

**THE LISLE PARK DISTRICT  
JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
DECEMBER 8, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:** President Cook called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. in the Lisle Park District Community Center Board Room, 1825 Short Street, Lisle, IL 60532.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present:

Hough  
Kanzler  
Morse  
Cook  
Carballo

Also Present:

Director  
Superintendent of Recreation  
Superintendent of Operations  
Superintendent of Parks  
Superintendent of Finance

Garvy  
Toohey  
Leone  
Cerutti  
Silver

**DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTER**

President Cook stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results of the recent referendum and to hear feedback from the public. He stated that in his opinion, the results were a definitive "no", and he is reluctant to support another referendum effort in April 2009. He stated he thought the underlying factor is the economy, but stated there are other reasons as well. President Cook stated he was frustrated with what he had heard around town and the level to which he thought people were misinformed, citing recent Village of Lisle projects that have been compared to the park district, leading him to believe many people do not understand they are two separate taxing districts. He stated the proposed design is intended to replace existing spaces while adding much needed gymnasium space. He emphasized the park district's only source of tax revenue is through property tax, and explained the number of different tax sources available to the Village that they are able to utilize without having to ask the voters for their support. President Cook reviewed many steps the current Board of Park Commissioners and staff has made to control costs, including not filling positions when employees leave and presenting balanced budgets for the past few years.

President Cook opened the floor up to public comment.

Ms. Betty Long, 6120 Heritage Lane, asked about the continued use of the Meadows Center. President Cook replied the lease expires September 30, 2009. Commissioner Kanzler stated the park district needs to consider much more than an increased lease payment and asked Director Garvy to summarize existing conditions and related expenditures needed should the park district consider acquiring the building.

Director Garvy summarized existing conditions, stating the need for roof replacement, significant structural improvements, severe accessibility limitations, and others. Superintendent Cerutti reported the park district recently replaced several furnaces within the building at a cost of over \$3,000. Commissioner Carballo stated the presence of asbestos throughout the entire building as well as the grossly undersized and obsolete gym. He reiterated the handicapped inaccessible condition of the building in general. Commissioner Hough stated the footprint of the building was designed as an elementary school and is simply not conducive for community recreational purposes. She stated the park district is quite limited by what can be offered and improved upon by both county building and land use code, as well as what the resident neighbors will tolerate.

Ms. Carol Bartelli, 5224 Riverview Drive, asked if the park district had considered leasing other property adjacent to Community Park. She stated there are numerous vacancies, and while the economy may not be conducive for a referendum it could be in the park district's favor for acquiring property. She stated that considering the real estate market it could be a very beneficial time for the park district to consider other options to the Meadows Center building.

President Cook replied that the park district had investigated various opportunities but discovered that at the time they were being considered, they were no better than the Meadows Center option from a financial perspective. Director Garvy agreed, and explained that at the time, the Meadows was still the best deal in town, despite being subject to tripled and doubled on top of that lease payments. Ms. Bartelli stated she thought the park district is in a very good position to negotiate and should not just assume there are no other options. President Cook explained the issue does not solely rest with the building, but the adjacent open space is part of the equation too. Commissioner Hough stressed that the relationship between the park and school districts is strong, and stated she did not want anyone in the audience to get the wrong impression. She stated that as far as the park board is concerned, both bodies will work together to ensure a mutually beneficial solution to this dilemma. Commissioner Carballo stated that the issue is not only with the Meadows Center building, but that the existing community center is in need of costly repairs as well.

Mr. Andy Yender, 4418 Chelsea, stated he is concerned with the current economy and that while he is supportive of the park district doing something, he said the current proposal is a little more than he wants to bear during these economic times. He stated he is concerned that an increase in taxes may result in putting someone out of their home, saying that another \$100 a year could be the straw that breaks the camel's back for some. He said he was not opposed to a new building, but said the timing is poor and the park district should cut all the costs they can now, and wait until April 2010 for another referendum proposition.

Ms. Geraldine McNellis, 5345 Riverview Drive, stated the original proposal included things that should be left to the private sector to provide, such as the gymnasium, fitness center and walking track. Commissioner Kanzler asked Ms. McNellis if she thought the

park district should consider cutting existing programs that use the existing facilities. Ms. McNellis replied she didn't think the park district should compete with the private sector. President Cook stated that the park district has been offering a fitness center for over 15 years, and should other fitness centers choose to open a facility in Lisle that is there prerogative. He said the park district should not be expected to close its doors when others choose to compete with them. Ms. McNellis stated that people will have to re-assess what they want and what they will have to pay for themselves. Commissioner Kanzler stated that the park district's recent proposal was only looking to replace what the district currently has, plus add sorely needed gymnasium space. She stated she did not think it to be wise to make the needed significant investments in existing facilities. Ms. McNellis asked about the performance of River Bend Golf Club and The View Restaurant & Bar, and questioned whether or not they have received subsidy from taxes. Superintendent Silver replied that they do not receive tax subsidy, and they are both performing much better in the past 12-18 months.

Commissioner Carballo stated that the park district is providing services to many different users, groups, and interests. He said the issue is indoor space and the cost to either maintain or replace what the district currently has. He stated nobody is building right now and the economy is stalled. He said the proposal would stimulate the economy by bringing jobs to contractors and that the building can be constructed at a much lower cost now than in two years.

Jeff Moore, 5252 Riverview Drive, stated the economy is most certainly in a recession, and in his opinion only going to get worse before it gets better. He compared the current economic conditions to those of the Great Depression. He stated that the park district would be adding to the national debt problem if it issued its own debt. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Judy Merrick, 5528 Ranier Drive, stated she had made inquiries of several neighboring park districts about what kind of facilities they have, and reported that with only a couple of exceptions they do not have facilities comparable to what the Lisle Park District was proposing. She stated she thought the park district should make minor improvements to the existing community center and should construct additions to accommodate the programs at the Meadows Center. Director Garvy explained the existing community center has significant constraints due to its original design. He stated its current footprint is not conducive to any more than minor improvements, that the foundations and walls cannot support a second story, and its proximity to adjacent property lines and the flood plain make such considerations quite limited. Ms. Merrick questioned the need and size of the proposed gymnasium. Director Garvy stated that while the park district currently uses school gyms, there is a definitive want and need from several members of the community for additional gym space. He stated that the gymnasium portion of the proposed facility is the least expensive part of the building to construct, and that it provides the greatest value citing the district's need to generate revenue from sources other than taxes for operational expenses. He continued by saying the gyms offer the greatest opportunity for cost recovery to the extent that it would help subsidize other programs. President Cook stated the gymnasium offers opportunities far beyond basketball. He stated the park district had been approached by numerous outside groups, including baseball, softball, soccer, volleyball,

and golf, and that the gym offers great revenue generating potential that can lessen the district's reliance on tax dollars for operations. He stated it would also allow for walk-in use by residents where that opportunity does not exist to any great degree with the schools.

Tom Althoff, 1995 Green Trails Drive, suggested other funding opportunities, citing the Village of Lisle's relationship with Benedictine University and the Sports Complex project. He stated there may be an opportunity to reinvestigate an indoor pool since Benedictine University recently closed its pool, and that Benet Academy and the Lisle schools do not have access to indoor pools now.

Commissioner Kanzler asked Ms. Merrick and others who oppose the current proposal if their objection lies in the entire concept, or in specific areas such as the overall size of the proposed facility. Ms. McNellis stated she didn't think the park district needs the gyms, fitness center or walking track.

Jeff Moore asked for the amount of increase this would have resulted in. Director Garvy replied it would cost the owner of a home valued at \$300,000 approximately \$100 per year. Mr. Moore asked what the average homeowner pays in taxes to the park district, to which Director Garvy replied approximately \$280 per year. Mr. Moore stated the park district is asking for a 36% increase in taxes. Superintendent Silver agreed, but stated that the Lisle Park District's portion of the average homeowner's tax bill is roughly 6%, so to say someone's taxes will go up by 38% can be misleading.

Mr. Tom Hummel, 824 59<sup>th</sup> Street, stated that possibly the Bulls-White Sox facility can pick up business the park district cannot accommodate. Director Garvy stated staff will be meeting with them, as well as the Walker Sports Performance Complex in the near future to revisit their respective facility's availability and cost should the park district redirect their programs there.

Commissioner Morse stated the park district's purpose is to serve the entire community, and is interested in providing opportunities for future generations. Commissioner Hough stated the park district is being steered by two main factors currently: one being the economy, and the other by the district's 2006 Master Plan which through a third party administrator and community wide survey recommends increased indoor programming space. She stated that while the Edward health club may be an option for some, not all park district residents should be expected to go there if they need a recreation facility. She stated the issue is not just about money, but also about quality of life. She stated she does not think the community will be in the current economic situation forever, and the park district is looking at a sustainable design that will be functional for 50 years or more. She stated she believes in public accessibility to affordable opportunities for recreation.

Mr. Moore stated that he does not think now is a good time and there are no fun cuts to make with respect to facilities and programs. He said he does not envy the park district's position.

Mr. Tony Grillo, 5353 Newport, stated that the park district has a large base of voter support to varying degrees, and agreed with the need to stress the difference between the Lisle Park District and other taxing districts like the village and school district. He stated that unfortunately the park district is in a position to have to cut programs and services and deal with the complaints. Commissioner Carballo agreed, and stated the park district will have to evaluate such areas as the museum complex and other operations that do not generate revenue. He stated that the issue should not be what you as an individual like, but should be what the entire community wants.

Mr. Carl Doerr, 5408 Riverview Drive, stated he thought the park district should put to bed the issue of the Meadows Center sooner than later, and focus its efforts in Community Park. He said he agrees the park district has to do something, but said the where, what and how much are still all unknowns. He commended the park district on its open approach in choosing to go to referendum in a time it knew a large voter turnout would occur. He said the park district showed a lot of credibility, and urged the park district to continue to take into account what the people said no to, and that the project may have to occur in two phases. He said he thought the \$22 million price tag scared too many people.

Ms. Doris Grillo, 5353 Newport, stated that if the park district needs to negotiate with the school district they must negotiate aggressively because she said she does not want any more of her park district taxes going to the school district.

Ms. Bartelli stated the park district can avoid a lot of duplication of efforts by using existing facilities in the area.

President Cook stated staff and the Board has taken a lot of notes and will be meeting several more times in the coming months to discuss various options. He thanked all those in attendance for sharing their opinions and suggestions.

Commissioner Carballo thanked the audience for their attendance, and commended them on their participation. He thanked staff for their efforts throughout the entire project.

Director Garvy stated he can include anyone interested in an email distribution list he uses to communicate progress on this project and as a forum to communicate upcoming meetings.

#### **ADJOURN SPECIAL MEETING**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Hough moved to adjourn the special meeting at 8:52 p.m. Commissioner Kanzler seconded the motion. There was no further discussion and the motion passed by voice vote.