

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
HELD ON NOVEMBER 29, 2010 AT 7:00 P.M. AT MEMORIAL PARK

Call to order: 7:06 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Commissioners John Murphy, John Spizzirri,  
Raeann Zylman, and Joanne Ring

Committee Members Absent: Commissioner Fred Bilotto

Park Staff Members Present: Jane Kawanna, William Cazares, Chris Hobson,  
Chris Sobczak, Octavio Carbajal

Others Present: Carmine Bilotto, Carol Kaiser

Commissioner Spizzirri called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm. Commissioner Spizzirri makes note of importance of sticking strictly to the agenda and recommends no “side bars” to streamline and expedite the meeting; and further states that whatever matters and/or issues discussed at the meeting should be communicated to the employees. Commissioner Spizzirri also recommends that there should be no more moving agenda matters around and that the agenda be followed in order to have the meeting run smoothly, and requests “let us work as a team”.

Commissioner Spizzirri applauds Tina Morin for the weekend endeavors in decorating the Field House front lawn. Tina is also commended for building and painting the large wooden deer.

Commissioner Spizzirri suggests that the commissioners should start writing down what they want in the Recreation Center proposal to minimize outsider input. Commissioner Zylman suggests they send out current suggestions and rough draft to the City. When the City gets back to them with an accepted proposal, the grant writer and lawyers can take a look at it. Commissioner Spizzirri reiterates that the first thing they need to do is begin writing down what they need on the Recreation Center proposal. Commissioner Ring advises Commissioner Spizzirri that with the proposal there should be legal representation. Commissioner Spizzirri responds “not until the end when they are ready to do a legal transfer”. Commissioner Spizzirri expresses they do not know what the proposal is at this point and time. Commissioner Spizzirri acknowledges that the proposal has to go to the lawyer, but they are not at the stage to put it there now. Commissioner Zylman asks, “What do we want?” Commissioner Spizzirri inquires which commissioner will be taking notes on the proposal. Commissioner Murphy requests to have water at city rate for both the Recreation Center and Memorial Park. Commissioner Zylman suggests we request the city rate for all parks. Commissioner Zylman suggests adding something saying that the park district is willing to work with Tommy Brown. Commissioner Ring cautions on the wording of the document. Further discussion on unforeseen liabilities takes place.

Chris Hobson updates the committee that there are successful programs the park could oversee should the Recreation Center be acquired by the park district. Chris Hobson proceeds to inform the committee that the community is very responsive to many of their programs. Commissioner Murphy interjects a reminiscent college football experience and ties it to the importance of recreation and physical activities. Commissioner Spizzirri adds the inclusion of a Golf Outing for fundraiser purposes to be amended to the proposal. Commissioner Zylman suggests the inclusion of garbage removal, and Commissioner Ring suggests possibly including street and sidewalk cleaning.

Commissioner Zylman puts across something about the TIF which prompts a hazy conversation which is clarified by Carmine Bilotto. Mr. Bilotto clarifies that the first TIF expires in 2017, but the City plans on paying it off in 2013. When they finish paying off the bonds they can abolish the TIF, but there must be a legal document requiring the City to abolish the TIF. If it is not in the legal document, the City can turn around and say “okay we will make another TIF”, which will leave the park with no money from the first TIF. Mr. Bilotto moves on to the second TIF and states he is unsure of the maturity date for the second TIF.

Discussion moves back to inclusions in the Recreation Center proposal and a scoreboard is mentioned. Chris Hobson acknowledges the existence of a scoreboard but advises the committee of a possible maintenance expense with acquiring the scoreboard. Commissioner Murphy inquires about a floor scrubber for the floor. Chris Hobson acknowledges the existence of a floor scrubber but is unsure if it would be designed for the material that makes up the current floor. Commissioner Ring advises we compare the acquisition of the Recreation Center in the same manner one would when buying a house. Commissioner Spizzirri addresses Mr. Carmine Bilotto in regards to information of a TIF. Chris Hobson updates the Committee on general endeavors highlighting the lack of revenue currently generated at the Recreation Center.

Jane Kawanna suggests to the committee of cancelling the December 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of the Whole. Committee members present agreed to cancel the meeting.

Commissioner Murphy takes over meeting in regards to grants. He praises the grant writer and points out her extensive knowledge on existing grants. With her accessibility to people in Springfield, he feels confident on successfully obtaining grants. He also encourages the Park District to wean themselves off political grants. “The sooner we get politics out of the Park District, the better off we are going to be”. He continues to list a variety of grants available and touches on obesity and DCFS and urges in general to not “. . . miss this boat.” Commissioner Spizzirri cuts back to the grant initiative and redirects Commissioner Zylman to find possible grants for the park. Commissioner Murphy highlights property availability around the canal area and encourages that effort be made in acquiring land to promote more park availability in Blue Island.

Commissioner Spizzirri expresses frustration on the Santa House endeavors. He continues to elaborate on various elements leading to setbacks in completing the Santa House. Jane Kawanna explains and updates Commissioner Spizzirri on his concerns. Commissioner Spizzirri questions Chris Sobczak and Ken Baret's time spent working on the Santa House. Commissioner Murphy encourages holding employees accountable, and Commissioner Zylman requests that the new Recreation Department team be excused from blame as they just got involved with the Santa House. Commissioner Spizzirri reiterates his point and directly addresses Chris Sobczak. Commissioner Spizzirri stresses more delegation within the Maintenance Department and inquires into more maintenance endeavors. Chris Sobczak updates Commissioner Spizzirri on the essential directive steps needed prior to accomplishing the current tasks at hand. Commissioner Spizzirri reinforces the chain of command and Jane Kawanna's authority to terminate insubordinate employees. Commissioner Murphy affirms his distaste with paying employees who do not work. Christmas decorations are discussed by Commissioner Spizzirri with regard to any possible areas of improvement. Jane Kawanna updates the committee, and Commissioner Spizzirri addresses Will Cazares in regards to the lighting and camera mechanics inside the Santa House. Will Cazares updates the committee and confirms that everything is falling together as planned. Jane Kawanna states that decorations in the Santa House are going to be limited because the area is not that large. Commissioner Spizzirri states that some Santa volunteers have declined because of the background check policy.

Meeting transitions into Polar Express and decorative supplies inventory. Jane Kawanna updates the committee on the need for decorations to compliment the Christmas programs in play. Jane Kawanna asks if maintenance can be used in the Santa House as Santas. Commissioners agree to her request. She then asks what can she do if they don't want to be Santas? Commissioners Murphy and Spizzirri said, "Fire Them". Commissioner Spizzirri reaffirms Jane Kawanna's authority to terminate any employee not cooperating with the direction from a person with authority. Movement of the Santa House and possible staging areas are discussed. Commissioner Spizzirri inquires about transportation and concerns of possible vandalism to the Santa House. Jane Kawanna stresses the importance of mapping out a route and staging sites for the Santa House. Chris Hobson inquires about the budget allowed for decorating. Jane Kawanna raises concerns about the importance of calling for decoration purchases with no budget. She advises the committee not to send her shopping with no budget. The Park District did not purchase decorations last year, so the Commissioners feel the expense for decorations to compliment the season is justified. It is agreed that a sign or banner be made to effectively identify the Santa House for the upcoming parade. Commissioner Spizzirri offers decorative advice while formulating a plan to finalize the issue. Commissioner Ring asks for clarification in regards to agenda for Lunch with Santa. Commissioner Ring offers to purchase cookies from Iversen's Bakery as a contribution to the program. Commissioner Spizzirri questions the status of the Lunch with Santa event and expresses concerns. Commissioner Zylman and the recreation staff provide updates and plans to successfully execute the Lunch with Santa event. Commissioner Spizzirri reverts back to the Santa House and requests to have a vehicle follow the Santa House.

Mr. Carmine Bilotto offers advice from the audience in regards to contacting Blue Cap to better coordinate efforts near Portland Park.

Commissioner Spizzirri inquires on the status for vehicles entering the Light Parade. A brief overview is given of the plan in motion. Six (6) vehicles will be decorated and entered in the Light Parade. Commissioner Spizzirri asks Chris Sobczak to place a vehicle behind the Santa House. The Santa House mapped-out route is once again discussed. Commissioner Ring has a Polar Express inquiry with regards to the layout of the events taking place in and around the Rail Grill restaurant. Costume characters are picked and staffed for the Light Parade.

The January Newsletter is mentioned and discussed to direct the information included in it. Jane Kawanna asks for more direction and Will Cazares offers professional guidance in writing methods. Commissioner Zylman offers suggestions which will both compliment the Park District and The Friends of the Park organization. Swimming, Toddler Music, Friends of the Park Party, amongst other programs and events, are mentioned for inclusion in the newsletter. Commissioner Zylman asks Commissioner Spizzirri if there is anything else up for discussion.

Public Comments: Carmine Bilotto regarding TIF.

Commissioner Spizzirri adjourned the meeting at 9:31 P.M.

Approved:

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John Murphy, Acting Chairperson