

MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS      August 5, 2021

The Workshop Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was called to order by President Patinkin at 7:34 p.m. at the Jewett Park Community Center. Attendance was taken and the following were:

Present:        Brown, Caron, Cohen, Patinkin, Serota (5)  
Absent:         None (0)

And there was a quorum in attendance. Also present were Jeff Nehila, Secretary/Executive Director; Jeff Harvey, Laura McCarty, Jay Zahn, Tony Korzyniewski, Jason Mannina, staff members; James Lang, Brian Ondyak, Performance Services, Inc.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Solar Energy Presentation

Director Nehila provided background information. The concept of placing solar panels on the south facing roofs at the Sachs Recreation Center have been discussed in the past. One of the factors that would facilitate the placement of panels was that the roofs at the facility would need to be replaced prior to placing the panels on them. Last year, one of the three roofs was replaced and this started the exploration by staff to examine the feasibility of placing panels on that section. The panel project, according to the sources that provide them, essentially offer two options. One option is “leasing” the roof(s) to a firm that would install and maintain them in return for a reduced electrical cost. The other option is for the district to purchase, install and maintain the panels for lower electrical costs and offer a Return of Investment on the purchase.

Staff has been working with a different firm to explore each option. The option of purchasing the panels outright is going to be presented tonight by Performance Services, Inc.

As we move into our budget preparation season, staff looks forward to board feedback on the options. The “leasing” option would not require any changes to the 7-year capital plan. The purchase option would potentially alter the 7-year plan for the actual purchase of the panel system and move the roof replacements for the other two roofs from 2024 and 2025 to a much sooner timeline, (2022).

James Lang and Brian Ondyak, Performance Services, were at the meeting to present a Solar Energy presentation.

Performance Servies, Inc. is a full-service construction company that only works with taxing bodies.

PSI Preliminary Assessment – Solar Panel Arrays

Proposed solar solution:

- Install a roof-mounted solar array that produces savings on energy costs – explore any potential ground-mount opportunities.
- Execute all potential rebate and incentive opportunities, providing additional savings.
- Projected gross savings over 20 years is more than \$1.2 million.
- Preliminary budget - \$1.1 million

Why a Guaranteed Energy Savings Contract makes sense for the Deerfield Park District

- Guaranteed Energy Savings Contract provides a more efficient, cost-effective method to achieve high-performing renovation and construction projects.
- The GESG Procurement Process is governed by the Local Energy Conservation Act 50-ILCS-515.
- The Act specifically spells out projects and/or aspects of projects that would qualify as a GESG, “.....that the savings are guaranteed to the extent necessary to pay the costs of the energy conservation measures.”

Advantages of GESG Procurement

- Design and construction are integrated under one firm – one contract and one point of accountability.
- No cost to the Deerfield Park District during procurement process (no cost for initial design work and to see firm project cost estimates).
- Competitive procurement process where firms not only compete on price, but on the quality of solution and solar engineering designs.
- Guaranteed no change orders.

Potential Opportunities as we exit the pandemic

- “Cheap money” – unprecedented low borrowing rates and ability to defer payments for up to 36 months – traditional loan and/or bond options.
- Potential stimulus funding – “Shovel ready” projects and prioritized – get in line now.
- Opportunity to keep local workforce employed and working.
- A new round of Renewable Energy Credits, (RECs), is in the Illinois Energy Bill currently sitting on the House floor in Springfield with a late 2021 vote – again, get in line now.

PSI provided an illustration of the timeline should the district choose to move forward with the project.

Commissioner Brown asked if we had considered any of our other roofs such as the Deerspring bathhouse or Jewett Park Community Center. Executive Director Nehila commented that when we first started exploring solar, we did consider other roofs but due to the size and the angle of the roofs those locations aren't as ideal as Sachs.

Executive Director Nehila commented that this system will pay for itself in 20 years. If we wanted to do any juggling around of the roofs to do solar prior to 2023-2024 we can adjust the 7-year capital plan. There are two concepts. One option is you buy the panels and you get the savings after you pay the panels off. The second option is to lease your roof and get a reduce electric rate. To complicate things even more, if you live in Deerfield, you can join the power grid co-op. This is now an available option as they have opened it up to public entities. This might be an option for smaller and/or seasonal structures. The savings aren't as substantial but are still a savings.

Treasurer Cohen commented that the concept sounds interesting but there is a lot of homework to be done. \$100,000 over 20-30 years isn't worth the upfront costs. No one is figuring in the cost of replacing the roofs in 10 years or the solar panels in 20 to 30 years. Treasurer Cohen is more concerned with working through the numbers and the assumptions with rate increases.

Commissioner Serota asked if it's worth looking into what the project would look like if we just did the project on the one roof we have already replaced. Director Nehila responded that without them doing the finite measurement and study, it doesn't appear to be lucrative.

Director Nehila stated that we should focus on replacing the roofs. We could consider leasing the one roof. Any savings off of a \$140,000 electric bill is a positive. Staff will continue to do fact finding.

### **Capital Planning**

The district develops and presents a 7-Year Capital Plan as part of its annual budget. Up to a few years ago previous practice had been developing and presenting a 5-year plan which included the current Fiscal Year projects. The full 7-year plan for out years was developed as a more inclusive planning tool to forecast a longer time period in order to display the need for awareness of longer term resources. The plan has been a valuable tool for the district as it now also includes more components and more areas to focus on while allocating those resources. It also provides more potential to re-prioritize many more capital needs in case of the need to shift more urgent projects and purchases.

Historically, the district has allocated \$2 to \$2.5 million dollars of capital projects and purchases annually. The years 2020 and 2021 have been reduced due to decreased revenues. The current plan reflects those deferrals of projects which has created higher potential spending levels for the majority of the next 7 years. As staff develops the next 7-year plan, some of these annual expenditures can be reduced as we could potentially move projects around within the next seven years. In any case, the annual expenditure levels will range from \$2.3 to \$2.6 million dollars per year with just the projects/purchases listed.

As presented at the July 15, 2021 Finance Committee, the district is nearing the end of its current bond obligations. In 2021, the district will pay \$305,000 towards the bonds. In 2022, a total of \$195,000 will be paid. In 2023, the district will retire the debt with a \$65,000 payment. Therefore, if the district was to pursue another bond issuance, that time is arriving. The typical annual bond payment has been approximately \$300,000 per year covered by the tax levy. Thus there could be some opportunity in the 2022/2023 timeframe to re-issue bonds and keep the annual payments at an average of \$300,000, which would not increase current taxes and allow for more borrowing to cover projects and purchases within the district's budget.

Within 2021 and 2022, there has been some movement and deferrals of projects as well as a project that won't be completed this year due to lack of grant funding, (Keller Park Bike Path). We will discuss some other upcoming projects. We will also have to keep in mind, dependent on feedback from the community survey currently being administered, there may be some additional projects and purchases to be added to the plan. And last but not least, with the introduction of the solar panel cost estimates, these may need to be added as well.

Staff doesn't foresee us changing/updating the entire plan at this workshop. The hope is that we could identify some priorities and also some potential deferrals. This conversation will enable staff to begin to develop a new 7-year plan as we enter into our budget preparation "season."

Director Nehila reported that SD109 will know shortly if they will be doing the Caruso auditorium renovation project. The Facility Committee will be meeting in a couple weeks to decide if they will be putting the project out for bid this fall for work next summer.

The current capital plan has a four-year period of paying \$40,000 per year for leased golf carts. Three things have changed in relation to golf carts. One is the availability, two is the pricing and three is the trade-in value. Traditionally you lease carts for 4 years and trade them in or buy them over a 4-year period and use them into the fifth year at no cost, but the trade-in value goes down. Knowing golf carts are going to cost an average of \$40,000 for 5 years with a lease to own option, this is the best way to go. This allows you to use your own discretion as to when to trade them in.

Another factor right now is availability. Typically, the turnaround is 90-120 days but as of now, golf carts ordered now would hopefully be delivered in May 2022.

We currently own our fleet and the trade-in value is about \$3,400 per cart. Knowing that carts are going to cost \$40,000 per year, staff compiled cart revenues over the last few years so Commissioners could get an idea of how much revenue could be made over the \$40,000 yearly payment.

Cart revenue for 2017 was \$277,000; 2018 was \$260,000; and 2019 was \$249,000. Cart revenue has been declining due to more walkers. In 2020, our cart revenue was about \$210,000, but that was with no golf in April and no carts in May. July 2021 is the first month we can compare apples to apples from 2020 for golf. Staff is estimating cart revenue around \$240,000 for 2021. As far as pricing for a new fleet, cash price would be \$171,000 or with the leasing option it would cost \$186,800.

Treasurer Cohen asked how much more electric carts would be. Staff responded that they didn't get a price for an electric fleet but could easily do so.

Treasurer Cohen commented with the popularity of golf, the course is realizing a great season and might be able to afford to purchase electric carts and build a cart barn to house the carts. Staff is hoping that the increased popularity of golf since COVID will continue. We are also seeing an increase in play due to area courses being closed for construction.

Commissioner Serota asked what the return is on electric over gas carts. Director Nehila responded that it is the same rotation as batteries become a large expense to maintain.

Commissioner Brown commented that it would be interesting to run the numbers for gas carts over electric carts, the gasoline vs. electricity costs and the construction of the cart barn.

Vice-President Caron commented that we should at least look into the concept of electric carts. If we are looking into solar, it would be a lot different to build a new building with solar than retrofitting an existing building. If we are going to purchase gas carts, then we know that we would put off purchasing electric carts for 5 years.

Commissioner Serota asked about the advantages of electric carts over gas carts besides environmental. Treasurer Cohen responded that they are environmentally friendlier, more efficient, have lower maintenance costs, are quieter and cost less to operate especially in warmer weather.

Director Nehila commented that we could try to keep the carts for another year since there isn't time to put together a cart barn project for next year but could be considered for 2023.

Director Nehila commented that we are also waiting for the community survey results. The results will be used to help determine capital projects and purchases as staff begins the FY2022 budget process.

Capital planning will be an agenda item for August 19, 2021 board meeting or the September 2 workshop meeting. At that time, staff should have some survey data available. The return rate for the survey is high, we have received 420 between the written surveys and emailed surveys. The survey can be validated now but we have a goal of 500 surveys received. PRG sent out 500 mailed surveys and 300 emailed surveys. Once the random sampling is closed, we will put the survey on our website to continue to gather feedback.

### **Other Matters**

#### **Park Board Email Response**

Treasurer Cohen stated that an auto reply should be set up for emails received for the Park Board. Staff will set up a uniform response as an acknowledgement.

#### **Tennis Emails**

Commissioners discussed emails received related to tennis and agreed to send an email response acknowledging their comments.

#### **South Park Playground**

Due to equipment delays the South Park Playground project is delayed. Equipment was scheduled to arrive in June now it's the end of August. Kids around the World was scheduled to remove the existing playground in June, but staff rescheduled the removal to August. Thankfully there is another playground at the school, so while doing the project after the start of school isn't ideal it can be accomplished.

#### **Buckthorn Removal**

One of the objectives in our Strategic Plan was to remove buckthorn throughout our park system. Staff was contacted by a new park neighbor at Kipling to discuss removing buckthorn along the property line. Staff will meet with her discuss the project.

#### **Golf Course**

The golf course was aerated on August 2. The golf course was scheduled to be closed for the day, but staff worked so quickly the course was able to open at 2:40 p.m. and still sold 100 rounds of golf for the day. Sunday, July 31 we had 309 golfers utilize the course. This was our biggest day of the year. High school golf team tryouts are scheduled for next week. The shortage on golf supplies continues with the announcement that a golf ball shortage is on the horizon. Our Adult Beginner class continues to fill.

President Patinkin read a letter from IAPD praising the Deerfield Golf Club and staff for the fabulous job done hosting the IAPD golf outing.

#### **Budget Season**

Staff has officially started the budget process. Staff is always working to simplify and improve the process and formats. Staff looks to continue to do so again this year.

#### **Tennis**

Staff interviewed two tennis contractors to resume a tennis program at Sachs. After the interviews and review of the proposals, staff selected Life Sports Management. Staff and Life Sports worked together to

quickly get agreements in place, determine a class schedule, get the programs set-up in RecTrac and available on our website for resident registration on Monday, August 2. Life Sports has been fielding phone calls and answering questions for interested persons.

**Sachs Recreation Center Fitness Program**

Staff had to pivot quickly and adjust the August Fitness Schedule since the new mask mandate for Cook County was announced on August 5. Staff moved the majority of classes to outdoor locations.

**Summer Camps**

Most of our summer camps ended on July 31. We do have Extra Added Attraction, Safety Town and the White Sox Baseball Camp running this week. Next week we have a basketball camp and skateboarding camp running. Overall, the camp season was successful and surveys are being returning with positive comments.

**Swimming Pools**

The district had a great pool season. Deerspring will close on August 15 and Mitchell will start its end of season hours on August 16. Mitchell will close for the season on September 5. Aquatic staff had their third and final audit of the season and received another five-star score.

**After School Club**

Staff is still trying to hire more staff for the After School Club. At this time, we are unable to accommodate our wait lists. Staff is promoting the After School Enrichment programs to help parents with childcare needs.

**Executive Director Statement**

Since March of 2020, the Deerfield Park District has followed guidelines from many federal, state, county and local agencies to best serve the residents of the park district. A global pandemic clearly identified public safety as the number one priority within these guidelines. Those guidelines included the CDC, the State of Illinois, the State of Illinois Dept. of Public Health, the State of Illinois Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Cook County Health Dept., the Lake County Health Dept. and the Villages of Deerfield and Riverwoods. Some of the guidelines were very broad. Some guidelines were program and service specific including summer camps, pools, fitness, golf, sports, retail sales, restaurants and public use of park amenities.

There were multiple occasions where the guidelines were both inconsistent and even contradictory. Regardless of these obstacles, the park district was able to offer a multitude of services and programs by creating operational protocols with the public's safety as a priority. Even despite these protocols, the district experienced positive COVID-19 cases within numerous age groups of customers along with the district's staff throughout the pandemic which includes very recent cases within unvaccinated populations. One of these cases sadly even resulted in a loss of one of own staff members. Despite these cases, the protocols were effective in minimizing community spread. These same protocols resulted in the district being able to offer programs and services that other agencies did not and have served as a model for other agencies to follow. The district received positive feedback from many residents over the course of the last year as they understood public safety was the priority.

As with any protocols, and subsequent restrictions, we have also received feedback covering concerns on how we've interpreted guidelines and instituted them into our programs and services. In most cases,

positive and respectful interactions with concerned parties resulted in some mutual level of understanding from both sides. Total agreement and common ground was not always reached. Contradicting viewpoints of the guidelines have led to those disagreements. In these cases, as with all resident feedback, staff continues to respectfully acknowledge those viewpoints despite not incorporating all suggestions and demands to program and service protocols. There may be a time, however, that if the interactions become hostile or personal, staff will disengage with debate as to move on to allocating their time to serve the community as a whole.

On June 11, 2021, the State of Illinois reached Phase 5 of its Restore Illinois Plan. This Phase removed many restrictions on crowd and program capacities and the use of public spaces. The district takes pride in the fact that they were a contributor of this movement to help combat the pandemic as it dedicated one its facilities as a Regional Vaccine Center. There were, however, again some guidelines that had inconsistencies regarding masks wearing for indoor and outdoor use.

For example, the CDC Guidance for camps where not everyone is fully vaccinated, within its mask guidance stated:

“Camp programs should encourage people who are not fully vaccinated and those who might need extra precautions to wear a mask consistently and correctly:

Indoors. Mask use indoors is strongly encouraged for people who are not fully vaccinated including children. No child under the age of 2 should wear a mask.

Outdoors. In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, people who are fully vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not vaccinated.

Although people who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks, camp programs should be supportive of campers or staff who choose to wear a mask. Camps may also choose to require masks for vaccinated and not fully vaccinated campers and staff in order to adhere to prevention strategies when it is difficult to tell who has been vaccinated to set an example for not fully vaccinated campers. Camps should also be supportive of campers and staff who choose to wear a mask. Particularly in areas of substantial or high transmission, camps may consider requiring masks indoors by all people present including vaccinated, staff, and other people such as visitors.”

Within the Phase 5 Guidance from the State of Illinois, one strategy says:

“All unvaccinated persons should wear face coverings in crowded settings, both indoors and outdoors, especially when youth are present.”

So, within these aforementioned guidelines, the CDC does appear to possibly enable the removal of masks while outdoors. The state guidance, however, is contradictory as it mentions crowded settings, both indoors and outdoors, especially when youth are present.

As previously mentioned, the park district has done their best in interpreting and incorporating guidelines into their program protocols. We have admittedly often taken the more conservative and

safety conscious approach in developing program protocols. Our experience and interactions with residents over the last year has been highly supportive as parents entrust us with the safety and well-being of their family members and themselves. We understand that there will be differing levels of debate regarding some general and program specific guidance. Staff have families too and we as consumers face the differing levels of services from firms and businesses we seek. There is no consistent and simple answer in a global pandemic that continues to present new challenges and new guidelines are continually developed. We will continue, as we have in the past, to collaborate as much as possible with other local agencies, interpret and incorporate guidelines into protocols and offer the best quality and safest services that we believe are possible.

Commissioners thanked park district staff and expressed appreciation for the efforts put forth during the pandemic to keep facilities open, programs running and staff and the community safe.

**North Shore Rhythmic Gymnastics**

Director Nehila and Deputy Director of Recreation Korzyniewski were interviewed by WBBM News and channel 5 regarding the Sachs Recreation Center being the regional training facility for the North Shore Rhythmic Gymnastics group.

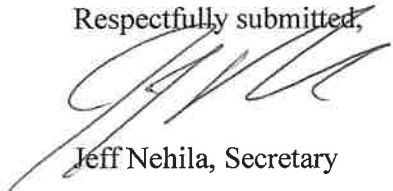
Motion made by Treasurer Cohen, seconded by Vice-President Caron, to adjourn the Workshop Meeting at 10:14 p.m. Voice vote as follows:

AYES:           Cohen, Caron, Brown, Serota, Patinkin (5)

NAYS:           None (0)

Motion passed in a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Nehila, Secretary