

Present: Chairperson O'Reilly; Vice-Chair Greening; Members: Arvant, Davis, Nagle and Schmitt

Absent: Kondak

Also Present: Council member, Peddie

Chairperson O'Reilly called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in Beverly Park.

APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 20, 2008

Motion by Schmitt, second by Greening, that the minutes of a regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board held on March 20, 2008 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed.

ADD ITEM TO AGENDA

Motion by O'Reilly, second by Schmitt, to add an item to the agenda: "4A. Proposal from Brother Rice High School to improve Beverly Park ball fields and use the site for its baseball program."

Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Rita Battocletti and Lee Peddie were present to update the Board on plans for the pancake breakfast that will initiate the Village's 50th Anniversary celebration in the park on June 14. A company called Chris Cakes based in Clare, Michigan has been engaged to prepare the pancake breakfast; they supply everything including labor. Battocletti related pricing information and indicated that the Lions Club has offered to pick up the entire cost of the breakfast.

Battocletti distributed a handout that listed what the Village needs to provide for the pancake breakfast. She outlined the timeline to prepare for the event and the specific assistance needed from Parks and Recreation Board members. Six Board volunteers will be needed that morning. Boy Scout volunteers will be used to pick up during and after the event. Battocletti anticipates giving a final presentation to the Board at its May meeting.

Peddie outlined the activities planned for the remainder of the day concluding at 9 p.m. Information on the Anniversary Celebration will be included in the upcoming Villager Newsletter and posted on the Beverly Hills web site.

UPDATE ON MY HOMETOWN HELPER GRANT APPLICATION

Village administration submitted an application for the My Hometown Helper grant intended for the purchase of horizontal ladders for the Beverly Park playground. The notification deadline is May 15. Administration will advise the Parks and Recreation Board when a response is received.

PROPOSAL FROM BROTHER RICE HIGH SCHOOL TO IMPROVE BEVERLY PARK BALL FIELDS AND USE THE SITE FOR ITS BASEBALL PROGRAM

Board members have received a copy of a letter dated April 7, 2008 from John Birney, President of Brother Rice High School, to Manager Renzo Spallasso. Brother Rice is proposing to create a state-of-the-art baseball complex in Beverly Park. Brother Rice is looking for the community's reaction to the opportunity before submitting a formal proposal. O'Reilly remarked that the letter mentions installing synthetic turf, batting cages, dugouts, concessions, locker rooms, etc. in the area of the current baseball fields.

This item came before Council at its Tuesday, April 15 meeting, at which time it was referred to the Parks and Recreation Board for review and recommendation. It was suggested that the proposal come before the Board as a discussion item so that Council and administration could discern how Parks and Recreation Board members view this idea.

O'Reilly related that Brother Rice will lose the use of their current field next year due to a construction project. The School has looked into buying land to build a field, which was determined to be cost prohibitive. They are looking elsewhere to accomplish their objective. It is O'Reilly's understanding that Beverly Park is not the only site that Brother Rice is considering.

Brother Rice has indicated an interest in helping the Village renovate its baseball fields in Beverly Park. O'Reilly estimated that the school has about \$250,000 to spend on the project. It would be understood that Brother Rice has priority use of the fields, which would impact the Village's use.

O'Reilly asked for input from Board members on the strengths and/or weaknesses of this proposal. Administration would like input from the Parks and Recreation Board before asking Brother Rice to spend the necessary time and money to prepare a formal proposal. If Board members recommend against the concept or suggest that it be limited in some manner, it may influence the school's decision on whether to present a proposal to Beverly Hills for the improvements and use of Beverly Park.

Board members had questions and comments on the proposal. A major concern was scheduling conflicts with other teams and leagues that use the ball fields in the park. It was suggested that the high school athletic director communicate with the Board on this topic. The point was made that the proposal was too elaborate for our community park.

O'Reilly provided his sense and understanding of the proposal based on years of involvement in baseball. It could be assumed that Brother Rice would want first priority on use of the fields if the school puts a substantial amount of money into improving them. He noted that a synthetic field would be wonderful. O'Reilly indicated that the high school program starts in March and ends in mid-June; the Little League program starts in April with games beginning May. Brother Rice has Varsity, Junior Varsity and Freshman baseball teams that would want to make use of the fields. O'Reilly thought that only the north diamond would be available for use by Brother Rice. The Little League field does not accommodate high school baseball, and there is no room to expand the south diamond.

O'Reilly related that it has been his responsibility for the last 8-10 years to schedule the Beverly Park baseball fields. The Beverly Hills Little League uses the south diamond and occasionally the north diamond. It is becoming more of a challenge to coordinate schedules because the Little League has lost two or three baseball fields due to Birmingham Public Schools' renovations and expansions. The north diamond has been used quite a bit by the Little League for the last three years for this reason. O'Reilly expressed the view that the Village has a responsibility to accommodate Beverly Hills Little League, which has used Beverly Park since 1969.

The north diamond has been used by Queen of Martyrs for 25 years. A men's softball league uses the field on Sundays. Detroit Country Day School has been using the north diamond for the last four years. There is a 13-year-old travel team that expanded the infield on the north diamond in exchange for use of the ball field. O'Reilly related that there are at least four organizations using the north diamond and two or three using the south diamond. The fields are used seven days a week between April 1 and the middle of June. It would be difficult to accommodate Brother Rice in addition to the other teams.

O'Reilly added that he has serious reservations about allowing concession stands in the park as well as locker rooms. Batting cages would have to be monitored. He questioned if they would be unused for 10 months out of the year.

Schmitt was concerned that the parking lot may not accommodate all the people who would attend high school baseball games along with regular park users. He added that May and June are prime pavilion rental times for large groups.

Janet Mooney of 19111 Devonshire commented that it may be difficult to look past the amount of money that Brother Rice is willing to invest in the ball fields. However, she did not think that this type of improvement would meet the approval of Beverly Hills citizens. Mooney stated that she was involved in promoting the park millage, at which time many residents were adamant about Beverly Park remaining as park-like as possible. Residents liked the fact that all the structures were at the front of the park so people could walk along the path and enjoy a more natural environment. Mooney believed that the Village would be giving up a lot with this proposal in terms of a serene, natural park setting. Mooney added that baseball is growing and not declining. Little League participation has doubled in the past eight years, and the Village cannot afford to lose any more baseball diamonds.

Dan Nelson of 32311 Sheridan commented that he could not see many benefits with this proposal compared to the negative considerations. Parking and overcrowding will be a problem, and there is no weatherized plumbing in the park.

O'Reilly summarized that Board members considered the initial proposal from Brother Rice and commented on its feasibility based on their concerns and how it would have to be limited to accommodate the Village's use of the fields.

Motion by Schmitt, second by Greening, that the Parks and Recreation Board has serious reservations regarding the proposal from Brother Rice particularly concerning scheduling. Without further information, the Board cannot make a recommendation.

However, the Parks and Recreation Board recommends that Brother Rice pursue alternate proposals.

Motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER RESTORING THE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES TO BEVERLY PARK IN 2009

Board member Nagle remarked that people have been talking about the fact that there will be no concerts in the park this summer. She would be interested in knowing whether residents will contact the Village office to ask why concerts were not scheduled this season. Nagle said that she is raising the subject of summer concerts in order to determine whether the Parks and Recreation Board is interested in resuming concerts next year. Topics of discussion should include what would make the concert series more viable and well attended.

Nagle remarked that there have been three or four summer concerts in past years with attendance varying depending on the entertainment. For the most part, sophisticated rock and roll seems to bring people out more than other venues. Nagle proposed doing one concert a week for 8-10 weeks in the summer, possibly on a Friday. Considerations would include how to finance the concerts, what strategies can be used to engage people and publicize the events. She questioned whether asking for donations at the event would be an option.

Arvant commented that she was in favor of summer concerts returning next year. She has spoken with people who are disappointed that it is not happening this summer. Greening indicated that she would like to give summer concerts another try and offered to make phone calls to solicit sponsors.

Board members talked about bringing concerts back into the park in 2009. Topics discussed were booking bands that draw a wide range of people and that would project into the crowd, the number of concerts, the day of the week, advertising ideas, budgetary constraints, and sponsorships.

Schmitt expressed the view that the concerts have not worked in past years. O'Reilly thought that the Board should look into why concerts have not always been well attended. He believed that there is interest in the community. Concerts bring people together and build community spirit. This group should explore how to maximize the number of people who attend the concerts.

A subcommittee of Nagle, Arvant and Greening will continue to work on ideas for conducting a successful concert series.

DISCUSS 2008/09 BUDGET REQUESTS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A subcommittee of Nagle, Arvant, and Kondak has met and is in the process of assessing costs related to maintaining and improving Beverly Park into the future. The plan is to provide information to Council and request that funds be budgeted for replacement and/or maintenance of existing park facilities.

The next Council budget meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m. O'Reilly intends to be present to request that Council set aside money on an annual basis for capital improvements in order to maintain Beverly Park.

Greening requested a future agenda item to consider an "Adopt a Garden" proposal.

Motion by Schmitt, second by O'Reilly, to support the recommendations of the subcommittee on the park capital improvement budget.

Motion passed unanimously.

REVIEW AND CONSIDER LARGE GROUP SURVEY FOR KRISTEN KELSEY

Board members reviewed and discussed a large group event planning form submitted by Kristen Kelsey. There was no objection to the use of the pavilion as indicated on the form.

Schmitt referred to the letter received from Village Clerk Ellen Marshall in response to a concern expressed by the Board about a non-resident address on an application for pavilion use prior to April 1. Park pavilion reservations are available to non-residents after April 1. It appears that a non-resident utilized a Beverly Hills resident to make the reservation, but the non-resident's name and address appeared on the large group survey form. Schmitt suggested that residents should not act as proxies for non-resident groups. He suggested that Village staff ask people reserving the pavilion for a large group if they are a member of the group or if they are acting on behalf of a non-resident.

LIAISON COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Janet Mooney of 19111 Devonshire requested an update on the tennis court improvements. O'Reilly responded that bids for the tennis court project will be opened on April 24. Proposals will be received for resurfacing and new fencing.

BOARD COMMENTS

Nagle mentioned that she attended an informative Neighborhood Watch information session. The Beverly Hills Public Safety Department is holding introductory meetings to re-establish the Neighborhood Watch Program in the Village. The Department will be assisting neighborhoods in organizing and teaching citizens how to provide a safer environment in the community. A schedule of meetings is listed on the Beverly Hills police web site, and additional meetings can be held by contacting Lieutenant Vargas at 248/540-3400.

Nagle met with Arvant and Kondak at the park last Thursday to survey the grounds and assess the costs related to maintaining park facilities. They suggested that consideration be given to putting a sealant on the sled hill railing as part of the Beverly Park Clean Up.

Nagle asked if there was an update from administration on the Board's request to look into the cost and feasibility of providing doggie waste bags with dispensers at Beverly Park and Douglas

Evans. O'Reilly has not received feedback on this matter, and Tom Meszler is not present tonight to provide an update.

Greening commented on recent problems with vandalism in Beverly Park. She asked that a brief article appear in the Villager Newsletter requesting people to call the Public Safety Department and report vandalism when they see it occurring.

Davis suggested that there is money in the park repair and maintenance fund to complete the fencing around the pavilion. O'Reilly stated that he would mention this to Meszler.

Schmitt offered condolences on behalf of the Board to Dan Nelson on the loss of his mother.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.