said this would go a long way in controlling traffic, noise, and potential over use. It was also suggested that the Woodglenn Park site not be programmed by travel soccer teams. One resident stated there are Lisle Park District residents who participate in travel soccer, and prohibiting them from using this site is inappropriate. Discussion returned to only scheduling one field at a time and that if the park district can prove it will program the site appropriately, more might favor the plan.

Park district representatives asked if the group was comfortable with the parking lot as presented, even if the plan ultimately reflects two soccer fields versus three. Those speaking up agreed that keeping the parking lot "as is" was desirable. Park district staff asked if the group was comfortable with the pavilion as presented, to which the group replied it was. Staff asked if the group was comfortable with the site having a playground as presented, to which the group responded it was. Staff then said it appears the only sticking point at this time was how the park district would program the soccer fields. Those in attendance and speaking out said yes, that there remains a concern about how the soccer fields will be programmed. It was discussed that responsible programming consists of allowing for adequate parking in the parking lot with room to spare, not programming more than one field at a given time, and most importantly controlling traffic in the neighborhood.

A comment was made about spending \$1.1 million dollars on a site for one soccer game at a time, and that it doesn't sound reasonable to limit the park's use to only one game at a time.

A comment was made that the residents have a responsibility to share in the spaces for our children to recreate, and that so strictly limiting the use of this park is bothersome.

A suggestion was made to keep the programming consistent with Lisle Baseball-Softball League, 9 am to 5 pm on weekends and 4 pm to 7 pm during the week. This comment was met with favor from others in attendance.

A comment was made to not rush this project, and that more due diligence was needed to justify the project. Staff questioned what other due diligence was needed when everyone in attendance agreed to the physical improvements of the site and the real need to get cars off the streets and into a parking lot. A comment was made to move forward with the plan for two soccer fields and the other amenities, to apply for the IDNR grant, and to work with the residents to develop a mutually agreeable programming schedule. This comment was met with favor by others in attendance.

A suggestion was again made to establish a consent decree whereby the park board would guarantee certain programming restrictions and future boards and administration will honor them. Staff agreed that a smaller group of interested parties discussing this issue can prove beneficial in developing mutually agreeable solutions. Staff asked that if the park district can demonstrate what the group would consider responsible programming, would the park district gain their support. The consensus of those in attendance and speaking up was yes.

Staff thanked those in attendance for their participation, and reminded everyone to provide email addresses on the sign-in sheet at the door so they can communicate future meeting dates.