

WOLTERS FIELD ADVISORY GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

City of Highland Park

Pre-Session Conference Room

1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, IL

I. CALL TO ORDER

At 7:03 p.m., Co-Chair Stolberg called the meeting to order and called the Roll.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Co-Chairs Lizzy Garlovsky & Adam Stolberg
Advisory Group Members: Mindy Deutsch, John Fuhrer, Lou Jogmen, & Scott Lieberman
Members Absent: Judith Magel Cohen, Joel Fontane, Michele Goldstein, & John Helander

It was declared a quorum was present.

Also Present: Ghida Neukirch, Highland Park City Manager
Dr. Bruce Law, Superintendent, Township High School District 113
Colleen Boilini, Assistant Athletic Director, District 113

Jeff Gilbert, Catherine Spencer, Howard Katz, Tracy Listener, &
other neighborhood residents
Gale Cerabona, Recorder

Co-Chair Stolberg welcomed the Advisory Group, neighborhood residents, and thanked everyone for attending. Introductions took place.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Garlovsky moved to approve the June 18, 2018 meeting minutes. Member Stolberg seconded the motion.

Voting Yea: Co-Chairs Garlovsky & Stolberg; Members Deutsch, Fuhrer, & Jogmen

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: Lieberman

Co-Chair Stolberg declared that the motion passed unanimously.

IV. SCHEDULED BUSINESS

a. Introductions

Co-Chairs are Lizzy Garlovsky, District 113 Board of Education & Adam Stolberg, Highland Park City Council.

Co-Chair Stolberg stated the goal is to address the neighbors' concerns and give students a first-rate athletic experience.

City Manager Neukirch thanked everyone for coming as well. She provided an overview of the Special Use Permit for a Conditional Use at Wolters Field and amendments. City Manager Neukirch advised the Special User Permit governs parking and traffic management, and the intention is for representatives from the school district, the City, and the neighborhood to strike a balance.

City Manager Neukirch noted the City has 18 commissions, committees and boards and a review of the groups was undertaken in 2018 with the goal to create opportunities for increased public engagement and to make the board/commission process more efficient. With the WFAG, the City is working with the School District to bring forth a change that would entail a minimum of two neighborhood meetings whereby property owners from 800' of the high school and Wolters Field would be invited to attend the neighborhood meeting, versus only a select group of individuals appointed to the Advisory Group. The Neighborhood Meeting concept would be subject to formal City Council and School Board approval. Further information will be communicated about this proposed change this year.

Co-Chair Stolberg stated these meetings work although the intention is to get neighbors engaged.

b. Summer/Fall Activities

Member Fuhrer shared the following:

- 12 lighted & 20 twilight events
- Athletic Drive has been used for events; notice went out
- Barricades were added along the southern end of the Drive
- Fencing was installed, and electrical repairs were made on the fields
- East gate is now being locked; better flow for bleachers; students can filter out
- For IHSA events, spectators are not allowed to sit behind certain athletes
- There were 11 concerns via email regarding:
 - Athletic Drive
 - Plows
 - Speakers
 - Busses starting before times stated in Noise Ordinance

c. Update of Issues

Co-Chair Stolberg stated the bus issue has been discussed in the past. Member Fuhrer advised the back-up beeper was replaced.

Member Lieberman provided history on the bleachers and speakers. He noted the solution was to install west-facing speakers. However, when east-facing speakers are turned on, his children's sleep is interrupted as well as he and his wife's ability to work.

Co-Chair Stolberg stated the students' experience vs. neighbors' complaints needs to balance.

Member Fuhrer stated the guests, visitors, and parents are unable to hear in the stadium; not getting the experience. Deerfield Stadium was referenced.

City Manager Neukirch inquired about the change the District made to the address system since concerns from the neighborhood surfaced recently. Member Fuhrer stated the east-facing speakers are turned on to enhance sound. He stated he would review this again. Member Lieberman stated a speaker on the bar could be more effective than ones that face residents' homes.

Audience member Jeff Gilbert stated it is difficult to filter a bass sound, but high sounds could be mitigated. He advised a past suggestion was to face speakers to the stands with dense material (intended for warm-ups). Recently, a sound engineer gave a presentation but ultimately stated nothing could be done. Mr. Gilbert stated he believes there is a way to muffle the sound toward neighbors. He is sympathetic, supports the school, and likes music. Mr. Gilbert stated he believes the school district is incumbent to find a solution. He noted one solution was turning the music down as the music is really loud. Guests and patrons agree. Mr. Gilbert stated he believes the school district should comply with the ordinance. He suggested perhaps the school be relocated.

Co-Chair Stolberg asked Member Fuhrer about complaints and east-facing speakers. Member Fuhrer stated, realistically, this is an athletic field. He stated he is open to again discussing the sound issue. Member Fuhrer stated he believes there is a better solution to improve the sound, not at the expense of anyone. He recommended visiting other stadiums.

Member Lieberman reminded this problem wasn't there before the bleachers were installed. He stated the sound of the speakers created the problem.

Police Chief Jogmen identified complaints and explained the results that responding officers indicated the sound was a reasonable level based on their opinion.

Mr. Gilbert stated the neighbors were directed to call the High School and not to call the police. He noted this is the reason for fewer complaints. City Manager Neukirch concurred that it is recommended the neighbors notify the School District first of any concerns; if there is not a response, then residents are encouraged to call the non-emergency police number. If callers provide their names and address, the officer will respond to the home first.

Co-Chair Stolberg raised the issue of overflow parking. He noted barricades were added. Member Fuhrer advised there have been no complaints.

An audience member asked for clarification of a refused complaint. Police Chief Jogmen stated these are anonymous callers.

Assistant Athletic Director Colleen Boilini stated on May 11, 2019, she was present when the police arrived. She noted games are played with music being turned on and off. The police advised the sound was reasonable.

Resident Catherine Spencer advised her daughter is a softball player. She asked her about the music and shared her response. Regarding the national anthem, her daughter stated it represents Americans, women's rights, and all those who help athletes get to where they are. She displayed a team photo (that took place) when the National Anthem is played. Ms. Spencer advised her daughter stated the music makes her feel empowered, etc.

An audience member stated Ms. Boilini is adequately managing this.

A head softball coach and resident (who lives in Oak Terrace) stated she hears hockey complaints that parents cannot hear the music, announcers, etc. She noted the goal is for the kids to have the best experience. She raised the issue of residents utilizing equipment when they could get hurt. She feels a disrespect. There isn't music playing typically after 6:30 p.m. We might as well build a wall. She is happy to work with residents.

Resident Howard Katz advised he has a child in high school. He stated he believes the Athletic Department should be able to do their job. Mr. Katz asked that residents reduce the noise in their homes.

Audience member Tracy Listener stated she is appalled this meeting is taking place. She advised she lives in Ravinia, and she knew what she was getting into when she moved there. Ms. Listener stated.....*thank God children are on the field*. She wants her daughter to play sports rather than do things less than desirable.

Member Lieberman advised he received permission from a previous Athletic Director to go to the field (and enjoy it). At the time they bought their house, there were no lighted events. Ever since the bleachers were installed, the (football) speakers have been the issue. He stated he believes he is being attacked.

City Manager Neukirch asked that comments be directed to the Chair.

Co-Chair Stolberg advised there have not been any issues with residents using the field. Member Fuhrer stated the fields were locked in the past. Member Lieberman shared that was around 2005 and provided background.

Co-Chair Garlovsky advised the permission would be taken away now due to liability.

Mr. Gilbert stated the music was not to be played during practice (whether the Athletic Director is there or not). He noted these meetings should not be shocking as there have been 12 meetings in the last 6 years. Mr. Gilbert noted things have changed. Men's & Women's Lacrosse, softball, field hockey, etc. takes place weekly (Monday-Thursday), Saturdays in the fall, etc. He reminded some homes were here before the field arrived in a residential neighborhood. The community negotiated a special-use permit. The neighbors have been generous and endure extra noise, etc. that the school district negotiated.

Co-Chair Garlovsky stated the school board changes all the time. She noted the President of the Board is the only person who can make these decisions. Co-Chair Garlovsky advised they want to be good neighbors. The Special-Use Permit was granted in 2004. Things have changed. Girls' sports were not as encouraged as they are today. The programming is

better. She explained residents' quality of life and students' experiences are equally important. Co-Chair Garlovsky stated there are no funds to move the field. She stated she would like to see everyone work together and hear solutions rather than complaints.

Mr. Gilbert stated neighbors are in agreement. He advised rules do exist, and they should be adhered to. Co-Chair Garlovsky stated they have every intention of complying.

Co-Chair Stolberg stated the nuisance standard is subjective. He stated he believes progress has been made.

Co-Chair Garlovsky advised they would look into possible solutions. Co-Chair Stolberg suggested residents send an email to register a complaint.

Mr. Gilbert stated he believes everyone in this room would believe the noise is loud if he/she were in his home. Another resident asked if there is a recommended decibel. Co-Chair Stolberg read an excerpt of the public-address system upgrade policy.

Another resident advised that students have found a safe haven to compete, have sportsmanship. She stated she believes the Special-Use Permit should be revisited. Residents knew what they were getting into. The community is trying to keep kids off drugs, etc.

Co-Chair Stolberg stated he doesn't believe anyone is here to diminish what's happening at the field. He noted there has been progress with other issues. The problem now is noise. Co-Chair Stolberg read Section 8 (noise from 8 p.m.-7 a.m., etc.). He scrolled to Section O which Co-Chair Garlovsky read.

City Manager Neukirch stated a resident's first point of contact is the school district (regarding the field), then the police. She advised if the first step is not addressed, giving a name helps the police document complaints. City Manager Neukirch stated the announcements should continue as deemed appropriate and respectful.

Co-Chair Stolberg stated progress has been made. Member Lieberman concurred until the speakers were pointed at his house. He agreed the goal is to make things better.

d. Neighbor Communications

City Manager Neukirch stated the City and School District received an email from a resident about a sign posted at Wolters Field pertaining to noise regulations although the sign read in part, "No Noise" which was not reasonable.

Dr. Law concurred there needs to be a balance between students' experiences and being good neighbors. He is concerned that residents may get hurt on their equipment as everyone has to be kept safe.

Co-Chair Garlovsky compared Deerfield to Highland Park as they have similarities (fields next to houses). She asks that everyone limit or manage their expectations.

A resident asked about east parking. It was noted the southern end wasn't needed. She stated she can't ever hear the announcers. Another neighbor compared loud landscapers to sound at a field. He stated he loves living near Wolters Field.

Member Lieberman mentioned a past inquiry from the Athletic Director. He noted that's why the gate is there/closed. He stated if the east gate is locked, one has to walk elsewhere (where a basin is soaked), and one cannot get there. Mr. Gilbert asked about the gate being closed but unlocked when the field is not in use. Member Fuhrer stated the intent. Co-Chair Garlovsky advised this would be reviewed.

Co-Chair Stolberg indicated that the District will revisit the sound system and will follow-up with the City and School District within the next three weeks.

V. **Other Business**

- Next Meeting

The next meeting will be in October or November of 2019.

- Comments

Co-Chair Stolberg and Member Fuhrer will review these comments and attempt to find solutions.

An audience member provided rationale for having the gate locked. Member Fuhrer concurred. It was clarified this is the gate to the field.

VI. **Business from the Public**

There was no Business from the Public.

VII. **Adjournment**

Co-Chair Member Garlovsky moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. Member Fuhrer seconded the motion.

Voting Yea: Co-Chairs Garlovsky & Stolberg; Members Deutsch, Fuhrer, Jogmen & Lieberman
Voting Nay: None

Co-Chair Garlovsky declared that the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gale Cerabona
Recorder