



**OUTDOOR FIELDS / COMSTOCK ROOM FOCUS GROUP C
MEETING NOTES**

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**Park District of Oak Park
Ridgeland Common Master Plan**

Date/Time: Tuesday, December 4, 2007, 6:15 PM
Location: Hedges Administrative Center, 218 Madison Street
Attendance: Outdoor Fields/Comstock Room Focus Group
Fred Boos, Concordia University
Don Stapleton, Oak Park Youth Baseball
Gary Cuneen, Seven Generations Ahead
Frank Schwerin, Roller Rink
Jeanne Friedell, Universal Access Commission
Mike Farley, Friends of Oak Park Dogs
Tom Phillion, Striker/AYSO
Park District Citizen Committee Representatives
Maggie Kelly
Brian Crawford
Gary Komar
Park District of Oak Park (PDOP)
Commissioner Christine Graves
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 D 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 the 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 3rd. 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 25th, 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 C – Outdoor Fields / Comstock Room Team Members

Franklin Schwerin

Representing:

- General Recreation

Comments:

- His kids used to swim in the Ridgeland Common Pool
- Ridgeland is a place to play ball
- Interested in a roller rink

Fred Boos

Representing:

- Concordia College
 - 1,100 undergrad (on campus and staff)
 - 3,500 graduate (mostly off-site)

Comments:

- Location: prefer accessibility on Lake Street
- Potential: Synergy with High Schools
- Fenwick, OPHS, Concordia – collaboration
- Resident in town

Don Stapleton

Representing:

- Oak Park Youth Baseball
 - 1,700 participants
- PONY (Protect Our National Youth)
 - 50 Years of Affiliation

Mike Farley

Representing:

- Friends of Oak Park Dogs
 - Non-profit advocacy group

Comments:

- At Ridgeland have 8500 sq. ft. fenced off area + Dog Park Plus
- In operation for 2 years with user fees of \$39/year
- 350 licensed dogs for Dog Park
- “21” year resident
- Like pool / hockey / softball and Dog Park
- Potential for total site

Jeanne Friedell

Representing:

- Universal Access – nine members
- Shriners Hospital

Comments:

- Likes variety of programs / location

Gary Cuneen

Representing:

- 7 Generations Ahead
- LEED Design
- “Green Practices”

Comments:

- Likes pool green space as well as entire space

Tom Phillion

Representing:

- Strikers Soccer Travel Organization
- Ages 5 / 6 to high school

Comments:

- Everything at Ridgeland Common has to be redone

The following comments were provided during the formal discussion of Group C – Outdoor Fields and Comstock Room

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

- 1) Pool, skating rink, fields, flag football, sledding
- 2) Likes indoor programming
- 3) Central location
- 4) Pool, rink
- 5) Not much of a user until the dog park opened
- 6) Appreciates potential of park
- 7) Fields are getting better
- 8) Access is good
- 9) Three years ago fields took 3 days to recover after rain - Now it takes one day!
- 10) Gary Balling is doing a good job
- 11) Nothing to currently like
- 12) Synergy of H.S.
- 13) Very accessible
- 14) One of the largest parks
- 15) Has a lot of potential
- 16) Likes pool
- 17) Places to play

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

- 1) Access
- 2) Old facility combined with number of people using space
- 3) Not state-of-the-art
- 4) Lots of people using it – overcrowded
- 5) Not enough space
- 6) Crowded for swim lessons
- 7) Age of physical plant
- 8) Pool renovations / hockey renovations – contributions for renovations and construction
- 9) Enlarging the pool should be paid for by the users
- 10) Year round ice could be a problem for 900 kids needing to use space for summer camp
- 11) Dog Park compatibility with ball fields
- 12) Dog park has caused a lot of holes

- 13) Sled hill – No use of sled hill. Only four weeks/year, taking up a lot of area
- 14) Park narrows down as it goes to the East.
- 15) Balls always going over the fence
- 16) Run down – needs to be renovated
- 17) Drainage at dog park
- 18) Number of hours for dog park
- 19) Drainage on fields
- 20) Dog park to be included in Maple Park + another park
- 21) Would like to have dog park until Maple Park is built
- 22) 2 hours of dog park access each weekend morning is adequate
- 23) Accessibility to facilities
- 24) Dilapidated structure out of date
- 25) Pool in poor shape
- 26) Not state-of-the-art
- 27) Ball field condition not up to par with others
- 28) What materials are in existing structure – are materials good for our health in building?

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

- 1) Multi-use facility
- 2) Skating, basketball, soccer
- 3) Increase multi-use capacity – basketball
- 4) Add water park elements to the pool to make it more attractive
- 5) Be comfortable and hangout for a while – provide water play features in pool
- 6) Ball field dugouts amenities
- 7) Environmental no toxic chemicals – highest technology for building construction
- 8) Energy efficient design to connect inside and outside
- 9) LEED certified – Platinum – ideal
- 10) Solar panels, renewable energy
- 11) Accessible facility, user-friendly
- 12) Programming that is more inviting – Make user-friendly
- 13) Ballet bars and off ice training
- 14) Use environmental technology
- 15) Indoor conversion of ice into other uses
- 16) Indoor volleyball
- 17) Possibly some adaptive spaces
- 18) Efficient space planning
- 19) Off ice training
- 20) Two ice sheets (full scale and studio rink) with multiple use
- 21) Fields renovated/improved (currently very hard)
- 22) Bleachers seating for baseball fields are currently pretty meager
- 23) Sled hill not a big need

- 24) Dog park criteria: Min size – ½ acre criteria; Maple Park – 1/3 acre; Ridgeland – 1/5 acre
- 25) Dog Park – location proximity to multi-family or high density res.
- 26) Dog Park could be more ideally 50% larger @ 13,000 sq. ft.
- 27) Dog Park could be located anywhere but should be kept away from kids
- 28) Dog Park plus – use of ball fields on weekend (Continue to use larger fields for limited time of week)
- 29) More usable space in building
- 30) Batting cages/multi-use space in building
- 31) Multi-use of rinks – batting cages in summer or outdoors
- 32) Concessions stand with press box and permanent power
- 33) Circulation around dog park bad – can't get easily to sledding hill
- 34) Improved traffic flow to sled hill
- 35) Lighting on fields
- 36) Artificial turf on ball fields
- 37) Field that faces SW – batters can't see ball
- 38) Partner with PD for turf or other purchases
- 39) Indoor pool / indoor ice
- 40) Indoor w/ pool – currently outdoor pool is not attractive by roadway
- 41) Ice rink – indoors – can't work year round- mixed use as gym
- 42) Gymnasium, fitness (needed)
- 43) Track for running
- 44) Soccer – indoor drills if possible “flexible space”
- 45) MAC count (?)
- 46) Parking underground (like library)
- 47) Barrier along tracks – kids can get on track
- 48) Sled hill has lost its value- should be eliminated
- 49) Dog park – likes big park activity
- 50) Multiple use is key
- 51) Need more multiple use space
- 52) Indoor – pool w/ retractable roof
- 53) More use with pool
- 54) Environmental aspects are important
- 55) Artificial turf – questionable
- 56) Winter use – huge water program
- 57) Maximum use of minimum area
- 58) Fitness
- 59) Maximum use, maximum number of people
- 60) School system and park keeps people in city
- 61) Builds infrastructure for community
- 62) Lighting is inadequate
- 63) School District collaboration

END