

Project: Recreation Center Historical Stewardship Committee 2006 (RCHSC)
Park District of Oak Park (PDOP)

Meeting Date: July 17, 2006

Location: Carroll Center

Attendees: Committee Members:
Tom Philion, Chair / Park Board Commissioner
Beth Burdin, Member
Doug Gilbert, Member (OPHPC chair)
Chris Goode, Member
Nancy Holmes, Member
Maggie Kelly, Member
Roy Phifer, Member

Park District Staff:
Gary Balling, Executive Director PDOP
Mike Grandy, Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds PDOP
Matt Ellmann, Superintendent of Recreation
Bret Fahnstrom, Manager of Community Centers
Kent Newton, Superintendent of Business Operations

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm

I. Recreation Programming at Andersen, Carroll & Field Centers

Mr. Ellmann and Mr. Fahnstrom presented the committee with background information regarding programming of the centers as well as information about the reorganization of the Recreation Department and the benefits of change within the department:

- Presently (2005)** Comprehensive Program Participation Report - 2005
- Recreation Department in 2005 had 18 full time employees (6 involved with Centers)
 - Budget \$3,912,380 just under 50% of the total annual budget.(Centers \$1,235,111)
 - Provides a host of services (sports, skating, gymnastics, camps, fitness, arts, etc.)
 - Dependent on affiliates (fills role for specialized training and competition in athletics)
 - 4 Programming Divisions
 - Programs Offered 2,816 (25% filled vs. 18% cancelled)
 - Compare to 2004, 2,993 (23% filled vs. 20% cancelled)
 - Compare to 2000, 1,036 (41% cancelled) – Centers & Teens only
 - Program Approach more target driven
 - Contact Hours (Camps 1st, Youth Athletics 2nd, Gymnastics 3rd, Fitness 4th)
- Community Center based programming mainly falls into seven categories
 1. *Youth Leagues & Sports Instruction (Soccer, Flag Football, T-Ball, Basketball, etc)
 2. Youth and Adult Visual Arts (Painting, Crafts, xxx)
 3. Preschools/Playschools/Early Childhood (Preschool, Parent & Tots Classes)
 4. *Youth Trips & Outings (Youth Holiday Trips)
 5. General/Special Interest (Dog Obedience, Magic, etc.)
 6. *Special Events (small scale, holiday family activities, penny carnivals)

7. Camps (Action, Basic)

*Not necessarily dependent on Buildings/Facilities

Additional Uses

User Groups (Senior Bridge, WSSRA, Coin Club)
Comfort Stations (Restrooms)
Resident Rentals (Birthday Parties, Baby Showers, Church Groups)
Meetings (Affiliates, Park District, Neighborhood)
Polling Places

Future Programming

- Programming needs and desires have changed in today's society
 - 2 out of three surveyed (1998 attitudes survey) said they would be willing to go to a community center across town if an appealing program or course was offered. In practice today, this is evident.
 - The present community center model of service delivery doesn't work (backed by consultants)
 - People are reluctant to send their children to the centers without supervision
 - Youth recreational programming is becoming much more skill based as opposed to pure recreation as the focus
 - Our society is looking for specialty programming (look at all the martial arts)
 - Competition is in (look at travel sports clubs)
- Agency looks to be trend setters and ahead of the curve
 - This can be accomplished through involvement, education and innovation
 - Also possible physical renovations to the interior to target special functions (i.e., arts, after school)
 - Baby Boomers are 42% of the population
 - Known to work hard, play hard, spend hard
 - Place high value on exercise and fitness
 - Less interested in civic engagements (volunteering)
 - Increased demand for outdoor/adventure programming
 - Continued interest in arts and entertainment
- Park District planning on After school based programs (day care)

Recreation Department Reorganization

In Progress (Plan assembled 2005, being implemented 2006, fully in place 2007)

- Reason for reorganization
 - Systems (stressed, outdated and lacking focus & direction)
 - Personnel (over independent, need mentoring, more accountability, work balance, margin)
 - Programming (duplicated, stagnant, not trend setting)
- Benefits of Reorganization
 - Creating Balance (employee workloads)
 - Maximizing resources (positions developed to compliment staff skills & talents)
 - Provide new opportunities (system encourages ownership, accountability and teamwork)
 - Happy Customers (Customer Service Team to improve coordination, reduce wait lists)

- More and new Programs (eliminate duplication so staff can be creative and innovative)
- Meeting the communities needs (more responsive Park District)
- Center and all programming will be Market Driven
- The fall 2006 Brochure reflects the Reorganization, its initiatives (new topic orientation format suggested all the way back in 1998)

Summary

- Programming and utilization of the centers will challenge the Park District in the future
 - Balancing indoor and outdoor users
 - Staffing and training affordable work force
 - Facilities do have expanded potential with physical and managerial care
 - Maintain neighborhood feel
 - Limited by their size (too small for active and physical activities)
- Physical characteristics (ceiling heights, flooring, configuration, site lines, windows, etc.)
- Lend themselves to Early Childhood and After School Programming (Day Time), Visual Arts, Family Programming, Meetings (evenings & Saturdays), Rentals (Sundays, non use times)

Mr. Newton reviewed:

- Fund Accounting
- Cost Recovery Policy for Recreation Programs
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Recreation Fund detail related to the costs of operating the recreation centers.

II. Review of Site Master Plans at Andersen, Carroll & Field Parks

Mr. Gary Balling described the existing layout of Anderson Park; how the park functions and also described the new plan and the work that is to be carried out.

Mr. Balling introduced John Mac Manus of Altamanu Inc. and requested that John speak about the master plans Altamanu Inc. has been involved with (Carroll and Field).

Mr. Mac Manus stated that Altamanu Inc. when beginning the planning processes was not invested in the decision to restore or not restore, keep or not keep the centers. The history, present condition and potential future use of the Centers were discussed in detail at the Community meetings. Mr. Mac Manus stated that there did not seem to be a large upwelling of public support for the Centers. Some spoke with fondness of their own personal experiences of the Centers, others spoke about the present conditions and uses but there was more interest in the potential programs that could be provided than the buildings themselves.

Mr. Mac Manus addressed the location of the buildings on aerials of the parks and stated that the relative relationship of these buildings was not as was originally intended. Both Carroll and Field Parks were expanded by the removal of the road between the Center and the adjacent school. This created a new spatial relationship between the building and the park and to the access roads, making it difficult in particular at Field to access the building. There, the main auto access to the building is by using the alley which creates traffic and a safety hazard.

The relationship between the building and the park remains as intended at Andersen, with easy access for the main road to the building and a very pleasant and practical relationship between the building and the park. The resulting master plans of Carroll and Field look different. In the Carroll Master Plan the

building is removed, in the Field Master Plan the building is still shown. However, the intent is to phase out the buildings in both parks when new centers are constructed attached to the schools.

Mr. Goode stated that he was not able to attend the public meetings but that he had made his feelings on the subject of the Centers well known to Mr. Mac Manus and Mr. Grandy by phone. He did not agree that the Centers are not well sited in the parks nor did he think that access was particularly difficult at Carroll Park as there is a turn around close to the building. He believed that the Centers continue to divide the park into intimate spaces and still have wonderful views of the park. Mr. Goode stated that he believed that there was more support for the keeping of the Field Center as the controversy over Carroll Center had been publicized in the papers. Mr. Mac Manus stated that the papers did cover the controversy but that there was no great support for keeping the buildings. Even after the articles appeared the number of supporters for restoring the Centers remained static.

It was questioned whether Altamanu had looked at removing the addition to the Carroll Center and if it would help. Mr. Mac Manus stated that Altamanu Inc had looked at expanding the existing Center to try to meet the need for additional space but had not looked at reducing the size of the center.

Mr. Gilbert stated that it was unfortunate that the center that was to be kept was Field and not Carroll as the Carroll Center was a much finer building and was in better condition and had wonderful views to the park.

Mr. Phillion stated for clarification that the Center at Field was not intended to stay but that it would be phased over time. It remained on the drawings because the community could not decide where to place the new center, whether it should be attached to the school at the north or at the southern end.

Mr. Balling spoke about the need for spaces that supported new recreational activities and that the buildings were not very flexible and could not accommodate more than one activity at a time.

Mr. Ellmann spoke of the need for flexibility in the Centers and the need for the spaces and conditions that were appropriate for the programs the Park District wished to provide.

III. Discussion of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Monday, August 21 at 7pm at Andersen Center with a presentation by Tim Kelly.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.