

Lan-Oak Park District
Board Meeting
July 20, 2009

President Long called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Upon roll call the following were present: Commissioners Long, Gaffney, Flanagan, Leck. Also present: Primack, Wilson, Celmer. Absent: Kuniej. Guests present were: Frank Wellever -6338 193rd Court, Matt Miles-18533 Christina Drive, Joseph Castaneda-7722 177th Street, Thomas Fremault-3319 S. Schultz, Linda Przybla-17961 Wentworth, Jim and Janet Wieczorek-19050 Wildwood. Commissioner Kelly arrived at 7:02pm.

President Long asked the guests if any were here to discuss the removal of playground equipment at Schultz Park. Thomas Fremault of 3319 S. Schultz stated that he was. Mr. Fremault stated that he understood the money issues surrounding the removal of the equipment and that he had contacted the Director last year in regards to unsafe conditions at the park. He explained that there were several unsafe trees and a fence that need to be tied down. Fremault explained that the tree issue was addressed but that the fence issue never was. He explained that he knew that the referendum was voted down and that he did vote in favor of the referendum, but he now feels that the swings were removed under the pretense of not being safe and that now taxpayers are being held hostage because the referendum did not pass. Fremault stated that Schultz Park has been under-maintained and under-utilized and that he had even contacted the Mayor about the park upkeep, who in turn told him to contact the Old Timers. He stated that he felt like there was a disinterest and stonewalling in regards to the park. Fremault explained that he had called the Director a few years back in regards to replacing a basketball backboard and that the Director stated that a new backboard would cost around \$1200. Mr. Fremault stated that he understands that the park district probably has to buy equipment from certain businesses, but that a backboard from Wal-Mart doesn't cost that much. He stated that he chose to move here to Lansing because of the nice community and parks and that he is outraged that the equipment is being removed. Commissioner Long thanked Mr. Fremault for his concerns about Schultz Park and explained that the park district was not threatening to remove any equipment if the referendum did not pass. He explained that

the decision to remove unsafe playground equipment was discussed and decided on prior to the date of the last referendum. Long further explained that the risk manager had inspected that parks and that also certain mandates had come deeming certain park equipment unsafe. Long explained that if someone was hurt playing on that unsafe equipment that the park district could face a huge lawsuit. He also explained that there is a shortage of money and that it costs around \$50,000-\$100,000 to rehab each park and that right now the park district does not have that money. Long stated that the Board has set a goal to do the best that they can but that they do need to remove the unsafe equipment. Primack explained that the issue is one of safety and that Schultz Park is not the only park to have equipment removed. Primack explained that the equipment was coming out no matter what and that if the referendum had passed the equipment may have been put back in.

Commissioner Long asked Wilson if he knew anything about the fence at Schultz Park with Wilson stating no. Long stated to Fremault that they would be getting someone out to check the fence. Wilson stated that there were several residents of the Schultz Park area who were meeting at Village Hall on Tuesday, July 21 to discuss fund raising activities.

Commissioner Gaffney explained to Mr. Fremault that he feels the pain that the residents feel. He explained that it is a sad state to have to remove park equipment but that it was mandated by safety terms and that they were looking at alternates to bring the parks back. Mr. Fremault stated that he might be putting his house up for sale because with the park being gone, this would ultimately drive down his property value. He also explained that he would be willing to help out any way possible. Long agreed that both parks and schools are important to the village and that in the near future the park district may go out for another referendum. Commissioner Leck explained that the LOPD Foundation would be having a “tag day” collection on October 13th and that they are looking for volunteers. Mr. Fremault stated that he would volunteer to help out. President Long thanked Mr. Fremault for coming to the meeting.

Motion made by Flanagan to go into Executive Session for the discussion of land acquisition, personnel, probable litigation and/or other subject matters as allowed by the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS, Par. 120/2.(c)(1) – 22.(e). Second by Gaffney. Upon

roll call the following voted “aye”-Flanagin, Gaffney, Kelly, Leck, Long. No “nays”. Motion passed.

President Long called the regular Board meeting back to order at 9:40pm. Upon roll call the following were present-Commissioners Long, Gaffney, Flanagin, Kelly, Leck. Also present: Primack, Wilson, Celmer.

Motion by Flanagin to accept the Consent Agenda Items A-E which consist of Board meeting minutes from June 15, 2009, Planning Committee/Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting minutes from June 29, 2009, Executive Session meeting minutes from June 15, 2009 and AP Payment Selection Reports-Refund & PR W/H June 25, July 9, 2009; AP Invoices for July 20, 2009. Second by Kelly. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Gaffney, Kelly, Leck, Flanagin, Long. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Director Wilson presented his report. Wilson stated to the Board that there were two Toro mowers for them to look at in the garage. The mowers were demos that the maintenance staff has been trying out.

Gaffney explained to the Board that the proposed room rental policy has to be pushed back to the next recreation committee meeting, which would not be for another 90 days.

Long discussed with the Board the meeting planned for either August 3 or August 5 with the Superintendent of School District 158. Long explained that he had given them a copy of the lease to look over before the meeting and that they had decided to start with District 158 because that is the largest mowing area with 25 acres. Gaffney stated that he had a question pertinent to the lease. Gaffney stated that all the leases were dated the same, which meant that they were all incorporated at the same time. Long explained that after they meet with the Superintendent they will discuss it among the group. Long stated that they may see reasons that they do not want to do anything. Primack explained that answer to the question about the removal of the park’s equipment is that the park district has the right to remove it but not the obligation to remove it. Kelly stated that it was a win-win situation when the park district was using their properties.

Flanagin discussed with the Board the email that he had received from Luke Cadet requiring information on who determines that the equipment at the parks are unsafe and where could he get that information from. Commissioner Long explained that he had

received a phone call from Doris Archer regarding Schultz Park and that it was a very positive conversation. He stated that he had invited Ms. Archer to future Board meetings and that she accepted and may come to the August Board meeting.

Kelly discussed with the Board the Meekma Property. Kelly stated that the Board had agreed that this was number one on the list because of the active grant from the Department of Natural Resources. Kelly asked where the park district could get the finances. Flanagin explained that the park district has to put out all of the funds first to get reimbursed by the State and that forthcoming funds may come from the TIF district that was expiring. Flanagin stated that they needed to find out from the village about permits and builder development contributions from those developers. Flanagin stated that it would be discussed at the next Finance meeting. Wilson stated that the Board needed to be specific if they were going to approve the document. From a pre-construction meeting with the architect, Wilson explained that they would like the construction to start in May/June 2010 so the park area would be ready for planting grass in the growing season which would be late August through September. Primack asked Wilson what the total budget was for the project with Wilson stating that it was \$134,000. As for funding the project, Wilson stated that there is approximately \$160,000 is due from the Park District relating to the CMAQ grant that developed the Pennsy Greenway. Wilson stated that the Meekma project would be done by late Fall 2010. Primack asked if the last payment would be made in 2010 with Wilson saying that in all likelihood that it would be in December. Flanagin stated that the Meekma Property was a high priority due to the grant.

Long asked Wilson for an update on the request from Chicago Laser and Computer Service regarding a tree that was blocking a sign. Wilson explained the request from the owner based upon the letter that was in the Board packet. Long asked if the Board wanted to give him permission to the owner to either cut it down or trim the tree provided the owner making the request covers all expenses relating to the matter. Primack asked if they wanted the owner to grind the stump and remove all debris associated with the tree work. Wilson stated yes and further suggested that the individual should be responsible for all permits, damages, etc., should it be necessary. Long asked if Primack would be sending a letter with Primack stating that Wilson could send one.

Wilson discussed with the Board a tentative date for the bicycle plan meeting with Wilson stating that it would be on August 11th @7:00pm at the Administration Office.

Gaffney discussed with the Board the fact that the Recreation Committee meeting had to be postponed due to schedule conflicts and that it was recommended by the Committee that the meetings be held every quarter so the next meeting wouldn't be until October.

Leck discussed with the Board the mowing contract. Wilson asked why the park district mows Lansing Christian School and Flanagin answered because the field was needed for the Lansing Old Timer's use. Gaffney stated that he couldn't recall the Old Timer's ever using the field there for practice. Long stated that he and Wilson would be talking to the school districts and then coming back to the Board with the information. Kelly stated that they should talk to the other school districts besides District 158. Wilson explained to the Board that there were mowers in the garage for them to look at.

Kelly discussed with the Board the Meekma Property Agreement and asked if they were in the position to pass it. Gaffney stated that he had a question regarding the Project Agreement. Gaffney asked if the project would be starting in 2010. Wilson reviewed the project timeline. Primack asked if it would be finished in October and they would pay in December. Wilson explained that it was a small project and that it would be done by October or November. Kelly asked if only capital improvements can come out of bonds with Wilson explaining that has been the Board's practice during his tenure and that there are minor capital improvements that are paid from various other funds within the operating budget. Motion made by Kelly to accept the Project Agreement for the Meekma Park Development Project as presented by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Second by Flanagin. Upon roll call the following voted "aye"-Kelly, Leck, Flanagin, Gaffney, Long. No "nays". Motion passed.

Kelly stated that the Planning Committee would be having a meeting with the Mayor in a few weeks to follow up on the Monaldi Manor issue. Long asked when the next Planning Committee meeting would be with Kelly stating that he would have to look into it and let Wilson know.

Flanagin presented Kuniej's report. Gaffney stated that he had a question regarding the outstanding tax levy amounts and how long it would take the park district

to receive that money. Flanagan stated that the park district might never get that money and that there are 5200 properties in Thornton Township and 4000 in Bloom Township that are for sale. Primack explained some of the properties do not get brought up at a tax sale and go to a scavenger sale for pennies on the dollar. Gaffney asked if it is a tax write-off with Primack stating yes. Motion made by Flanagan to accept the Treasurer's Report as information. Second by Gaffney. Upon roll call the following voted "aye"-Leck, Flanagan, Gaffney, Kelly, Long. No "nays". Motion passed. Motion made by Flanagan to accept the Treasurer's Operating Statement. Second by Gaffney. Upon roll call the following voted "aye"-Flanagan, Gaffney, Kelly, Leck, Long. No "nays". Motion passed.

Flanagan mentioned there would be a Finance and Personnel Committee meeting before the August Board meeting.

Primack presented his report and discussed a memo he had for the Board members regarding the Art in the Parks program. Primack explained that it might not be a bad thing for the park district to have. Explaining that the freedom of speech problem is still not solved and may never be solved and that the park district might just have to take that risk if they want to go ahead with the project. Gaffney stated that it would be a good idea to have a committee to check designs and that they could sit as a group and decide what the criteria would be. Flanagan stated that they could follow the Tri-Motors guidelines. Leck asked if they could ok the designs with Primack stating that it was a case of freedom of speech. Wilson stated that they would need standards to go by. Primack explained that they would need to decide whether they want the project. Kelly asked if the project was worth having with Flanagan responding yes, it was a positive community approach. Gaffney stated that he agreed and that he felt it was worth the risk. Kelly explained that it puts the park district at a little risk and what doesn't? He explained that it was a positive project and that right now the park district needs positive momentum in the community. Long stated that they needed to come up with a good set of standards for the program. Primack explained that he had given them 3 templates to go by. Motion made by Flanagan to move forward with the Art in the Parks program. Second by Leck. Upon roll call the following voted "aye"-Gaffney, Kelly, Leck, Flanagan, Long. No "nays". Motion passed.

Primack discussed with the Board that Wentworth Avenue issue. He explained that he and Wilson had gone through the compare version of the Agreement and that it was taken off of the Board July Agenda.

Primack discussed with the Board the real estate tax/tax exempt project that he has been working on relating to the former Pennsylvania Railroad. Since he has been working on this matter that would in the long run benefit both the Village and Park District, Primack suggested that the park district should look into getting reimbursed by the Village to defray the legal cost. Long asked if the park district was footing the bill. Wilson stated that they have been paying the legal bill for a long, long time relating to the acquisition and other matters associated with the former railroad property. After a discussion on the project matter, Wilson stated that he would call Mayor Abbott to discuss the situation and to see if the Village would be willing to split the legal fees associated with resolving this tax exempt issue for the railroad property. Primack asked if the Board in agreement for him to continue and finish the project at this time. The Board was in full agreement.

Long discussed with the Board the volunteer recognition dinner and explained that it was different than the Vince Award. Long explained that it was something that as a Board that they could do by nominating someone from the Park District who has been a pure volunteer. Long explained that they had plenty of time to decide since the dinner wasn't until November. Long stated that maybe they could receive some input from the staff.

Wilson discussed with the Board the bid results for the drain and spa repair at the Eisenhower Center. Wilson stated that it bids were open on July 14th. Kelly asked why the figures were so high. Wilson stated that they were actually lower than anticipated. Wilson the scope of the project was more than the drain and spa renovations. Since the pool and spas had to be drained, the staff was recommending to paint the pool and the men's recreation spa since the last time those amenities were painted was in 2004 during the renovation project at the Center. Gaffney asked what kind of guarantee that they would get for that kind of money. Wilson and Primack reviewed the warranty matter. Gaffney asked how long it would take with Wilson explaining that he never gives a firm timeline due to matters that could happen during the construction that he or the park

district has no control over. Wilson did provide a tentative timeline, barring non problems. A discussion centered on the issue of painting the pool and deck at this time amongst the Board. Long explained that the Eisenhower Center is the primary focal point of the park district, and with that a Motion was made by Gaffney to accept the bid recommendations as presented by Wilson based on the letter from Cody-Braun and Associates. Second by Kelly. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Kelly, Leck, Flanagin, Gaffney, Long. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Long discussed with the Commissioners the three upcoming golf outings. Long explained that the LARC outing was on August 3, the Police outing was on August 25th and that Lansing Lions outing was on August 29th and that if anyone wanted to go to just let Wilson know.

Long discussed the LOPD Foundation and stated that since the park district is associated with them he is requesting a report each month on what is happening and a list of their meeting dates. Flanagin stated that he would bring it up at the LOPF’s next meeting. Long asked the date of their next meeting with Flanagin stating that it may be on Wednesday, July 22 because of the upcoming cruise night.

Long stated that the new Board members did not have any Lan-Oak apparel and he would like to purchase polo shirts for the Board.

There being no further business, Motion made by Flanagin to adjourn the meeting. Second by Leck. Upon roll call the following voted “aye”-Leck, Flanagin, Gaffney, Kelly, Long. No “nays”. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:38pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Wilson, CPRP
Director of Parks & Recreation