

**Springfield Park District**  
**Public Hearing**

John F. Linxwiler Administrative Office / Bunn Park  
2500 South 11th Street / Springfield, IL  
Wednesday, September 14, 2022

**MINUTES**

Roll Call

President Sgro called the meeting to order

Members Participating in Person: Trustees: Badger, Eck, Theilen, Wescott, Rodgers and President Sgro

Members Not participating: Trustee Metcalf

Other Participants in Person: Derek Harms, Executive Director; Jason Graham, Director of Parks and Planning; Stephen Flesch, Director of Finance & Administration; Amanda Tippin, Interim Director of Recreation and Marketing; Patrick Murphy, Chief of Springfield Park District Police; Staff and Public

**Public Hearing/Input**

Sign in sheet distributed to all those present.

Executive Director Harms addresses the Board and the public explaining the need for this public hearing for the purposes of public input and discussions about the Open Space Lands Acquisitions & Development Grant application to replace Veteran's Memorial Pool with a spray ground.

Executive Director explained that this will be the opportunity to go over the ideas and designs that we have in mind for this new spray ground at the park. We have talked to the board about this, but we also wanted to give members of the public a chance to provide feedback. We also have an online engagement survey that anyone can take and provide input as well.

Executive Director Harms explains that there are several planning stages to this process. We had a kickoff meeting. We had meetings and did a lot of preliminary consulting with both staff and the Board. Tonight, is the public input meeting where we are seeking additional information from the board and public and then through the online engagement piece that will be open until Friday of next week, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Then the last step of the process is to submit the grant which is due the 30<sup>th</sup> of this month. The Board would need to pass a resolution next week at the Board meeting

authorizing staff to apply for the grant to hopefully get the funds that are needed. As a reminder we are a distressed community so we would be eligible up to a \$600,000.00 grant however we would have to put \$200,000.00 of our own money into it if we get the grant.

Executive Director Harms presented a slide show of the area and designs. He shows the ariel view of the park area itself and explains the layout of the park as it is currently. It is an 11-acre site. Everything South is Gietl Park. Surrounded by residential. We have existing parking and a bathroom/concession stand hiding under the trees. We have a playground and three baseball fields. This second parking lot is newly overlaid about two years ago. There is also a walking path that goes all the way around the park and connects all those amenities together.

Executive Director Harms shows the conceptual site plan. The splash pad itself with all the water features is 3400 square feet. This is a good size splash pad. There are areas for adults with hammocks, chase lounges, a picnic shelter, fabric shade structure and there is an existing shelter that is currently at the pool that will remain. There is also a bring your own bag toss. The design also includes an area for a future bathroom.

Trustee Theilen said there needs to be a bathroom right by the splash pad for the kids.

Executive Director Harms says that will cost about \$100,000.00 and would cut out half of the splash pad features. IDPH has specific rules that would require showers and bathhouses for a recirculation system. We went to a filtered flow through system, so we don't have to have showers or baths and we don't have to have it staffed. All the features are water conserving so there is minimal flow through. There will be plenty of water, but it is not designed with the high volume. That is the direction that we are going with this, and we feel that it is absolutely the right choice. We are proposing to demolish an existing pool and want to make sure that what we create something that the neighbors can be proud of and excited about.

Trustee Badger asks if it is possible to add features on at a later time.

Executive Director Harms indicates that it can be converted to a recirculating system later.

Executive Director Harms presented the splash pad design. There are many features to this. It is designed to be broken down into 4 areas. One area is designed for children ages 2-5. The next one is designed for children ages 5-12 with the next one being for families and then the last one is the adult section. This is a conceptual design. Nothing that we see in here is set in stone so the board can change it based on feedback from the public if we want to move some things around or change some things up it is all open for change at this point in time. The features in the area for 2-5-year olds are animated features and they are all custom painted making them bright and colorful and textured for touch. We have an area that individuals with learning disabilities will be attracted to.

Trustee Theilen says the hammocks should be moved down to the adult section and not be near kid's sections. Parents can lay on those when they are watching their kids anyway. And maybe like individual chairs.

Executive Director Harms says as you can see there are a lot of above grade features here. One is interactive so when kids go under, they can turn the handle and change the direction of the water flow. There is a soft touch Phillip the Frog in the youngest child area. The massive splash one, as you can see, is a single pole so no climbing. All the features are water conservation features and this bucket dumps onto a platform that takes the water and spreads it out. This mushroom maze, when it's on, it forms an umbrella, and this feature is particularly attractive to kids with autism because it is quite and shelters them in and they can see out and makes them feel secure. Some features are misting so it keeps them cool and not soaking wet.

So, the potential grant elements and summary include, to be very clear, permanently closing Veterans Memorial Pool including bath house and the pool structure returning it to green space and then constructing a modern splash pad that includes 4 distinctive play areas and the splash pad will be enclosed by a chain 4-foot fence for safety purposes. We will have 2 picnic shelters and can add some grills, chaises. Lounges, security light and bring your own bag game.

Trustee Theilen do you have water fountain. If we do that with grills it would be more inviting.

Trustee Badger asks if the one shelter would be available to book and rent out?

Executive Director Harms states we can have a discussion about it at the Board meeting. Maybe book one shelter and leave the other one open.

There is still plenty of green space for people to fly a kite or have a picnic. Whatever they are looking to do.

Adam Cook states it looks cool and asks if there will be some kind of a time valve on it so it is not running all the time when people aren't there or it is raining.

Executive Director Harms says yes. It is a very advanced system with a time valve system. Has an activation pad and so it will only run when visitors are present.

### **Close Public Hearing**

There being no further business to come before the Board it was moved by Trustee Theilen and seconded by Trustee Eck that the meeting be adjourned at 6:02 p.m.