

October 12, 2022 Buildings & Grounds Committee

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kerry Trask at 4:30 pm

Committee members present Matt Phipps and Matt Spaulding

Also in attendance was Superintendent James Feil, Director of Buildings and Ground Chris Dupré, Athletic and Activities Director Stan Diedrich, and Ships Head Baseball Coach Bruce Steinbecker.

Municipal Baseball Field Ownership Discussion:

Introductions were made and the group toured the facility.

An in depth and engaging discussion transpired over the course of about 90 minutes. A general brief, as well as a history of the past 10 or so months, includes the following points.

- The Municipal Baseball Facility was built in the mid-1980's. Funding was provided by two governmental agencies; the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and the US National Park Service (NPS).
- Because of these funding sources, there are contingencies that the City is obligated to abide by in perpetuity and these obligations would be transferred to MPSD as the new owner should the Board proceed forward with owning the facility. See memo dated August 30, 2022 from Davis and Kuelthau which was provided in BoardBook. In addition, see the comments below.
- The Lincoln Ships baseball teams (Freshmen, JV and Varsity) use three different City owned fields to complete their season (Municipal, Miracles, and Red Arrow).
- The LHS Tennis teams use City owned Red Arrow and Lincoln Park tennis courts
- The Girls Softball teams use City owned Citizens Park complex
- MPSD has an agreement to use the four parks that support baseball and softball with the City of Manitowoc. The Buildings and Grounds Dept, in lieu of paying the city to use these facilities, prepares these locations for the duration of the season. The main duties include dragging the ball diamond, chalking the infield batter's box and lines to the outfield out-of-bounds/foul lines, and tending to water issues.
- The City looks upon MPSD's Building and Grounds Department to pitch in with the tennis court net and windscreen installations annually.
- The City Mayor contacted then MPSD Superintendent Holzman in a conversation regarding the MPSD taking ownership of the Municipal Baseball Field.
- Superintendent Holzman and the city were in conversations and one request Mr. Holzman made was to have the city replace the south fence along the railroad tracks. It was in pretty bad condition. This was completed.
- Chris Dupré was asked to share his assessment of the facilities with Superintendent Holzman. This is a general overview. The site is aging and no improvements can be determined by looking at the facilities, except for the fairly new dug-outs and a storage garage beyond the first base dugout. The scoreboard is old and in need of replacement. The lights are in working condition but are old. The bleachers are in need of replacement. The wood deck ramp and observation area along the third base is questionable as to how long it will last or if it's ADA compliant. The drainage system is not working which makes it necessary to not play due to water/field conditions. The parking lot is not in good shape, but appears to be stable and not heaving or in need of any immediate repairs. The parking lot should be scheduled for a total replacement since the integrity of the lot is beyond normal crack filling and small areas of replacement. Some fencing footings/anchors are heaving badly - which is a sign of poorly drained soils which compound the standing water issues. Overall the fence is in good repair.

- Superintendent Holzman and then Athletic and Activities Director Dave Steavpack approved the purchase of a Smithco brand infield groomer as well as contracted with baseball construction services of Hutchinson Property Services to reconstruct the infield. The cost of these two items is approximately \$75,000.
- It has been understood by those with baseball knowledge and history of this facility that there has been a general lack of maintenance and improvements to the facility for many years.

Drainage Issues. The Buildings and Grounds Department was asked to repair the sump pumps that serve to take the water off the infield. There are two sump pumps, one behind each dug out along first and third baselines. Only one of the two sump pumps was operational - however, the drain pipes taking the water off site to the ditch by the railroad tracks were completely plugged. Luisier Plumbing was hired to help with these drainage issues. They jetted out the pipes and then used a remote camera to determine that tree roots were impacting a pipe section. So this section of pipe was replaced.

This sump pump drainage system is critical for the drainage of the playing surface. Hutchinson property services began work this summer to laser grade the infield, strip off all the old grass and infield playing material and new material and sod were installed. The infield will now be properly pitched for drainage and work in conjunction with the sump pump system to drain the field of play. The evening of our meeting, we received a good downpour of rain in the late morning and early afternoon. Coach Bruce Stienbecker commented that the improvements made for field drainage is like "night and day". In comparison to the old field, the team would not only not be able to play that evening but in all likelihood not play the next day because there would be so much standing water. The way the field was at the time of our meeting, Bruce indicated that they could play a game that night if there was one scheduled.

MPSD, the City and the Railroad Company met to discuss the ditch where the water from the field drains into. The drain pipe was found to be almost buried with sediment, not allowing any water from the field to drain off site. The Railroad owns the ditch. The ditch needs to be re-shaped and graded to allow for water to drain west to the City storm water service - a culvert under 23rd street. Between the Railroad and MPSD we cleaned up the debris in the ditch - overgrown vegetation and old discarded railroad ties. MPSD asked for assistance from the City to reshape the ditch. This did not happen. MPSD B&G department reshaped a small section of the ditch so at least the water could drain away from the field drain pipe. The Railroad has been helpful, candid and realistic about the fact that if it costs the railroad money they are not likely able to support it, but has given the City and MPSD their approval to make these alterations. The tasks they completed were decided locally and done with their equipment and manpower. The ditch can remain the way it is probably for another year or two before sediment fills in the ditch by the drain pipe.

Scoreboard Issues. The City electrician and MPSD electrician worked on the scoreboard. This scoreboard has been repaired and sections rewired to make things work. The scoreboard is in dire need of replacement. The scoreboard does work for approximately 1 game. Sometimes that is in question. The scoreboard typically does not work long enough to play a doubleheader. The scoreboard is anticipated to cost approximately \$25,000 and Athletic and Activity Director Stan Deitrich is confident this cost can be covered by donations.

Transferring the ownership from City to MPSD. The memo shared on BoardBook, from attorney Tim Feldhausen indicates that our continued use as a baseball facility makes it fairly straightforward with the obligations set forth in the original agreement. The continued maintenance of the facility needs to be "maintained in an adequate state of upkeep and repair". There is one item that I have asked the City to provide and that is the requirement for the signage. Currently, there is no sign that declares to

patrons using the facility that it was built by using state and federal funds. There must have been there at one time but now is no longer around as far as the City knows. In addition, the City has no record of the last time the WDNR has come out to inspect the site. This is not an obligation put upon the City, but is the WDNR's responsibility.

A motion was made by Matt Spaulding and seconded by Matt Phipps to take the next step and have a letter drafted that the board could send to the City to start the process of land transfer. The motion passed unanimously. The city has provided an example letter to use as a template that would satisfy this objective.

Policy 7150 Use of District Facilities

The committee started the first of a few conversations surrounding the existing policy pertaining to Use of District Facilities. With the increased attention/use the Rubick Stadium has seen and with the potential addition of the baseball facility - use of district facilities needs to be spelled out more clearly for the groups that want to use our facilities. For example, the existing policy references a form 7510 F3, however, no document was located or obtained. Our policy should have well-defined user groups as well as a fee structure for the community groups to be aware of at the time they are submitting requests to use the facilities.

Having the discussion focused with the end in mind, a few things to ponder were discussed, including:

- Should there be a charge for the use of facilities? If so under what conditions would we or wouldn't we?
- Liability insurance. What constitutes an "internal MPSD group"? Our insurance broker Mr. Marty Malloy has advised us to always have outside groups follow our policy of having organizational liability insurance and that the MPSD is named in their policy. Furthermore, he commented on how making any exceptions for waiving a groups requirement to carry insurance would potentially expose MPSD to a discrimination lawsuit that would be very hard to defend. There is some confusion out there about if Junior Ships is an MPSD program or not. Since I have been here, these have been considered as a community group independent of MPSD. They do not operate under our policies and procedures or structure for things like budgeting and finance. While there is no question of the value they provide for kids to have connections with other kids and feed into our sports teams. They operate outside of a bona fide MPSD sports team.
- Alcohol. There are at least two adult league sports teams that have or will use our facilities and they want to sell beer at their games. While I am obtaining a legal opinion, I think it would be prudent to discuss this at the committee/board level. Marty Malloy has informed me that besides a license from the city/county, there is additional insurance usually required.
- Chris and Stan will work on a recommended framework to move forward with. There are many examples from other school districts and how they approach facility use.

A motion was made by Matt Spaulding and seconded by Matt Phipps to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Dupre'
Director of Buildings & Grounds