



## AQUATICS FOCUS GROUP B - MEETING NOTES

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### Park District of Oak Park Ridgeland Common Master Planning

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, December 4, 2007, 3:30 PM  
**Location:** Hedges Administrative Center, 218 Madison Street  
**Attendance:** Aquatics Focus Group  
Bret Patnode, The Oak Park Swimmers (TOPS)  
Jeff Halsema, Dominican University  
Tim Kelly, Master Swimming  
Marianne Birko, WSSRA  
Bob Foster, WSSRA  
Park District Citizen Committee Representatives  
Tracy Brooker  
Dick McKinlay  
Park District of Oak Park (PDOP) Staff  
Gary Balling – Present just for the Introduction  
Bonestroo Team Members  
Jim Maland, Bonestroo  
Jeff King, Ballard\*King  
Steve Halberg, Bonestroo  
Dirk Danker, Nagle Hartray

#### **Agenda:**

Introduction - Gary Balling and Jim Maland  
Overview of Process - Jeff King  
Formal Discussion by Focus Group B Team Members – moderated  
by Jeff King

#### **Meeting Notes**

**December 4, 2007**

##### *Introduction*

Gary Balling, PDOP, provided a general introduction to all Focus Group members outlining the purpose, scope and timeline of the master planning study. An emphasis was placed on the importance of developing solutions that maximized partnerships within and around the community in order to help minimize redundancy of facilities and provide the most equitable financial expenditure of community dollars. Specific reference to three potential scenarios for development of the site to include a major remodeling of the existing facilities,

a total new facility on the existing site and an ultimate solution which would include partnerships to enhance the site to the west to include the vacated Scoville Avenue right-of-way along with the block of property immediately to the west of Scoville currently owned by OPRF High School. Gary emphasized that the project is just in the beginning stages and he provided an overview of the initial public kickoff meeting held on the evening of December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Gary turned the meeting over to the Bonestroo Team and then left the room to allow complete and honest discussion to occur about the park district facilities.

Jim introduced the Bonestroo Team and then stressed the importance of community involvement throughout the master planning process. An overview of the agenda for the next Public Meeting, which is to be held on February 25<sup>th</sup>, was provided and is to include a review of the public and focus group input, results of the market analysis being prepared by the Bonestroo Team, preliminary programs for the three different solution scenarios outlined above along with some general bubble diagram level solution drawings for each of the scenarios and associated programs. Jim briefly outlined the market analysis tasks and then turned the meeting over to Jeff King for the overview of the focus group process and rules.

#### *Overview*

Jeff King provided more detailed description of the market analysis scope including the needs assessment, partnership process, alternative service provider analysis, and finally the community input process. Jeff then reviewed the rules of the focus group discussion and reminded everyone that this forum was not a debate of conflicting ideals but simply a download of all personal input and opinions regarding the Ridgeland Common Facility.

#### *Formal Group Discussion*

##### Introduction of Group B – Aquatics Team Members

Tim Kelly

##### Representing:

- Master swimming
- Swim teams
- Lap swim
  - 50-60 on a good morning; 5 in rain
  - swim times: 5:30 am, 9:00 am, evening

##### Comments:

- Long time pool user, since 1961

Bret Patnode

##### Representing:

- TOPS – 200 swimmers
- Millennium – 200 swimmers

- Father's Day Meet
  - 20 years of meets
  - 500-700 participants over Friday thru Sunday meet

Comments:

- Ridgeland Common has one of the few 50m pool
- Other 50 Meter Pools: UIC and Portage Park
- TOPS is growing
- Mostly OPRF kids
- Year round teams
  - off season TOPS goes to OPRF and YMCA
  - Millennium goes to Fenwick

Jeff Halsema

Representing:

- Dominican University (Athletic Facilities Management)
  - Faculty student staff recreational opportunities for campus
  - Existing Concordia pool old (1915), very small and currently is out of service (closed for past 10-11 months)
  - 3400 students on campus
  - 200-400 faculty staff
  - 3-8% of their organization would use pool

Comments:

- Their existing pool is small
- Jeff gets a lot of questions about lap swim and recreation
- Dominican Univ. & River Forest collaborate with Oak Park for Tennis
- No varsity swim team
- Student opportunities mainly
- Use could increase with a better facility (>3-8%)
- Students – lap swim and rehab

Marianne Birko

Representing:

- WSSRA - Provide recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities
  - ± 1000 participants - 200 O.P.
  - Therapeutic use of pool and the rink
  - Swimming – day camps, family swim time
  - Ice – need separate space
  - Need Green space as well

Comments:

- They also use the Franklin Park – studio rink
- Therapeutic pool – difficult to access
- They also use H.S. pool but it is cold – no adult therapeutics
- No one community with facility that can provide all needs
- Lots of competition for space is ongoing problem for them
- They have continual challenges with weather and water temperature

Bob Foster

Representing:

- WSSRA

**The following comments were provided during the formal discussion of Group B - Aquatics Interest**

**Question Number One: What Do You Like Best about Ridgeland Common?**

- 1) Zero depth entry at the rehabbed Rehm Pool is great – zero depth good for little ones and wheel chairs
- 2) Liability diving boards – a problem
- 3) The 50 meter competitive pool works for everyone
- 4) Facility is the social heart and lungs of Athletic community
- 5) Central location of both Ice & Aquatics
- 6) The competitive space
- 7) So heavily used by so many at so many levels
- 8) Addition of Green area at pool (north of deep well) was great for Fathers Day meet – had a place to hang out by trees
- 9) Expansion of family operation
- 10) Hours of operation beginning at 5:30 AM – is great
- 11) Sense of community is “Big”
- 12) Bill Hamilton has helped out a lot and made it a very usable space
- 13) Location – central in town
- 14) Prefer the single body of water at Rehm Pool – having separate pools like at Ridgeland is difficult to monitor children
- 15) Solving the parking issue will be key to future success!!
- 16) Adjacent to H.S., walking distance for Junior High
- 17) Potential to partner with H.S.

**Question Number Two: What Do You Like Least about Ridgeland Common?**

- 1) Need for meeting space
- 2) Indoor/outdoor pool would be good
- 3) Not enough green space
- 4) Parking not adequate – need more

- 5) No flow to building
- 6) No good place to sit
- 7) Access to pool area is difficult from the building – hallways are too narrow
- 8) Isolated pool areas
- 9) Zero depth pool needed
- 10) Proximity to street parking and parking ramp creates difficulties
- 11) Ice rink – no flow to building circulation
- 12) Green space underutilized
- 13) Dominican University built a garage at their site and it has been a great improvement
- 14) Availability of ice rink
- 15) Dominican University would be interested in using a second ice sheet at Ridgeland Common
- 16) Green space underutilized and could be more efficiently used (need more programs & multi-use)
- 17) Ultimate Frisbee
- 18) Lack of electrical power for swim meets
- 19) Audio system is terrible
- 20) Pit area of building “is a pit”
- 21) Dog Park space too valuable for other community needs - put it somewhere else
- 22) Green space needs improvement
- 23) Park space on north side of Ridgeland Common not needed – should just walk from parking garage
- 24) Locker rooms are ok
- 25) Traffic flow is just bad in building → leave it with the Architects to solve
- 26) Crossing street is dangerous – should have a bridge to parking lot which would benefit both the high school and the park district

**Question Number Three: What Would You Like to See at Ridgeland Common Building?**

- 1) Like multi-level access to various amenities similar to how the Pettit center in Milwaukee does it
- 2) Provide for pool and ice use year round
- 3) Concession / gift shop / pro shops that make money
- 4) Lockers that make money
- 5) A family oriented fitness Community Center
- 6) There is a Big opportunity to build a gem on West side of Chicago
- 7) 50-meter pool
- 8) A bigger hockey rink
- 9) Basketball courts
- 10) Rock climbing wall (a family activity)
- 11) Stack the facility (height could be a problem)
- 12) Pedestrian bridge from parking ramp to site is a no brainer
- 13) Use pedestrian bridge as marquee

- 14) A place to take the family to knock around
- 15) Facility should support Lifetime sports – swimming and ice
- 16) Existing facilities are more adult oriented – would like family orientation
- 17) Could use gym for volley ball / dodge ball / basketball / open gym
- 18) Pool / ice should be the heart beat of the facility
- 19) Family focused programming space
- 20) Oak Park uses every sq. ft. of space – programming can't overcome lack of space
- 21) Demands & needs can't be met by current facilities
- 22) Taller ceilings
- 23) Programming space
- 24) Indoor pool / outdoor pool
- 25) Oak Park is an active community
- 26) There is nothing like this facility nearby
- 27) Family locker room – 4 preferred, 2 minimum family locker room
- 28) A multi-use facility
- 29) Attract out-of-towners – bring in revenue
- 30) Hockey
- 31) New building should be more efficient
- 32) Don't worry about height: 3-4 stories would fit in with elevated tracks
- 33) Build new building by parking garage then keep existing facility operational during construction
- 34) Facilities to promote pool parties
- 35) Active features like a fitness center, gym, climbing wall
- 36) With "Y" moving to Forest Park there is a need for racquetball and a gym

**Question Number Four: What Type of Space Would You Like to See Outside?**

- 1) Close Scoville Avenue – share new space with OPRF H.S.
- 2) Multi-purpose use space is needed
- 3) Set up primarily for baseball
- 4) Make space accessible to all – use ADA accessible surfacing
- 5) Work to partner with OPRF H.S.
- 6) Design fields for multi-use
- 7) Storage underpass at Scoville Avenue – use viaduct for storage or garage
- 8) Partner to put multiple government boards to solve the problems and help financially
- 9) Add 3<sup>rd</sup> story on garage
- 10) Don't build space for the moment

End