

AMENDED

Minutes of the Workshop Meeting Board of Park Commissioners

June 7, 2018

The Workshop Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was called to order by President Cohen at 7:37 p.m. in the Administrative Offices of the Deerfield Park District located in the Jewett Park Community Center. Attendance was taken and the following were:

Present: Antokal, Caron, Cohen, Lapin, Patinkin (5)  
Absent: None (0)

And there was a quorum in attendance. Also in attendance was Jeff Nehila, Secretary/Executive Director; Bob Taylor, Linda Anderson, Tony Korzyniewski, Tim Johnson, Dolores Daley, Jennie Michalik, Jim Gariti, staff members.

**Matters from the Public**

There were no matters from the public.

**Sachs Center Visioning**

Director Nehila opened the meeting by reminding the board that we discussed performing some visioning for Sachs Recreation Center similar to the workshop dedicated to the golf course last year. Prior to the meeting, the board received information relating to the discussion topics and a list of possible goals to set as a result of our discussion.

The workshop should provide valuable perspective and guidance for district staff to carry out any initiatives and follow the overall scope of operational and service priorities the board has. The center is an asset to the community and staff looks forward to enhancing the benefits the center provides.

**History of Center**

The district was looking for indoor gym space and was looking at Woodland Park as a potential location to build a gymnasium. The adjacent residents were not interested in pursuing a gymnasium at Woodland Park. The old Multiplex became available and the district purchased it in 2008. The Sachs Recreation Center opened in 2009.

**Main Amenities**

The center has many amenities and service components including an indoor pool, 3 gyms including "Bulls Gym," fitness/cardio area, 2 weight rooms, large dance/exercise studio, soft court open floor space, 1 racquetball court, 1 racquetball court converted to Jungle Gym, 4 lane walking/running track, 1 mind-body yoga studio, admin/office spaces for staff, babysitting room, small Pilates studio, spin room, office space for outside tenant, 2 large locker rooms (1 for men, 1 for women), 2 smaller locker rooms by the pool for men and women, sitting area by pool and sitting area by tennis/stairs, 2 multi-purpose program rooms, game room, meeting room, 2 tennis courts, 1 additional tennis court converted into gymnastics area, 1 cafeteria space converted to fitness studio in 2018. Most of our spaces are programmed and heavily used except for some smaller spaces on the second floor.

### **Programs Offered**

A few of the programs offered include adult sports, children's sports, Coho Swim team usage, swim lessons, parent tot programs, drop-in open gyms for swim, volleyball, basketball and walking track.

### **Fitness**

A sizable portion of the center's activities with memberships, daily passes, monthly special are related to fitness. Fitness membership includes use of fitness floor, track, weight rooms and fitness classes, gyms, pool (pickleball, racquetball and tennis excluded).

### **Fitness Membership**

Staff pulled a random sampling of a month each year. Shortly after we opened we had steady growth until 2015. Since then numbers have declined slightly.

### **Local competition**

When the center opened in 2009, Bally's had just closed its doors and Midtown was the only other fitness center around. LA Fitness was the only other center close to Sachs. Since then the area has been saturated with a variety of different fitness outlet options.

Commissioner Caron asked what our target membership should be and if it was possible to have too many members. President Cohen commented that we shouldn't have a target number because demographics change. Commissioner Antokal agreed that we shouldn't have a target number but should continue to provide quality services that the community wants. President Cohen commented that we should be alert of upcoming trends to attract other people by offering more cutting-edge classes, programming, equipment and instruction whether private or in a group setting. Our biggest goal is to recognize what we should be doing in the next 6 months to a year and try to accommodate that. Commissioner Antokal stated that converting the Retro Café into usable fitness space will allow us to offer more classes.

### **Membership Recruitment**

Sachs staff has done many different types of membership recruitments including all local businesses were personally met with and offered special employee deals over the last year; all Deer Park Plaza businesses were visited and given free 2-week trial memberships; postcard mailings; DHS School Chest and Rotary Gift Check Book; Clipper Magazine cover coupon; Refer a Friend program; Fit Rewards referral program; Year-round Student Memberships; and cross promoting on signage and slides on TV's at Jewett Park and Deerfield Golf Club.

Something that comes up continually with the advisory committee is marketing. There is a concerted effort amongst staff to market the center. Now that we have our tapestries from the demographics study we can do more target marketing.

### **Group Exercise**

Commissioners reviewed the numbers for the last 3 years of attendance in our group exercise classes. It is not a benefit of membership that you get group fitness classes at every fitness center.

Commissioner Caron commented that people that attend the group exercise classes keep their memberships. Staff commented that we have a great instructor retention rate and it speaks to the point of group exercise being so important and that relationships are being cultivated over the years.

Group exercise being included in our memberships is such a valuable marketing piece.

### **Fitness Floor**

The center's fitness equipment was originally selected based on its versatility and usability for various demographic groups within the community. We have increased the number of pieces of equipment by nearly 30% since 2009. As training methods change, the fitness floor equipment also changes.

### **SRC Wellness**

The goal of SRC Wellness programming is to research, design and implement programs for the center's members and guests that create awareness, motivation and tools to help individuals adapt and maintain a well-rounded healthy lifestyle.

Many types of wellness programming are offered including FitRewards, Nutritional Counseling, Health Coaching, Protein Pancake Breakfast, PTC Guided Meditation Series and Walk Deerfield/Go Deerfield Walking Initiative which is part of the Go Lake County Initiative.

Commissioner Caron asked if the Walk Deerfield walks are always held at the same time. Staff responded that we try to offer lunch time and after work walks at different parks. Staff commented that when the walk was at Maplewood Park, participants enjoyed using the exercise stations. President Cohen asked if we should be considering putting exercise stations at other locations. Staff responded that it's a big trend to have outdoor equipment right now. It would probably be good to have strength training equipment not cardio equipment since you can walk and get the cardio. Commissioner Caron commented that it has been brought up in the past to have demonstrations on the equipment. Staff thought that making that part of the Walk Ride and Roll event would be great.

Other ideas for walks would be "Walk with the board" or Walk with the executive director."

### **Rentable Spaces**

Rentable spaces include racquetball courts and tennis courts. We also have multiple rentals for special events such as After Prom Party, parties and associated space i.e. gym, multi-purpose room.

### **Current Contractual Arrangements**

We currently have two contractual arrangements. The Chicago Sky have a two-year lease starting in 2018 with an option for a third year. The North Shore Rhythmic Gymnastics have a contract through May 2019.

### **Financial Information with and without Capital Projects**

Commissioners reviewed financial information with and without Capital Projects. Treasurer Lapin would like to see financials show what percentage is recreation and fitness as this would help to know if fitness is supporting itself. Staff can do the best they can to allocate a percentage. Director Nehila commented that if the goal is to have the fitness component break then we know what our magic number on memberships is.

### **Facility Operations**

Our facility operations are supported by our Recreation Center Advisory Committee. They provide valuable perspective as the consumer. Commissioners reviewed the organization chart. Prevalent needs of the center would be more marketing and promotion.

### **Facility Assessment**

#### **Capital Plan**

A 7-year capital plan includes annual replacement of equipment and HVAC, a phased plan for aesthetic improvements beginning in 2020 and renovation of the Main Women's Locker Room as well as several other items. One item to be considered prior to replacing the track would be to examine how best to select and identify the lanes used for walkers, joggers and runners.

### **Additional Capital Opportunities**

Additional capital projects include pool locker room renovations, solar energy panels on the roof and additional main locker room renovations such as flooring, lockers, lighting and finishes.

We have had companies contact us regarding installing solar panels on the roof which they would pay to install, sell energy back to us at a reduced rate and sell unused energy to ComEd. In order to pursue the installation of solar panels, we need to have new roofs. We will be replacing the West roof in 2021.

### **External Factors**

#### **Adjacent Businesses**

NTB Tire and Battery, Joy of the Game, and Brunswick Bowl are closing and the buildings are being torn down to make room for a Transit Oriented Development with 248 units of townhouses

and apartments. Since the center is in the Village of Deerfield but Northbrook Park District and School District these tenants would be considered non-resident. Director Nehila asked if we should consider a special pricing tier. These are the closest customers we will ever have. There's an opportunity to work with the developer to make sure we are part of their marketing package. We are also working with the developer to insure pedestrian access.

We have been contacted by a tenant in Joy of the Game looking for lease space. Staff met with him and gave a tour of the center. Also, recently another tenant contacted Director Nehila looking for space to lease. There could be other people interested in leasing space. President Cohen stated that he wasn't interested in being a landlord. Director Nehila stated that there could be the potential to make a substantial amount of money from a tenant looking for a new home instead of a small amount of money from a current tenant. President Cohen and Commissioner Caron expressed concern with having a private company that competes with us coming in to our facility. Director Nehila stated that this was just brought to the district in the past 24 hours and he just wanted to share it with the board. President Cohen stated that he doesn't consider us a profit revenue center so if we find better uses for the space that would serve our constituents then that would be the direction he would prefer to go. Commissioner Caron asked about possibly doing indoor soccer at the center. Director Nehila responded that indoor soccer wouldn't work because of the steel structural supports and the size of the space. Vice-President Patinkin asked if there was indoor soccer at Joy of the Game. Staff responded that there is no indoor soccer just basketball and volleyball. Staff also commented that they haven't been contacted regarding those programs. President Cohen commented that none of the suggestions should be shutdown. They are suggestions that staff and the board need to explore in more detail. There are so many possibilities depending on what is decided to do with the space.

### **Decline of Corporate Memberships**

The decline of corporate memberships is a reality and we will probably never be able to replace Beam. President Cohen asked why is it more difficult to get new corporate membership. Staff responded that Beam subsidized the employee's memberships by 50% so even if the employee wasn't coming to workout they weren't cancelling their membership because the cost was so low. New local companies have been contacted and they stated that they do not subsidize. Other area corporations have their own fitness facilities on-site.

### **Setting Goals**

Director Nehila feels that staff has good ideas for moving forward with the following goals:

- Continue to look at existing areas within the facility.
- Continue to do extensive marketing with our tapestries.
- Establish lease agreements with gymnastics organization or other outside group.
- Dedicate staff for more marketing.
- Continue finding ways to better inform members of schedule changes.
- Continue improving trainer ticket system.
- Continue funding support level for 7-year capital projects plan.

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- Maintain every 2-year modest membership price increase (2-3%).

Director Nehila thanked the board for their support.

Motion made by Commissioner Caron, seconded by Commissioner Antokal, to adjourn the Workshop Meeting at 9:45 p.m. Voice vote as follows:

AYES: Caron, Antokal, Lapin, Patinkin, Cohen (5)

NAYS: None (0)

Motion passed in a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Nehila, Secretary