



Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan Update

May 10, 2004 Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Chair Doug Varn, Marty Bracco, Gail Moran, David Stannard, Laura Kaufman, Patience Nelson, Katie Kelly, Susan Kurtenbach, John Mullins, Mark Gartland, Tom Phillion, David Kindler, Mike Grandy, Lisa, Lightcap, Kent Newton, Gary Balling, Tim Kelly, Diane Stanke, Rich Shoum, Lesley Gilmore, Bob Franzen, Kathy Grayson, and Kurt Mackey

Guest Speakers: Ron Vine, Leisure Vision and Jeff King, Ballard*King and Associates

- I. **Welcome** – The meeting was called to order at 7:40 by Doug Varn.
- II. Ron Vine introduced Jeff King, an authority on recreation facilities from Ballard* King and Associates.

Some of the findings from the Power Point included:

- a. Five out of six facilities identified in the survey as important are outdoors facilities, however, 63% of tax dollars are spent on indoor spaces.
- b. Oak Park Conservatory was the number one facility identified for importance.
- c. 13% of households use centers several times per week.
- d. If a person uses one center, they usually use more than one.
- e. Fitness and indoor ice identified as most important current indoor spaces for improvement/expansion.
- f. Indoor running/walking path was the number one new indoor space desired.
- g. The Community Center model is not efficient or effective.

Why current model doesn't work:

- i. Duplication of programs – Community Centers competing amongst themselves
- ii. Staffing costs driven by multiple locations
- iii. Administrative overhead
- iv. Neighborhood focus has changed (we are mobile, 46% of people drive to facilities)
- v. Program spaces are not what people want
- vi. Condition of centers (deferred maintenance)
- vii. Drain on existing operating resources
- viii. Tax costs are disproportionate to benefits

Recommendations:

- Convert 1-3 centers into specialized facilities

- Convert 1-2 to centers into Not For Profit facilities
- Restructure operations (one employee responsible for more than one facility)
- Expand centers by schools
- Build a new community center

Ron Vine and Jeff King asked the committee to compile a list of 2 or 3 of the best recommendations from the list above or new ideas not listed that they can look into in depth.

Doug Varn summarized that the current governance model and the current delivery of programs and services is not working, which we knew at the start of this process. We also know status quo is not acceptable option. There are many unmet needs identified in the community survey. The solution to addressing these unmet needs is expensive. We can take two tracks, either go directly to the community or we can maximize efficiencies throughout the District and then address the list of unmet needs. Dave Stannard added that not only should we focus on meeting current needs but address future needs also. John Mullins commented that the staff is doing a great job in getting the budget in control but asked how much longer can we continue without a major change? Doug Varn and John Mullins observed that the staff has made extraordinary changes in the last few years regarding District operations.

Gail Moran stated she is not surprised by the outcome of the indoor spaces study. We need to look at the big picture and agree that it's costly to operate the centers. Gail likes the number of options suggested; plenty of flexibility. Patience Nelson felt that some features Jeff King presented from other park and recreation facilities were extravagant. She wants to find out what facilities the schools have available and see if we can partner with the schools to meet community needs. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Multiplex to be built in Oak Park. Jeff King commented that this facility will cater to a certain clientele just as the YMCA does and other similar facilities in Oak Park. Susan Kurtenbach stated that we need to take care of what we currently do before we make major changes.

Katie Kelly commented that we need deeper understanding of program demands on a center by center basis, we need better differentiation between center usage and usage of park areas around them, and we need more information on program duplication.

It was suggested that Bret Fahnstrom, Manager of Community Centers, and Greg Evans, Manager of Adult and Senior Leisure Services, attend one of our next meetings.

Ron Vine said it is obvious that the Community Center situation needs to be addressed.

Doug would like to meet next Monday, May 17 at 7pm at 218 Madison to discuss what was presented this evening. Whoever can make it is welcome to attend. Doug reminded everyone that there will be a facility tour to Evanston and Niles this Saturday, May 15 departing at 8:15am from Rehm Park.

Tim Kelly emphasized that we need to work within our current economy. Gary Balling said he's glad we are discussing these issues and that there were no surprises in the findings presented tonight. Dave Kindler added that change is difficult but once accepted, it opens up many possibilities. We can then talk about what could be.

III. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm

Upcoming PDCC Meetings:

Monday, May 17, 2004, at 7pm, at the Administration Center, 218 Madison

Monday, May 24, at 7pm at Stevenson Center, 49 Lake Street