

Meeting Minutes

Board of Park Commissioners

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1. Roll Call

Present - Glodosky, Sevenich, Finn, Freckmann, Okonek, Phillips, Moore, Curtis, Aldinger, Sorenson, McDonald

Also Present - Susan VanDreser, Randy Stroik, Kareen Everman, Lynn Baumgartner, Gary Baier, Roger Hackler, Chris Seefeldt, Ed Eggleston, Tom Schrader, Carole Francel

2. Approval of the May 6, 2003 Minutes

Motion was made by Sevenich, seconded by Okonek to approve the Minutes of the May 6, 2003 Meeting.

Ayes; all, Nays; none. Motion carried.

3. Request to Develop Special Needs Playground in Mead Park (Portage County Leadership Group, Kids Are Special Here)

Kareen Everman presented some background on the special needs of the disabled children in the area. They are spectators only and invisible in our community. After touring the playground in Camden Park, Janesville, Wis. she feels our community would greatly benefit from such a playground.

Ed Eggleston presented a PowerPoint outline of the proposed equipment and why it would fit the best in Mead Park (other areas considered were Lake Pacawa and Iverson Park). Some of the considerations were centrally located, close to Green Circle, low maintenance, near bathrooms, shaded area, good parking, etc.

He explained that this project would be in three phases costing approximately \$200,000 to \$350,000. They are not asking the City for money as they would try to raise the money in three years to complete the project. An endowment fund would be set up to funnel the money as it comes in. It would also be used for maintenance and upkeep of this area.

McDonald asked how much space they would need and Everman said between 15,000 to 30,000 square feet; that they would work around the Mead playground so it is a park for everyone.

Okonek asked if they have ever considered Washington School or the Emerson site and she said they want it a community park

Randy Stroik mentioned that he knows of two schools that would be involved in taking advantage of such a park and felt it was a great idea and as the Alderperson of this district, he supports the idea.

Freckmann liked the idea of Mead park with lots of parking available.

Finn questioned if there would be any upgrading of the existing park and Everman said they would possibly need paths and a drop-off area. Finn also wondered if this would affect the disc golf and Schrader said that would not be an issue, because the disc golf course is north of this area.

McDonald pointed out that if they choose donor recognition, there are restrictions on signage and Schrader said he would get that information to them. Everman said they will be applying for Grants also.

Sevenich asked about the hours that the special needs children attend school and Everman said they coincide with the schools; some do go to Summer School such as her son.

Glodosky felt this was a fantastic idea and perhaps down the road, some of the room tax money could be used for this project.

Curtis said he is involved with People First of Wisconsin and knows Senator Lassa would be in favor of this and supportive.

Phillips asked if the pour surface had to be purple as shown on the plan and Everman said it could be any color you want it to be but hopefully complement the surrounding area. Schrader stated that the companies selling their product, want their equipment to stand out, thus the bright colors, and that we generally use earth tones.

Finn asked if the present playground equipment would have to be moved and Schrader said that would be impossible as it is approximately 10 years old and would fall apart if you tried to move it. When all the phases of this project have been completed, it may eliminate some of the equipment that would have needed to be replaced anyway because of its age. Finn also wondered if there are any Park Board members on the K.A.S.H. board and Curtis volunteered.

Phillips asked if fencing would be needed and Schrader said no; fencing sometimes gives the parents a false sense of security.

Motion was made by Phillips, seconded by McDonald to approve the development of a special needs playground in Mead Park as proposed.

Ayes; all, Nays; none. Motion carried.

4. Recommendation on Concession Agreement with PCYOI at Willett Arena

Schrader explained that at last month's meeting, discussion took place on operating the concessions at the Willett Arena. They included: the Commission could renegotiate the current agreement with PCYOI with changes to offset the lost ice time revenues or the Commission could terminate the agreement with PCYOI and the concession could be operated several ways; by a single major user or combination of major users, combination of major users and the City, or the City operate the concession.

Since then, Schrader met with the University, SPASH and Crystal Ice Figure Skating Club and they were willing to work as a group, to operate the concession. They all agreed that the best option would be that the City manage the concession and pay the members of these groups \$6.00/hour for staffing the concession.

Two options were recommended; terminate our agreement with PCYOI and have the City operate the concession with the help from UWSP, SPASH and the Crystal Ice Figure Skating Club or continue the agreement with PCYOI and amend the percentage we collect to 30% to offset the ice time revenue we have lost. Gary Baier said the 30% increase was not an option to PCYOI.

Schrader said that the hours needed to cover the concession operation would total approximately 2100 and would be split 3 ways.

Phillips thought it would be a better idea to have the City manage the concession and supply the staffing. Schrader said the hours are so varied it would be hard to find and keep staff. That after checking with Wausau, they found it works well to let the groups involved supply the manpower and it keeps the programs going.

McDonald realizes we need to maintain the solvency of the Willett Arena but feels that PCYOI is a volunteer organization that has done a good job through the years and we should continue to support them if they continue to buy an appropriate amount of ice. She asked how much revenue was lost last year from PCYOI reducing their ice time.

Schrader stated that the City lost around \$45,000 last year in ice time revenue when PCYOI dropped ice time and didn't know if PCYOI would increase their usage this coming year.

Seefeldt from PCYOI felt it would be hard for the other groups because PCYOI owns all the equipment and it would be very expensive to purchase the equipment to start up the concession. Schrader said staff had checked into that and the only equipment they would need to buy is the popcorn machine as the vendors let you use their equipment if you buy their product.

Baier did not anticipate that they would be dropping all that ice time when they built their rink but felt they had to for several reasons; rink cost them more to build than they budgeted, they needed to watch cost control and competition with the Saints. He stated that if the city terminates the concession agreement with PCYOI, the City would lose ice time, because PCYOI would not have the funds to purchase ice time from the city. He felt the proposal to increase the percentage to 30% was not fair; none of the other organizations, using park concession facilities, pay that much.

Schrader said that there is a difference, because all the money, generated by the other groups through concession sales, goes back into the park/facility where the concession is, thus benefiting the City. This was true with PCYOI until this past year, when they dropped 564 hours of ice time. In doing so, PCYOI now takes the majority of the profit, from running the concession stand, \$20,000.00 to \$30,000.00, outside of the Willett.

Seefeldt said that if they do not operate the concession, they would not know at this point if they would be renting ice time next year.

Schrader said that with all the proposed budget cuts and possible tax freeze facing the City, University and SPASH, they also will be looking at ways to generate additional revenue or face possible reductions in their programs.

Moore questioned why PCYOI would purchase more ice from the Willett when they have their own facility? Baier thought their organization would grow by 15% next year and they would need more ice time especially on weekends; probably around 200 hours.

Phillips wondered why the city would let a group, operate the concession, when they can't commit to renting the amount of ice time, they agreed to, when signing the current agreement and their Room Tax proposal. Dropping almost 600 hours is a great loss in revenue to the city and the current agreement is not tolerable. Why would the city let a group generate revenue at one of its facilities, only to have that group use the funds to operate a facility that is in competition with the city.

Baier stated that the city and PCYOI need to work together, like we did during the Badger State Games this past winter and both will do well.

Schrader agreed, but was disappointed again to hear that some PCYOI board members were again approaching renters at the Willett to move their ice time to their rink. Last year, PCYOI offered the Grand Masters a lower ice time rental fee and they left the Willett. The move cost the city a loss of \$8,200.00 in revenue.

Baier stated that he didn't agree with what the board did last year and is against them talking to current renters at the Willett.

McDonald stated that she would vote against not letting PCYOI operate the concession. That by terminating the concession agreement we could be doing harm to their program. That perhaps we should ask for a minimum of hours of ice rental, such as 200 hours, from PCYOI if they operate the concession.

Motion was made by Phillips, seconded by Moore to have the City operate the concession/vending, collect 10% of gross, hire a concession manager at \$2,500.00/season and pay the following organizations; UWSP, SPASH and Crystal Ice Figure Skating Club to staff the concession at \$6.00/hr.

Glodosky amended motion to include PCYOI as one of the organizations to run the concession and motion was seconded by Moore.

Ayes: Aldinger, Curtis, Freckmann, Glodosky, McDonald, Moore, Okonek, Sorenson
Nays: Finn, Phillips, Sevenich
Motion carried.

Amended motion: Have the City operate the concession/vending, collect 10% of gross, hire a concession manager at \$2,500.00/season and pay the following organizations; UWSP, SPASH, Crystal Ice Figure Skating Club and PCYOI to staff the concession at \$6.00/hr.

Ayes: Glodosky, Curtis, Moore, Phillips, Sorenson, Freckmann
Nays: McDonald, Okonek, Finn, Aldinger, Sevenich
Motion carried.

5. Amend Seasonal Pay Rate Schedule

There was a typo error under Party-In-The-Park; figures should read \$10.00, \$10.40 and \$10.80.

6. Director's Report

- Riverfront Rendezvous schedules should be in June 5th.
- Pfiffner Bldg. letter from neighbors handed out to Commissioners; they should not be harassing our renters.
- Trees came in late so flower planting was delayed
- Special Olympics starts Thursday, June 5th at Goerke Park
- All-Purpose Bldg. completed showing a lot of rentals
- Pool opens Saturday, June 7th.
- Dehumidification running at Willett and reflective ceiling to be completed in July.

8. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Commission, motion was made by Curtis, seconded by McDonald to adjourn at 8:00p.m.

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