

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF DUPAGE
DARIEN PARK DISTRICT
REGULAR MEETING**

September 14, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Christensen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of the Darien City Hall, 1702 Plainfield Road, Darien, Illinois.

ROLL CALL OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Upon roll call the following Commissioners were present:

PRESENT: Neil Christensen, Frank Noverini, Ray Jablonski, James Tikalsky, Rob Sarocco

ABSENT: None.

Staff: Stephanie Gurgone, Executive Director; Chris Katsougris, Assistant Director; Robert Strickler; Superintendent of Parks, Matt Henderson; Sportsplex General Manager

PUBLIC COMMENT & GUESTS

A. Recognition of SEASPAR Special Olympics Athletes

President Christensen welcomed the guests to the meeting. He stated that he looked forward to recognizing the SEASPAR Special Olympic young athletes who have put in a lot of effort. President Christensen introduced Assistant Director Chris Katsougris to present the awards.

Assistant Director Katsougris stated that the Darien Park District has recognized the Darien resident athletes for a number of years. She introduced each athlete, presented them with an award. Following the recognition ceremony there was a short break for a reception for the athletes.

At 7:25 p.m. the regular meeting resumed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Executive Director Gurgone reported that she received correspondence from Ms. Shari Gillespie regarding the closing of the skate park. She stated that it would be read in full under "New Business."

President Christensen reported that he received correspondence from a resident regarding the Fitness Center, correspondence from St. John's Church asking for any unused park benches and correspondence from Mr. Stan Niemiec regarding the skate park.

OFFICER REPORTS

- A. President** –No report
- B. Vice President** –No report
- C. Secretary** – No report
- D. Treasurer** –Commissioner Jablonski presented the Treasurer's report ending August 31, 2009.

Commissioner Tikalsky made a motion, duly seconded by Commissioner Sarocco to approve the Treasurer's Monthly Report ending August 31, 2009

Upon roll call the following Commissioners voted:

AYES: Tikalsky, Sarocco, Jablonski, Noverini, Christensen

NAYS: None

President Christensen declared the motion carried.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

No Report.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director/SEASPAR

Executive Director Gurgone reported that the Board received a copy of the Fitness Center report. She highlighted the report and stated that the center is celebrating its first year.

B. Assistant Director

Assistant Director Katsougris reported that registration for fall programs can be utilized through the District website. She reported that open gym basketball is available on Saturdays from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. and volleyball on Sundays from 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. and the cost is \$5 for residents and \$8 for non residents. She further reported that a punch card is also available.

Assistant Director Katsougris reported that there are openings for the Starved Rock tour of the Weber House and Gardens on Thursday, September 24th. She reported that cost is \$58 for residents and \$63 for non-residents and includes a historic trolley ride and buffet lunch.

Assistant Director Katsougris reported that Thursday, October 8th Trip to the Four Winds Casino is \$35 for residents and \$40 for non-residents and includes a \$10 voucher to be used at one of the

six restaurants and a \$5 instant slot play money. She stated that the deadline for registration is September 24th.

Assistant Director Katsougris reported that a relaxing cruise on Lake Geneva is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21st. She stated that the cost is \$72 for residents and \$77 for non-residents and includes lunch and a two hour cruise.

Assistant Director Katsougris reported that there are currently 162 children enrolled in the preschool and that the enrollment is up 30% over last year at this time. She reported that the Outdoor Flea Market is scheduled for Saturday, September 19th beginning at 9:00 a.m. at Darien Community Park.

Assistant Director Katsougris reported that the Hoe-Down is scheduled for Sunday, October 11th from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. at Darien Community Park. She stated that Little Nashville will be performing from 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. and many new attractions such as an inflatable obstacle course, moonwalk, pop-a-shot basketball, hayrides, pony rides, petting zoon, a tumble bus, games, crafts, food and fun. She further stated that punch cards will be available in \$5 and \$10 denominations.

C. Superintendent of Finance

Executive Director Gurgone reported that Superintendent Deldin was out. She reported that the audit was completed and that it will be ready for approval at the September 14th Board Meeting. She further reported that the on-line registration through Webtrac started August 26th and that it is running smoothly.

D. Superintendent of Parks

Superintendent Strickler reported that staff is busy now that summer staff has returned to school.

Superintendent Strickler reported on the outcome of Darien Fest. He reported that the setup went well and that although the tear down took longer than expected, overall the park is in fairly good condition.

Superintendent Strickler reported that staff has been receiving calls regarding the odor at South Grove pond. He stated that he has addressed the issue, which was caused by one of the aerators not working. The aerator has been fixed and he is running them more often for the next week to clear up the algae. Superintendent Strickler stated that once the problem is resolved, the aerators will go back to their regular schedule - 2 run from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and 2 run from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Christensen stated that when the subdivision was built, the pond had no attention for years and that the Park District does take care of it. He asked that the residents be patient until staff can get the pond under control.

E. Sportsplex General Manager

General Manager Henderson reported that the fall programs are in session and that late registration will be accepted. He stated that the open skate hours are located on the website at www.dariensportplex.com or on the phone menu at 630-789-6666.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT (for consent agenda)

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Tikalsky moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Noverini to approve the Consent Agenda as presented: Warrants, August 10, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes, Nike Bauer AAA Sportsplex Contract, Hinsdale South Ice Contract, City Salt Intergovernmental Agreement, Surplus Equipment Resolution, SEASPAR EAGLES Agreement, and SEASPAR Vehicle Agreement.

Upon roll call the following Commissioners voted:

AYES: Tikalsky, Noverini, Jablonski, Sarocco, Christensen

NAYS: None

President Christensen declared the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Annual Audit Report

Executive Director Gurgone reported that the Board received a summary of the District audit as well as the Sportsplex report. She reported that due to the finishing of the renovations at the Community Center and Sportsplex, this year's audit is a little different than previous years. Executive Director Gurgone reported that the capital expenditures are significantly higher than a normal year and the debt had already been issued in the previous fiscal year so the expenditures look out of balance. She stated that after this year's audit, capital expenditures will return to normal levels.

Executive Director Gurgone reported that \$150,000 in fund balances was transferred from the Corporate Fund and the Recreation Fund to cover the remaining building expenses in the 08-09 fiscal year. She stated that the remaining fund balance in the Corporate Fund is to cover 50% of the Sportsplex debt due and for a reserve.

Executive Director Gurgone noted that there is a new line item called "Unfunded Pension Obligation" which shows the District's pension obligations if IMRF ceased to exist.

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment.

Commissioner Jablonski moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Sarocco to approve the Darien Sportsplex Annual Audit Report.

Upon roll call the following Commissioners voted:

AYES: Jablonski, Sarocco, Noverini, Tikalsky, Christensen

NAYS: None

President Christensen declared the motion carried.

B. Annual Treasurer's Report

Executive Director Gurgone reported that once approved, the Treasurer's Report will need to be published in the newspaper.

Commissioner Tikalsky moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Noverini to approve the Annual Treasurer's Report.

Upon roll call the following Commissioners voted:

AYES: Tikalsky, Noverini, Jablonski, Sarocco, Christensen

NAYS: None

President Christensen declared the motion carried.

C. Skate Park Closure

Executive Director Gurgone provided a summary of how the District arrived at the decision to close the Skate Park. She reported that the District received numerous issues with most of them vandalism and that over the last six months the issues have intensified. She further reported that there have been drug arrests and many maintenance issues, taken care of by staff.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that the Darien Police attended the Committee Meeting and stated that there has been a trend in activities that is unsafe for patrons going to Sportsplex. She stated that the lower location of the skate park is difficult to patrol and inaccessible.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that staff discussed staffing the park or installing security cameras, but after running the numbers, the costs were excessive, and no money is available in the budget to fund these expenditures.

President Christensen stated that even in the banking industry cameras do not provide a clear picture to identify someone. He stated that the skate park has had numerous problems and that when the skate park was closed temporarily, the police found 15 people trespassing and not one was a Darien resident.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that staff is concerned about the safety of others using Sportsplex.

President Christensen stated that there is a beautiful facility in Westmont and that the District is willing to look at subsidizing some of the cost for the "true skateboarders".

Executive Director Gurgone read aloud the following email she received from former Commissioner Shari Gillespie.

"I do understand there have been several issues regarding the park. In the same case I do believe kids go in cycles and can only hope that the bad ones will have moved on next year. As the park is now closed, have it remain closed until next season. I would suggest adding a monitor and that the kids have to wear equipment. That will prohibit kids that just want to hang out or get into other things not able to enter. Limit the hours of the park.

I spoke to Westmont PD and Downers PD regarding their parks. Both of them have an attendant on duty who has a walkie-talkie in case something goes wrong, they communicate with their membership desk. Downers' attendant gets paid minimum wage. Summer hours are: weekdays 1-3 M-F, evenings, T-Th 5-8, Weekends 1-5. Fall hours are: weekdays 5-6:45 and Sat/Sun. 1-4 They also have a surveillance system. There is charge of \$5.00 for non members (members are those that are enrolled in classes or participate at the Y do not have to pay).

Westmont PD has a two supervisors at \$8.00 an hour. Their park is open March until November. Summer hours are: 10-10 on weekends and 10-10 M-F in the summer. Once school starts 4-9 MF and 10-9 on the weekend. They do charge \$2.00 for residents and \$4.00 for non residents. Skaters are required to wear a helmet.

I suggest adding a monitor to the parks, shortening the hours and perhaps charging a fee. If you don't have the proper equipment you are not allowed in the park.

I do believe the Darien Skatepark has been a terrific addition to the community and a needed one! It is not fair to punish the good kids because there is a group of bad kids. I would hate for the kids that do behave to be back on the streets and in parking lots.

This along with everything else takes teamwork not just from the Park District, the Darien Police but also the community itself."

D. Public Comment (for new business)

Ms. Lilly Escavilla stated that the skate park was not a cheap project. She questioned why the District would want to destroy the park. She agreed with Ms. Gillespie and that kids go in waves. Ms. Escavilla stated that the kids have no place to go if the skate park is closed. She asked if the Board considered charging.

President Christensen stated that there are approximately half a dozen skate boarders and five or six bikes that should not be there and the others are just kids hanging out in the park. He stated that a full time guard is cost prohibitive.

Mr. Arial Ramos, 1113 Ironwood Ave., Darien stated that he goes to the skate park and that vandalism is found anywhere. He stated that it was not right to knock it down.

President Christensen asked Mr. Ramos if he would bike to Westmont.

Mr. Ramos stated that it is a twenty minute bike ride.

Commissioner Sarocco stated that there is no other place to move the skate park and that he was in favor of the idea to subsidize the cost for Westmont. He stated that the Westmont skate park is visible and that Darien's skate park is not. Commissioner Sarocco stated that he does not want

to wait until something happens. He stated that the skate park is a great idea but just in the wrong location and that he will not allow his children to go there.

President Christensen stated that the police stated that there is a very sophisticated crime ring that is going on.

Commissioner Tikalsky stated that the location is bad and that the Board needs to take action promptly.

Commissioner Sarocco stated that he does not want to reopen and have something happen.

President Christensen stated that even when the park closed temporarily they found 15 people trespassing.

Commissioner Tikalsky asked about the grant money that was promised and not delivered.

President Christensen stated that the board built the park, assuming that grant money was coming and that it never materialized.

Commissioner Sarocco questioned the costs to tear down the park.

Executive Director Gurgone stated that they received a quote for \$41,000 just to get an idea on costs. She stated that if the park is closed down there are different options to donate the equipment, sell, reuse the fencing, etc. She further stated that anything over \$20,000 will need to go out for bid.

Ms. Escavilla asked about the clean up costs.

Superintendent Strickler reported that they staff cleans the graffiti daily and cleans up the garbage weekly. He stated that there has been vandalism to the signs which staff repaired and reinstalled.

Commissioner Noverini moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Sarocco to permanently close the Skate Park and those who enjoy skateboarding that the District will work on an arrangement with the Village of Westmont to provide discount passes and so that Darien residents can attend a facility that is open and supervised.

Upon roll call the following Commissioners voted:

AYES: Noverini, Sarocco, Tikalsky, Jablonski, Christensen

NAYS: None

President Christensen declared the motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Tikalsky moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Noverini that the meeting be adjourned. Upon roll call vote the Motion was thereby carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Neil Christensen, President
Darien Park District

James Tikalsky, Secretary
Darien Park District