

**VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
MINUTES
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Monday, September 20 at 7:15 PM
MEMORIAL HALL OLD BOARD ROOM**

Chairman Curran called the meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission to Order at 7:32 p.m. at the Memorial Hall old board room.

Members Present: Chairman Jeff Curran, Commissioners Banke, Deppe, Dougherty, Griffin, Mulligan, Opler & Otto

Members Absent: Commissioner Ed McCarthy

Also Present: Don Grigas, Liberty Suburban Newspaper, Bridget Doyle, Trib Local and 15 young people representing the skate park

Staff Present: Gina Hassett, Director of Parks and Recreation
Linda Copp, Secretary

Commissioner Deppe moved approval of the July 19, 2010 Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes. Commissioner Banke seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Curran suggested moving Veeck Park skate park up on the Agenda since there were skate park users present addressing that issue.

Skate Park Discussion

Chairman Curran gave a background on the skate park. He thanked the young people for coming. Chairman Curran stated that the Commissioners had visited the skate park before the meeting. Chairman Curran asked for their input on improvements or needs of the skate park. Ms. Hassett stated that ACA wants a recommendation and has not said the park needs to be shut down.

Chairman Curran stated Facebook could be used for a venue for the students. Commissioner Dougherty asked if Parks and Rec has a Facebook page. Ms. Hassett stated currently the department does not have one and she will review the policy for using that option. Charlie Banke, 427 N Vine, Hinsdale spoke regarding the skate park. He stated that skate boarding is misunderstood. He provided some statistics about the sport. He stated the average age is 14. Charlie stated that there could be as many as 849 skate boarders in the area or the same amount that attend the middle school. Attached to these minutes is the speech Charlie presented.

Commissioner Mulligan thanked Charlie for his presentation and asked when they mostly use the skate park. Ryan Lowe, 918 S Bodin Street stated that he would be there whenever he could get a ride or take his bike, generally after school. He stated that in the summer most of their time is spent there.

Commissioner Otto thanked the skate board users for coming and asked about the BMX bikes that are there. Most of the users that were present preferred that no bikes would be there. Joe Foley, 225 Sunset Ridge, Willowbrook stated that when he goes to Veeck the kids stay together and have fun. Steve Dietrich, 332 Ridge Ave, Clarendon Hills stated that there are not usually bikers there. There are also roller bladders there. Commissioner Otto asked if the boys thought the bikes were causing damage and asked if the bikes be banned from the park.

Chris Chenery, 220 Meadowbrook Lane, Hinsdale stated that it is a rule that no bikes are supposed to be there. The pegs on the bikes are what cause the damage. Ms. Hassett asked if the bikers come back when the police leave. Alfonso Lopez-Yanez, 21 Spinning Wheel Rd, Hinsdale stated that there have been bikers and they come back as soon as the police leave. He stated that police should come by more often and not only once per day. During the summer it sometimes would not even be open by the police. The poor condition of the park has stopped some users. Only one student thought it should remain open for bikes. Everyone else voted to have it be for skate boarders only. Chris Chenery stated that cement parks hold up better.

Commissioner Otto asked if there was a way to build the ramps that would be unusable for bikers. Charlie Banke stated that if Veeck was to stay, he would suggest not having bikers unless it was concrete. Alfonso Lopez-Yanez stated that the concrete skate parks in the long run would last longer. It would be a safer environment. He suggested it was safe for BMX's and boarders. Another student stated that the BMX bikes have caused damage. Commissioner Griffin asked about the ages listed in Chief Bloom's memo regarding the age of the users. She stated it appeared that most of the users were adult aged. Alfonso stated the age in the room is 13 – 19. One student stated that others can learn from the experienced boarders. Alfonso stated that they also use it for other things like filming for snow boarding.

Charlie Banke stated that some young kids come on with scooters. Commissioner Otto asked Charlie what could be done with the existing equipment if it was replaced. Charlie stated that it could be extended or rearranged. Charlie suggested installing a turnstile and a security light. Ryan Lowe also suggested rearranging the equipment as well and said the rail by the stairs is unusable. Alfonso stated that the park is an old style for skate boarding. He suggested the skate park be extended or rearranged. Commissioner Otto asked if that would be an issue in 5 – 7 years if it was concrete. Ms. Hassett stated that the park could still have some moveable parts even if the park was concrete. Ms. Hassett also stated that the skate park has about the same life span as playgrounds. Ms. Hassett stated that there was no plan in place for maintenance of the skate park.

Alfonso explained how Lemont Skate Park was built. The youth liked the design of that park. He suggested adding to ours. He suggested that if money was the issue, perhaps the users of the park could raise the money that could help. Chairman Curran asked if any of them attended competitions. Alfonso stated that none of them are that good and have not done competitions. Ms. Hassett stated that Darien has closed their park due to drug sales on the location. Commissioner Opler asked if there has been vandalism at other parks like the skate park. Ms. Hassett stated that some of the others have, but not like the skate park. The maintenance at the other parks has been less. Ms. Hassett stated that we don't have the man power to monitor and maintain the skate park.

Ryan Lowe stated that the users could help if clean up is needed. Commissioner Banke stated that these young people are a community. Commissioner Banke mentioned that it is unbelievable that we are talking about taking the park apart and a solution should be talked

about. Chairman Curran thanked the 15 young people for coming. He asked how many others use the skate park that could not attend the meeting. Alfonso stated that there are others who could not attend that use the park. There are also users from Clarendon Hills. The users were passing out flyers to let others know about the meeting tonight. He stated that everyone there has at least 5 friends that skate board. Some of the others have other activities that kept them from coming.

Commissioner Mulligan stated that it is a great showing of users. She asked if there is still room for more users and is there a way to reach out to the community to grow the sport if money is invested in the skate park. Ryan Lowe stated that more kids skate on the street because of the poor condition of the park. The police don't like them doing that so he feels that the use would increase if the park was in good condition. Chris Chenery stated that new items and rearranging of the park would have more users come back. Commissioner Dougherty asked how many in attendance live in Hinsdale. 13 out of 15 in attendance live in Hinsdale. She asked if there was a group, how many would help with suggestions and maintenance. They thought possibly 100. Justin Johnson stated that items like stairs, rails, and newer items could be helpful and that staffing the park would help. Ms. Hassett asked if they would staff it for free, since the Village does not have the personnel or the funds to staff it. One attendee suggested that staffing it would bring in more kids. Ms. Hassett asked about the Burr Ridge park and if smaller components would be feasible. Ryan Lowe stated that Citizens Park in Burr Ridge has a good set up even though it is small. The set up was mentioned and the kids are willing to help with the design.

Ms. Hassett asked if having two separate parks in two different locations could be an alternative. Most of the teens in attendance didn't object to that option. Ms. Hassett also stated that there is no line item for the maintenance of the skate park. All maintenance items are from park maintenance line item. There is no money this year to fix it. Ms. Hassett stated that it will close for the season when the weather is cold and will not reopen until the spring. Chairman Curran asked if any other skate parks are open in the winter. Alfonso mentioned that there is an indoor park in Tinley Park. It costs \$110 per year to be a member in Tinley Park or you can pay as you go. Alfonso stated that smaller ramps can help teach smaller kids how to skate board.

Chairman Curran suggested getting a turnstile estimate and he believes that Ms. Hassett should get some design alternatives including concrete. Commissioner Banke asked for an assessment of replacing items over time and replacing something each year and look at alternate locations. Chairman Curran asked Ms. Hassett if any work has been done. She stated that she has not found any information on any work being done at the park recently. Commissioner Mulligan suggested the user have a Facebook page or ways to work together to restore the park. Commissioner Banke suggested that the users can also go to a Board meeting. Ms. Hassett stated that the next step is a suggestion to ACA, but she feels it is premature for the users to attend a board meeting. The Commission needs to develop a plan. Ms. Hassett stated that the question is has the skate park lived it's live in this location and should it be moved or reinvest at Veeck. Ms. Hassett stated that smaller parks should be considered.

Commissioner Opler asked for more information about the costs. What is the range to get it to a level that the users would be happy? Commissioner Opler wants a range of suggestions before he can make a decision regarding a recommendation. Users do need to help to maintain it if they care about it. Commissioner Deppe stated that he is impressed with the group that was in

attendance and suggested that they talk to the parents since the parents are the ones that will be involved in writing letters or phone calls to the Trustees.

Commissioner Dougherty asked if the young people in attendance are going to organize a Facebook page for the users. They stated that they could help with rearranging items and they want to help with whatever they can for the short term. Chairman Curran stated this is a good first step and stated the earliest any work would be done was April of 2011. Chairman Curran stated that maintenance should be an item in the budget for the future.

One young man stated that many of the users would be able to help with building ramps and suggested that they could design a park as a team if needed. They would help with installing items if they could. Commissioner Griffin asked if they would rather have smaller parks instead of the one big one. Most of the young people said yes. Chairman Curran thanked the group for coming. The young people in attendance left at 8:30 pm.

Commissioner Discussion

Chairman Curran stated that he wants this to be used as a communication tool. Ms. Hassett stated that a Facebook page would be a one-way page because the Village would not want others using it to post comments. Commissioner Otto asked why we haven't had these kids involved and stated that if a FOB system was installed there, staff would not have to rely on the police or public services staff to open and close the park. Ms. Hassett stated the defacing is happening after hours. The two options are moving the skate park into community parks or fixing this one. Commissioner Banke stated that it is a different sport now. He stated that in the last 7 years the idea of having a skate park in other parks has changed. Seven years ago, no one wanted a skate park in any park except at Veeck Park. Ms. Hassett stated that two smaller parks are a better option than repairing Veeck. Chairman Curran stated that the officers are beginning to count the number of users when they check the park. The numbers are low now that school is in session. There also has been less activity because the park was closed for 18 months. Commissioner Griffin asked when the headcount was done. Ms. Hassett commented that the police will check evenings and weekends. Commissioner Dougherty stated that if the bushes were removed that the park could be seen from the street.

Commissioner Opler asked if Western Springs or Clarendon Hills have parks. Ms. Hassett stated they neither town has a skate park. Commissioner Opler suggested that perhaps these towns could cooperate with Hinsdale to help with possible funding since they have residents that use the park. Ms. Hassett stated that approximately \$10,000 has been spent for repairs at the skate park. Ms. Hassett commented that some things can be done to help with the maintenance but it does cost more to maintain the skate park. Commissioner Banke commented that this is the one place for the youth of that age.

Ms. Hassett suggested to the Commission that the recommendation to ACA should be to replace the pieces at about \$15,000 in materials, not including man power hours and talking with working with the youth. Ms. Hassett stated that the Board is concerned with dollars and there is no money in the budget to fix the skate park. Chairman Curran mentioned that the kids have offered to volunteer and provide labor hours and time. Chairman Curran asked Ms. Hassett to ask Public Services if that is a feasible option. Commissioner Otto asked how staff can work with the users of the park to see what can be done with the existing equipment.

Commissioner Otto suggested throwing it back to the users to see what can be done with the existing equipment with no money. Chairman Curran asked Ms. Hassett what can be done in

the next fiscal year if we have some money. Commissioner Deppe asked if the users can be put under Parks as staff and if there would be any legal ramifications. Chairman Curran stated this project equates to the boy scouts asking to do a volunteer project in the park and the users should be allowed to help in any way they can. Commissioner Dougherty suggested having an adult with to supervise the project and waivers can be signed. Commissioner Opler asked if there have been injuries at the skate park. Ms. Hassett stated that if there are, they have been unreported and that injuries are part of the sport.

Monthly Reports

July & August 2010 Revenue/Expense Reports

Ms. Hassett presented the July & August revenue/expense reports. Ms. Hassett stated that there is still about \$6500 of pool revenue to be received and there will be some expenses. Chairman Curran asked about the expansion of hours. Ms. Hassett stated that we made a profit of about \$500.

Recreation Program Report

Ms. Hassett commented about the pool users that were angry about the pool being closed during the week, even though the reduced hours had been advertised with the pool membership information. She explained that a compromise was made and the pool was open those days for four hours but everyone had to pay \$5. This made a lot of members angry. Ms. Hassett stated that Clarendon Hills went to back to school hours at the same time but they were open during the week, not just weekends.

Ms. Hassett stated that Clarendon Hills has been contacted regarding sharing back to school hours for the future. They asked if there could be some changes. The concern is that residents could no longer walk to the pool. The Clarendon Hills Park District Commissioners are still considering this option. Ms. Hassett presented the draft of the survey that will go to the pool members. There will not be an incentive to fill it out. Staff would like for it to go out this week. Ms. Hassett calculated that it would take 10-15 visits to the pool for the season to justify a \$30 fee increase. Chairman Curran asked if the software can show visits per family. Ms. Hassett stated that the software does not have that capability.

Commissioner Mulligan commented on the question about the reduced hours on the survey. She suggested two separate questions regarding the hours on weekends and back to school hours. Chairman Curran asked about feedback about the concessions. Ms. Hassett stated that there was only one complaint regarding the concession stand. She also stated that there were two private rentals and the pool was rented to swim clubs to try to generate more revenue during the times the pool was closed. Commissioner Banke also asked about season pool attendance. Ms. Hassett stated that those numbers are not complete yet.

Commissioner Opler asked if the capital outlay will be spent and if staff has the right to allocate that differently. Ms. Hassett stated that the Board would have to make that decision. Ms. Hassett wants a pool facility audit done but has not heard back if funds can be spent for that. Chairman Curran asked if there are any other items needed. Ms. Hassett stated that Hinsdale Swim Club gave a \$4000 donation towards lane lines and she hopes there will be funds for the remainder of the cost. Commissioner Deppe asked if there were any problems this year. Ms. Hassett that there were no personnel issues for the first time and swim lessons registrations were up. Commissioner Deppe commented that he heard no complaints either.

Ms. Hassett believed that the pool memberships were down because of the cold summer last year and she is hopeful that the reduced hours will not affect the memberships for 2011.

Ms. Hassett stated that the baseball field looks good at Veeck and hopes to hear in September or October on the Grant for KLM. Chairman Curran asked about the timing on the shelter. Ms. Hassett stated that all picnic shelter rentals have been postponed until February.

Park & Recreation Commission Follow Up Items

Hinsdale Platform Tennis Association Update

The Village Trustees have put together a letter to Burr Ridge and we have not received a letter from Burr Ridge regarding the new courts. No effort can be done with lifetime memberships until we receive this letter.

Correspondence

None

New Business

Ms. Hassett stated that the money from Duncan Field was diverted to KLM for paving but only the entrance and exit have been done. Staff received no notice about the work getting done. The road to the platform courts will not be done. Commissioner Dougherty commented on how bad the road is that goes back to HCA and the platform tennis courts. Chairman Curran asked Ms. Hassett to talk to Village Manager Dave Cook about getting this work done. It would be a project that would need to go out to bid. Ms. Hassett stated that there was a communication breakdown regarding the paving. Commissioner Mulligan stated that it is difficult to get up the road when there is snow and ice.

Commissioner Griffin asked about someone getting bit by a dog. Ms. Hassett stated that it was a police matter and handled by the police. Ms. Hassett did not know the details.

Liaison Reports

ACA

Ms. Hassett stated that the skate park was addressed at ACA but no funds will be spent without a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Commissioner Banke will attend the next meeting on October 4.

Gateway SRA

Ms. Hassett stated that there was a question about Gateway at ACA. President Cauley asked for the numbers if the families participated on their own. The Village can only tax what is going to be used. If the family participated the cost would be \$23,000 however the special recreation tax can only be levied from a participating SRA organization. Hinsdale is the second most used community and the Village contribution is \$66,000. Ms. Hassett stated that the number is increasing and currently there are 25 participants. Chairman Curran asked what would happen if the village dropped out. Ms. Hassett stated that the \$66,000 can't be used for anything else because it is a special recreation tax levy. Basically the participants are happy with the program

and the day camp is very popular. A lot of the programming is based on location. The tax levy is based on population. Commissioner Banke asked if the village could subsidize these 25 participants versus levying the expenditure. Ms. Hassett stated that the fee would come out of the general fund from the Village and the tax payers would no longer be charged the special tax.

Commissioner Dougherty stated how good the letter to the editor was in the Hinsdalean regarding the pool. Ms. Hassett commented that the paper wrote that article because of all the negative articles published by residents.

Commissioner Otto stated some boys were playing football at Robbins and were hanging upside down and destroyed the net. Commissioner Otto called police and they were busy. He was told that soccer was not an emergency call. Ms. Hassett stated to call 911 and not the non-emergency number and she will check with the police department about why no one responded.

Adjournment

Commissioners will meet at Burns before the next meeting in October with the meeting at 7 pm. Since there was no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Dougherty moved to adjourn. Commissioner Deppe seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission meeting was declared adjourned at 9:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Copp