

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 15, 2021**

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Park District of Highland Park held on December 15, 2021. Pursuant to Section 7(e) of the Open Meetings Act, The President of the Board of Park Commissioners has made a finding that it is not practical or prudent to hold in person meetings because of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Neither the elected officials nor the public will be allowed to attend Regular or Committee Meetings in person but will participate virtually. Links to the virtual meeting can be found on the Park District website <https://www.pdhp.org/park-board/meetings/>

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman,
Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Dunn;
Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Carr; Assistant Director Maliszewski;
Assistant Director Murrin; General Manager/Superintendent of Golf Operations
Ochs; Manager Johnson

Guest Speakers: **Woodhouse Tinucci Architects:**
Andy Tinucci, Brian Foote, Heather LaHood, Don Matthews

Holabird and Root:
Eric Risinger, Rusty Walker, Max Hanisch, Michael Pindelski, Jeff Oke,
Jeff Burton, Jodi McCarthy

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON AGENDA

President Ruttenberg reported that Public Comment will be moved to the end of the agenda so that the public can hear the presentations from presenting firms.

WEST RIDGE PARK SITE AND BUILDING INTERVIEWS

A. Holabird and Root

Mr. Risinger reported that the first approach to working with the Park District includes engagement of stakeholders for the site and building design along with analyzing the site at the existing location

or a different location. Additionally, he will review the pros and cons of renovating the existing building, building new on the existing site, and building new on a different site.

It is their intent to analyze all site options with the Park Board and Park District Leadership Team, understand the overarching goals of building accessibility are influenced by the site, while looking at site development costs, traffic, and community impact, explore opportunities for future growth based on the different site, discuss economic impact benefits, the team will conduct a high-level zoning review, lastly, a comparative site analysis will be assembled and presented for review and approval.

Regarding terms of engagement, they break their public/client user groups into tiers:

- Tier 1 – Board of Park Commissioners
- Tier 2 – Park District Leadership Team
- Tier 3 – Park District Project Team
- Tier 4 – Key User Groups in Building
- Tier 5 – Public User Groups

All of these tiers are a process of mining information while making sure the Park Board's initiatives are met along with the needs of the key constituents.

As for analysis and site selection, Mr. Risinger reported that West Ridge Park is located in a densely populated community. However, when looking at it globally, it's a strategic location and an area of need. He shared a case study with Wadsworth City School that needed a new intermediate school. Their challenge at the Board level was identifying a site. As a result, the team created a matrix with their Board to identify each potential site for analysis and review. While looking at sites they also conducted a budget analysis. The case study allowed the Board to be fair and transparent with their site selection.

Regarding the pros and cons to renovate or build new, Mr. Risinger reported their goal is to make sure we're verifying and validating past information while making sure the Park Board is confident in any decisions made.

He shared a Case Study at Crestview Local School District to provide a better understanding of their approach since the school district posed the same question whether to repurpose or build new. In Ohio, you need to have a particular ratio of renovation dollars compared to new with a fairly extensive process. As a result, they took the engineering report, worked with the School Board, and showed them that by extracting out information that was embedded in their report and provided a budget analysis to determine whether it was more affordable to repurpose or build new. They identified that the existing building could need up to \$11 million in catastrophic repairs, as a result, they opted to construct a new facility.

As for West Ridge Center, Mr. Risinger reported that the team used information previously commissioned and abstracted out and provided a recommendation to decommission the facility. Similarly, the Lakota Group's final recommendation in 2014 was to consider a new facility.

Additionally, they identified the key takeaways related to the facility operations and expectations, reporting that as a recreation facility it needs to be upgraded as it's no longer meeting the standard

of peer community facilities. As a result, the benchmark goal is to make sure the facility is a reflection of the community, makes the community a priority, and examines operating costs. Additionally, the current facility is lacking adequate insulation both in the roof area and walls, the facility has multiple heating units, and there are issues with stormwater management.

Holabird and Root is a 140-year-old firm, that is great at renovating buildings, however, this building challenges a renovation. West Ridge Center was originally designed to be a school. The building is asking to be flexible in accommodating operations of the Park District as well as the arts and dance, etc. that is being requested, and the firm does not think the existing building and footprint offer much value for renovations.

Renovate the Existing Facility

Mr. Risinger reported that the based-on data and reports reviewed thus far, the firm feels a renovation is not a viable option. If the park Board were to select that option, they would recommend gutting the entire facility, roof included and reframing the roof to provide a safer structure. This will not address the existing limitations for parking and safety.

Rebuild on Existing Site or New Site

Mr. Risinger reported that new open area is an opportunity to elevate the community and continue operations of the Park District building. Mr. Hanisch shared a video of a mock-up/rendering they developed. The rendering is a single-story facility housing administrative offices, gymnastics, dance, arts, and early childhood programs. Furthermore, the facility will have a dedicated entry to the early childhood wing so that this area can operate as its own entity.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know if the current parking lot will be preserved with the proposed new facility.

Mr. Hanisch and Mr. Walker reported that the current parking lot will be preserved, however, they are also proposing a new parking lot to the north for athletics.

Commissioner Freeman commended Holabird and Root for keeping the proposed renderings within budget. She would like to know if there is any way there could be changes within the property placement.

Mr. Risinger they do not want to push more automobile traffic closer to the school. Mr. Walker, Mr. Hanisch, and Mr. Risinger rotated the plan several times and found the stormwater basin poses a huge challenge and will raise the cost.

Commissioner Bernstein appreciated the comprehensive presentation. He would like to know their approach to creating a commercial building within a residential zoning district, specifically, how they would envision dealing with residential homeowners to the north and south if you decide to relocate the building footprint.

Mr. Risinger reported that they would let the homeowners know that the current function of the building will not change. Additionally, they will host community meetings revealing their process and site analysis.

Mr. Walker reported that they always make sure everything is sensitive and compatible with the community.

Commissioner Bernstein appreciated the porch-like setting in the rendering as it relates to the neighborhood. He would like to know how they balance the competing interest of trying to create something visually pleasing without looking like you overspent.

Mr. Walker reported that the Park District is stewards of public money. As a result, our design theory or basis is programmatic. Let's get the best spaces for the use we want while enhancing the community's connection to the Park District. Because they have done work for several schools, he feels the team has a way of responding to the immediate context.

Mr. Risinger reported that making sure the building doesn't look too expensive and reflects the neighborhood is crucial. Tonight's rendering intentionally brings in wood warm tones to respond to energy and sustainability.

Commissioner Bernstein asked that to address sustainability for the property and the building.

Mr. Risinger reported they want the building to be more efficient for operation while reducing current costs. They would like to increase the building footprint while cutting operational costs by setting appropriate sustainable goals.

Mr. Oke reported that the team believes in data-driven decisions so that they can offer options to their clients. For example, they will evaluate building the structure out of concrete and steel versus mass timber. What does that do to the carbon footprint and the cost impact? Their analysis will give the Park District the data needed to understand the cost and long-term life implications so that you can make an educated decision. The team will do that for the structure, mechanicals, lighting, materials, etc. so that they can evaluate options and find the right fit for the Park District.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if they ever use solar or wind technology and incorporate those into buildings.

Mr. Oke reported that they just completed an early childhood center in Mount Prospect. They had a goal of pursuing net-zero and they wanted to pursue a grant through Illinois Clean Energy. As part of the project if we were to achieve net-zero and have it certified the client would receive \$2 million in grant funds. As a result, the team performed a lot of energy modeling to determine the most efficient system. Improved the performance of the envelope and made up for losses through renewable solar energy. The School District is very proud and is in the first year of operation.

Mr. Walker reported that this is an engineered mass timber structure that performs like steel or concrete. There may be a possibility to design a building now that could be converted into all-electric down the road. The less you spend in operations the more you can spend on the facility.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the budget they are using includes a solar system.

Mr. Risinger reported that further analysis would be needed. At this time the team does not have enough information to know if the budget can contain those sustainability goals.

Commissioner Bernstein asked if separating structures would increase operating costs.

Mr. Risinger reported that the team doesn't think having separate structures will increase operating costs. Due to COVID, they feel this is a critical component, indicating that they are simply isolating specific units for the daycare so that the Park District would not have to shut down an entire facility due to an infection.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that West Ridge Center is not just a building, it's also a park and asked that they elaborate on pedestrian access and how that's integrated.

Mr. Risinger reported that the park was part of their design. He shared a video showing the event lawn in a controlled outdoor environment.

Walker reported that they took an integrated approach as to how this whole site will interact.

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know what percentage of green space will change.

Mr. Hanisch reported that they swapped the building footprint locations to ensure everything is balanced, however, there is a small increase in parking so a little bit of green space would be converted to the pavement.

President Ruttenberg would like to know the square footage of the new building vs. the existing one.

Mr. Risinger reported that they are looking at a 44,000 square foot building.

President Ruttenberg asked if the new facility would have a gymnasium, dance studio, and gymnastics studio.

Mr. Walker reported that the current rendering is strictly for gymnastics, dance, and arts, however, a gymnasium could be incorporated and discussed during the design phase.

President Ruttenberg reported that it's a great concept and thanked the team.

B. Woodhouse Tinucci Architects

Mr. Tinucci feels architecture is a service. And that their team distinguishes themselves based on the quality of that service they provide, and the level of care provided. As for the project at hand, he doesn't feel that determining whether to renovate or construct a new facility should be discussed this evening, suggesting that their team does not define the outcome before a project begins. Instead, they let the product development through collaboration. Their mission over the last 30 years has been to work with agencies that serve the public.

He reviewed the pros and cons of new construction vs. renovating the existing structure.

Pros of New Construction

He reported that the Park District will have the ability to design a facility that is perfectly designed for your needs and functions. New construction is often an easier type of construction since costs and schedules can be controlled, which reduces maintenance costs. Lastly, the optics are often a pro with new construction.

Cons of New Construction

Mr. Tinucci reported that there is a greater amount of waste with new construction. Additionally, all the character of a historic building is lost. At times, new construction could be more costly due to site impacts from construction. Likewise, new construction has a higher site impact on the neighbors.

Pros of Renovation

Mr. Tinucci reported that renovations save resources and reduce waste since the changes are within the existing footprint. Renovations could be done in phases so that portions of the facility would still be operational.

Cons of Renovation

Mr. Tinucci reported that there can be a programmatic compromise. Since not every program fits exactly into the existing footprint. There is a greater chance of increased maintenance costs since the current systems need more care. Additionally, it could be more complicated to renovate existing ductwork and pipes. Lastly, the Park District would have to be cautious of the optics so there is harmony between new and old.

Mr. Tinucci shared a decision-making matrix so clients could determine if it's cost-prohibitive to save the existing structure. If it's not cost-prohibitive, their team will get to the bottom line to that an education decision can be made. At Woodhouse Tinucci Architects their team collaborates without preconception and works with their clients to develop an engagement plan. He shared a slide showing off an engagement plan they developed for the Robert Crown Community Center.

The Community Center had a private fundraising committee that raised 25% of the funds for the project. As a result, they developed several different strategies to engage constituents so that they developed a design that met everyone's criteria.

As for this project, Mr. Tinucci reported that the team shared programmatic overlays of the existing building vs. a rendering of a new facility.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know what the building would look like as new construction and where it would be positioned on the property.

Mr. Tinucci reported that in the initial interview we thought the new construction would go in place of the current building, suggesting this is the most appropriate solution for the neighborhood and most fiscally responsible.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know where they would construct a new facility on the same site.

Mr. Tinucci reported that if they were to pursue that route, they would recommend the west side of the park even though it changes to access, but it proposes interesting synergies, such as a parking share solution.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know if they considered possibly acquiring the 112 facility.

Mr. Tinucci reported that the team considered that hence why they are recommending keeping the current footprint or constructing a new facility to the west.

Vice President Grossberg asked if they had done a traffic study with the potential of constructing a new facility on the west side of the park. Additionally, he would like to know if they explored the traffic flow from the nursery.

Mr. Tinucci reported that they have not conducted a traffic study. However, if requested they would like to know if access can be gained from an existing driveway allowing for a similar traffic flow. Furthermore, it will address if there are opportunities for shared spaces and reduction in spaces.

Vice President Grossberg asked if the team has given any thought to separating the early childhood programs from the rest of the facility.

Mr. Tinucci reported that the team has not considered that, but that could be discussed during the design phase.

Commissioner Bernstein asked has the team thought about issues with the neighbors.

Mr. Tinucci reported that the team proposed rebuilding in the current footprint as that would have the least impact on the neighbors. This new low building in the same location can utilize existing infrastructure and offer more parkland and buffer to northern neighbors.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know how the team would balance the competing goals of creating an attractive architecturally interesting building versus community members that think you are being frivolous of taxpayer money.

Mr. Tinucci reported that they would design a building that's perfect for the site by making a better parkland building. The current building is opaque and has no significance upon arrival. He feels thickened edges and porch spaces are more appropriate which is not an excessive waste of taxpayer dollars. The team will be communicating with the Park Board, the Leadership Team, and the general public to determine the neighborhood value of the new building and where it falls in line with budgeting.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know the team's vision of integrating a commercial building along Ridge Road when it's surrounded by single-family homes.

Mr. Tinucci reported that either the current site or the west side of the park is the most appropriate location. A building to the east makes the parkland the back of the building. The neighbors want to see the park. He feels the team's architecture is known for integrating buildings in parklands. T

Commissioner Bernstein asked if the team considered sustainable elements.

Mr. Tinucci reported that reusing the existing building is the highest form of sustainability. However, if the Park District opts to build a new facility some of that material can be reused which would maintain history. The highest tech sustainability is the highest cost. The lowest-tech sustainability is the appropriate siding of the building so the sun can heat the building through overhangs so that the sun doesn't overheat the building in the summer. Additionally, they will utilize natural ventilation. Overall, they would like to use the lowest type of carbon imprinted material possible and talk about processes to offset carbon uses. Lastly, they would like to incorporate water gardens.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the team integrated solar or wind power into developments.

Mr. Tinucci reported that the team integrated solar power, but not wind as it is challenging in a neighborhood setting.

Commissioner Bernstein asked if the facility were relocated to the west, would it be oriented to Ridge Road or Red Oak School.

Mr. Tinucci reported that the facility would be oriented to Red Oak School.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Vice President Grossberg, seconded by Commissioner Freeman to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)1: The employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 6:56 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:25 p.m.

ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION IF ANY

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the Park Board of Commissioners are committed to constructing a new facility instead of a renovation.

Vice President Grossberg is concerned that he has a lack of knowledge, he is fairly confident that a new building should be constructed, but he is unclear of other moving pieces such as programming and staffing.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that GreenPrint 2014, and the refresh of GreenPrint that was approved by the Park Board of Commissioners in 2020 has a summary regarding West Ridge Center and the site and building plans. Commissioner Bernstein requested that Executive Director Romes put together this information, put together a short summary, and share it with the Park Board of Commissioners.

Executive Director Romes reported that a critical component is revalidating GreenPrint so that there is confidence from each Board member. There is always the ability to stop and pivot during the design phase. Additionally, he feels all of this can be done in tandem with contract negotiation.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Freeman and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary