

QUINCY PARK DISTRICT
1310 Washington Street
Quincy, Illinois

Board Study Session
Board Room-Emerson Community Center

February 28, 2011
6:00 P.M.

The Quincy Park District Board of Commissioners of the Quincy Park District held a Board Study Session in the Board Room at Emerson Community Center, 1310 Washington, Quincy, IL.

ROLL CALL: Present: President John Frankenhoff, Commissioners Terry Anastas, Patty McGlothlin and Chris Hogge.

Absent: Mike Ridder, Tom Behrens and Don Adolfs.

Staff in attendance included: Executive Director – Dan Gible, Director of Business Services Hilgenbrinck, Director of Parks Ed Seger, Director of Program Services Mike Bruns, Director of Golf Matt Burry, Maintenance Supervisors Chris Veihl, Rome Frericks and Rick Miles, Recreation Supervisors Mark Callaway and Melinda Murk, Park Safety Supervisor Robin Schild and Recording Secretary – Vicky Egbert.

President Frankenhoff called the meeting to order.

Andy Stahr and Lauren Wayhrich from Pizzo & Associates, Ltd. presented the Natural Areas Master Plan recently completed for the Quincy Park District. Mr. Stahr started the presentation by stating that some of the benefits of natural area restoration include yearly cost savings, erosion control and an overall improved ecosystem. He stated that converting one acre of turf grass to natural prairie over a 20 year period results in a savings of \$64,000 dollars. He discussed the critical role that native plants play in the ecosystem. Mr. Stahr discussed options for restoration using plugs or seeds. Using an appropriate seed mix is important and plant height is also important to achieve a pleasing look to the public. Stewardship/maintenance is also important to the project and must be done to achieve the prescribed goals. Areas their firm looked at to restore to their original natural state include Bob Mays Park, Bob Bangert Park, Parker Heights Park, South Park and Gardner/Riverview/Sunset overlooks. He discussed the changes that could be made to the parks and the cost saving results by returning them to natural prairie areas. He showed examples of what the parks could look like if restored and the impact of the restoration. Gible stated that the work can be done in phases and we would probably want to do some of the greater impact areas to educate the public with what we're are trying to accomplish in terms of lower maintenance costs, restoring the ecosystem, opening the overlooks and understory, etc. When asked about the costs, Mr. Stahr stated that the cost and labor is at the onset but as the years go by the maintenance costs will go down and once the restored area is established it will need minimal stewardship compared to the way it currently is maintained. Mr. Stahr stated that he would send us a list of places downstate that we could travel to look at what their company has recently restored. The board thanked them for their presentation.

Executive Director Gibble introduced Ron Vine of Leisure Vision and stated that he is here to review the findings from the recently conducted focus groups so that we can begin to draft questions for the survey. Mr. Vine stated that the focus groups were well attended with 59 residents overall and the goal was 40. The three major topics discussed in the focus groups were #1. the current park system, #2. vision of the future park system and #3. funding the future park system. Under Topic #1, Mr. Vine stated that over 90% of participants use the park system and highly value the system. He stated that use of programs is moderate at 56%. The programs they liked the most were our outdoor music concerts. He feels there's a lack of awareness regarding our program offerings and could benefit from expanded marketing efforts. He stated that use of revenue facilities is high at 73% and participants especially enjoy the district's batting cage, mini-golf facility and in general they like Westview but not the speed of play on the course.

Under Topic #2, they felt that we should concentrate on maintaining what we have, they desired more winter facilities, walking, biking, nature trails and riverfront facilities and they felt there is sufficient # of parks. He stated that there was average support for Cedar Creek Trail, mainly down to the river, but they saw no benefit of the trail connecting to 36th Street. Outdoor pools were very important and they had a strong opposition to closing Wavering Aquatic Center and additionally felt that we should keep 2 pools in Quincy. Indoor programming was not a priority to the groups and they believe the Salvation Army and YMCA handle programming needs and would not want to duplicate services but cover gaps in programming only or expand outdoor programming.

Topic #3: When the groups were asked to allocate \$100 to the park district into areas that came up during their focus group, they determined that \$28 should be spent to maintain what we have, \$15 on outdoor pools, \$14 on trails and \$12 on the riverfront. Mr. Vine got the impression that you could add trails and riverfront together as a "like interest" and treat that as a \$26 commitment. He stated lastly, they were asked if the park district went out for a \$3.5 million bond for park improvements, what would be your level of support? The majority of people (87%) said they would support some level of allocation of dollars with 37% supporting \$35/yr, 13% supporting \$30/yr and 17% supporting \$25/yr. Mr. Vine noted that it will be important to ask questions that can be drilled down to get the most accurate information concerning issues relating to needs, unmet needs and priorities for both existing and proposed facilities in addition to their specific household information. Mr. Vine asked commissioners which issues they would like him to look at in the survey. President Frankenhoff would like us to ask questions about the trail and the safety of it. Commissioner Anastas asked what riverfront improvements they would like to see and Ron said they were not specific but there was interest in linkage to the bluff parks and a riverfront trail. Gibble stated that we should probably ask what they want to see on the riverfront since it came up several times. Frankenhoff stated that it's important to ask some questions about the riverfront and linking it to trails. Anastas said that we should ask questions about a trailhead at Bob Bangert Park to fit with the city's trail project or the park in general in relationship to the riverfront and Quinsippi Island. Gibble stated that Ron will be drafting 8 to 12 pages of questions based of the focus groups and discussion with the board and staff. Then, staff and the board will narrow those questions down to a 6 page survey. Boots Bush Park and support for a new park in the southeast end of town near JWCC are questions President

Frankenhoff would like to see us ask. Mr. Vine stated that they would be sending out 2000 surveys along with an electronic message and hope for 400 at a minimum returned. Commissioner McGlothlin would like us ask what patrons feel we should improve in the parks with their tax dollars since we are reducing our budget and work force. Commissioner Anastas is not sure he'd like for us to ask about the southeast park since it didn't come up in the focus groups. Mr. Vine stated he feels that you should definitely use information from the focus groups to keep your credibility but you could add other items that were not discussed and that would be perfectly fine. Anastas feels that trails and the use of them says something about the demographics of Quincy and we don't seem to be as popular for trails as other communities he's traveled to. Frankenhoff asked about program related questions and Mr. Vine stated that he would not concentrate on program related questions based on the findings of the focus groups. Frankenhoff asked about putting the bond issue question on the survey and Mr. Vine said that if we do it should be at the end of the survey so you aren't asking for money first thing. Gible stated that Mike Bruns has some specific questions about programming gaps that he would be including in the survey and some outdoor recreation opportunities. Mr. Vine stated that they can benchmark the survey results against other communities in Illinois and the National average also. President Frankenhoff asked staff to get tonight's information to the missing commissioners as soon as possible and get their feedback as to questions they might have.

Executive Director Gible stated that the next study session is scheduled for March 28, 2011 at 6:00PM. The date for the April study session will most likely be on April 25 or 26, 2011 at 6:00PM.

With no further business to discuss, COMMISSIONER MCGLOTHLIN MOVED, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HOGGE TO ADJOURN THE STUDY SESSION. UNANIMOUS. PRESIDENT FRANKENHOFF DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

Secretary

Date

President

Date