

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2002

I. Call TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A meeting of the Town of Palm Beach Recreation Advisory Commission was held on November 13, 2002, at the Recreation Center. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Gail Coniglio, Chairperson at 9:00 a.m. Commission members in attendance were Mrs. Coniglio, Mr. Gavigan, Mr. Gross, Mrs. Morris, Mr. Spaziani and Mr. Shulman. Alternate members in attendance were Mrs. Agnello, Mr. Bone and Mr. Fishman. Absent from the meeting was Mr. Ochstein. Staff members in attendance were Mr. Bitzer, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Walkowich

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Mrs. Coniglio asked for a motion for the approval of the agenda. Mrs. Agnello made the motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mrs. Morris, all were in favor.

III. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2002, MINUTES - Mrs. Coniglio asked for a motion to approve the September 11, 2002, minutes. Mr. Spaziani made the motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by Mr. Fishman, all were in favor.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

A. **Palm Beach Public School Building Project - Site Plan**

Mrs. Coniglio showed the commission the current site plan of the proposed Palm Beach Public School Building Project. She stated that it was the same plan that was presented a month ago at the Preservation Committee Meeting. She requested that the staff create an overlay which would show a rendering of the current school building against the current plan, so that it would better show the loss of green space. Mr. Bitzer said that staff may be able to do that. Mr. Shulman said that at yesterday's Town Council Meeting Mr. Wyatt suggested that the Town Council postpone this project for another year. He said that no one supported Mr. Wyatt's suggestion, but that no one opposed it either. Mr. Fishman said that it was a good idea because in a year the School Board may take a different position. Mr. Shulman said that it was mostly because of the new law in class sizes.

Mr. Gavigan asked if the School Board had made a decision on the sale of the west building. Mrs. Agnello said that she was under the impression that they were still planning on selling it but that they were postponing the sale until the plans on the east side of the street were completed. Mr. Gavigan said that what they have actually done is sell the green space off to the Four Arts, because in lieu of using that school they have basically sold the green space. He said that the Four Arts doesn't need that building, it could be used by the school. He said that a lot of residents spoke up in favor of keeping that building as part of the school. Mr. Gavigan said "The School Board says that it's an exception, that they should not be crossing the street, but the whole site is an exception because you couldn't build a school on that amount of land if you wanted to." Mr. Fishman said that if they used the west side of the campus then they wouldn't have to encroach on the open green space.

Mr. Bone asked if anything had happened since the last meeting to hope that the School Board would change it's position that it was unsafe, although no longer illegal, to have a campus on two sides of the street. He asked if there had been any feeling that they will bend on that point. Mrs. Coniglio said that she felt the School Board was not going to bend on anything..

Mr. Bone asked if there was any possibility that some private citizen or the Town would come forward and put up the money to tear down the structure that was put up in the 1970's namely the media center. He said that is was his understanding that the current media center did not meet State standards for destruction because of a financial formula for preserving buildings.

Mr. Bone said "Here's the problem., this site plan which must be built, can only be built like this because this building (the media center) sits here, if this building is torn down, the architect now has this entire site to build upon. If the architect didn't have to build around that building (the media center) the school could be longer instead of wider and take up less green space." He said, "I feel quite confident, knowing what I heard from the architect that her hands were tied because she had to build around this structure."

Mr. Bone said that the historical people were up in arms when the plan called for the northeast building to be destroyed. He said, "They told the school board, don't destroy the historical building that we, the members of this Town bought and paid for 80 years ago, don't destroy that. Every one on the Historical Commission was up in arms about the fact that the media center was maintained and they all said, tear down the media center if you have to but don't tear down this building. To which the School Board simply said, well we can't tear down the media center because of this administrative code that says that if it's a certain age and a certain value and it's worth a certain amount of money it can't be destroyed. But nobody ever said, well wait a minute, if you tear down the media center, admittedly it will

cost you another million dollars, you can replace the media center in a building that is much longer and not as wide.” Mr. Bone said that the possibilities are almost endless to an architect who does not have to build around this old building.

He said, “My proposal is this, since the Town did it 80 years ago, some good citizen, if not the Town itself, in an effort to save our green space which is so important to the children, should come forward and say here’s a million dollars and put my name on that new building.. It’s now called the John E. Ravinsky building of the Palm Beach Public School and I have given you the million dollars to preserve the green space. There are a lot of people in this town who are eager to put their names on buildings.” Mr. Bone said, “I’m almost certain from hearing the architect speak that if that media center were no longer a block, that this structure with all its requirements could be built in such a way that it would not encroach upon any of the existing green space. It could be moved more to the left so that the old historic building on the corner is saved and the rest of the site is available to redesign. I think this is where we should put our emphasis, we should approach the Town and say fathers why don’t we do a study to see how much more money it’s going to cost to tear down that building, because if the state won’t pay for it and the school board can’t pay for it by law, but a private citizen or the Town can pay for it, then come forward and offer the money. All we have to do is a study that says that it’s “x” number of dollars, and then we all get the result we want.”

Mrs. Agnello said “The School Board has not gone back to the state to try to get an exception.” Mr. Bone said “ Yes they did, you may not have heard this. Originally there were two other buildings on this site that did not meet the state’s code according to that schedule. They went back and asked specific permission that those two, because they were so close to the age, be torn down and the state granted them permission to tear those buildings down, but this one was 5 years off. The county can’t replace it, the School Board can’t replace it, by law they can’t use those funds, but a private citizen or the Town could put up the money. We did it by precedent, we spent the money to build that school itself, we the members of this Town, the citizens put up the money which is the argument they made when they wanted to tear it down. The Town fathers said no, we paid for that and gave it to you, how dare you tear it down and the School Board said, OK we’ll save that building. I say we step forward and tear down the media center and name the new building in honor of the woman, man or family who donates the money.” Mr. Gavigan said, “Assuming you gain something by tearing it down.” Mr. Bone said, “Without question, there is no doubt in my mind, I’m telling you that if you ask the architect, and I did, I believe her response was, if I did not have to build around the media center that tied my hands, this entire structure would look dramatically different.”

Mr. Gavigan asked if we could show the original footprint on the plan that they had just received to see what green space will be lost. Mrs. Coniglio said that she has already asked for that and Russ said that he would try to get that information to us. Mr. Brown said if you look at the far west corner of the media center, that would be the left field line of the existing field. Mr. Gavigan said that if you draw a line through, you go right through the proposed administration building, you'll cut off two thirds of what they have proposed. Mr. Gavigan said, "My fear is that no matter what they do they're still going to use this plan." Mr. Bone said, "The architect, Young Song is very talented and very nice, who admires challenges and an architect wants to preserve green space, but her hands are tied by the media center. You give her that, by taking the media center away and say now you solve our problem, which is, we want all the green space that we can get. I'm willing to bet that she will design something that will give us exactly what we need and want, but it will cost money." Mr. Bone said, "The Town Council repeatedly uses as its' justification for keeping the school that the Town is unique and should have a school, then for that reason the Town should come up with more money or our citizens should be encouraged to come up with the money, so that we do not sacrifice anything. We are Palm Beach, we can have it all." Mr. Fishman said that he felt Mr. Bone's proposal had possibilities but that we should consider Mr. Wyatt's proposal about postponing the project to gain time and possibly get someone to come up with the money for Mr. Bone's proposal. Mr. Bone said that Mr. Wyatt has a good point that in a year things may change. He said that he originally took the position that we had to have a school in our town, then he took the position that we should have no school at all because to have a half way decent school was a mistake but now he felt that we could have everything, the school and the open green space. Mr. Bone said "It's all about money, you know you can put a dollar sign on that building, there needs to be a dollar sign on the green space we're giving up. Right now everyone says it's impossible, we have to give up the green space and that's not true."

Mr. Gavigan asked, "Does anybody know what's going to happen to the west side of the school?" Mrs. Agnello said that at the last School Board meeting it was removed from the agenda and a vote was postponed until the plans and everything was set on what was going to happen on the east side of the campus. Mr. Gavigan said, "A compromise is fine but this is not a very good solution. It would be helpful if they could redo the plan with the media center gone, but however you work it we are losing a tremendous chunk of green space, seemingly for no purpose. They have, on the west side of Cocoanut, a space which could be used and there is no way the Town should allow them to sell that and I think the argument is your just selling off green space. You take that plot and you put it here and that's what they are selling." Mrs. Agnello said they can say it's our land, our property. Mr. Gavigan said, "Fine but you cannot adopt a plan that will limit the green space. The only way they are going to make this plan work is by taking the green space and then use the athletic field for their activities." Mr. Gavigan said the only reason we have a joint use agreement is

because of the open green space, we use their land, but if they build on their part of the land and the Town loses the use of that open green space what are we gaining.. He said, "How can you say to the Public School, no you can't use our field, only the Day School can."

Mrs. Coniglio asked Mr. Gavigan what he found out in his investigation of the deed. Mr. Gavigan said he couldn't get anyplace on that. Mrs. Coniglio said that one other thing puzzled her. Which was the legality of the Town Council's precedence to hold the property line in 1981 and in 1986. She said that the plans at that time called for the media center to be further south and the Recreation Advisory Board at that time recommended to the Town Council that they push that building back to allow the regulation baseball field to be maintained. The addition that they put on the north side, when they extended those classrooms, was again supposed to come further south and the Town Council asked them to maintain that property line in that footprint to prevent encroaching on the green space. She asked, "Isn't there a legal precedence with those two deed restrictions?"

Mr. Bone made the following motion: That we, the Recreation Advisory Commission have made the following observations: 1. That in essence the Town has allowed the school board to sell part of it's property which looks like they're selling unusable space but in a sense it's selling the green space that is currently used. 2. That we feel that the site as designed by the architect is constrained artificially by state requirements, that require the architect to build around existing buildings like the media center which have little or no architectural value.

That we, the Recreation Advisory Commission recommend to the Town Council the following: 1. That the Town Council table discussions while the School Board investigates how much money it will cost over and above what is permitted by state law , to tear down those other structures of little or no architectural value, i.e. the media center and until it can be determined how the new constitutional amendment on class sizes will effect the design. 2. To find out what the dollar amount is so that we the Town of Palm Beach can put a dollar sign on the loss of this green space. 3. After we know that dollar amount, either the Town consider spending the money or that an effort be made to raise those monies privately so that we can accomplish everything that the Town and the School Board need and want. 4. That the property be redesigned so that it stays within it's existing use and does not encroach upon the green space. 5. That we encourage or require the school board to redesign the school using its' existing campus on the west side of the road.

Mrs. Coniglio showed the commission a report that Mr. Brown had put together for Mr. Goldblum to actually show the facility usage of the Recreation Department fields. She said that the result of the report shows that we will lose 50% of all of our outside play areas everyday. It shows how it impacts the Public School children, the Day School children and

the Town Residents. Mr. Brown said that in regards to the report, the area listed as the outfield should also state infield since the school uses the infield on occasion for different games. This report is attached.

Mr. Gavigan said that after reviewing the plans further he saw some major problems with the proposed baseball field. He said that the 200ft baseball field is not very large and that it overlapped the basketball court which created a hazard. The proposed baseball field also encroaches on the soccer field. He said, "It's got safety problems, and with the infringement on the athletic field they are limiting use significantly." Mr. Bitzer said that staff was asked to review the plan and get back with the architect with a list of potential problems and suggestions so that they could consider making modifications. He said that the items that staff were concerned with were as follows: 1. At the south end of the baseball field there is a liquid fertilizer tank that may interfere with the relocated baseball field and would need to be moved. 2. The fencing around the basketball court was too close and could be a hazard. He said the School Board told us that they were waiting for their School Board Security to advise them whether they could tie the buildings together with fencing rather than the outside perimeter. 3. By fencing the outside perimeter there may be a problem with a public gas easement that is in the property line next to the basketball court. 4. The sidewalk was inside the baseball field. 5. The P.E. Building was a hazard because even though it was in foul territory of the baseball field it could be dangerous as a sharp corner extended onto the field. He said that the architect said that they might be able to elongate the building and curve that corner. Mrs. Coniglio said that's not a solution, instead of running into a sharp angle you would run in to a curved wall. 6. Rather than have clay base paths it has been suggested that perhaps the clay base paths be entirely grass. Staff suggested clay cutouts (sliding pits) around the bases rather than just grass, as grass alone may be a sliding hazard without some clay around the bases. Cut outs around the bases would interfere less with other activities being conducted at this location than having full clay base paths.

Mr. Bone revised his original motion: That we The Commission advise and recommend the following to the Town Council: 1. That the School Board's latest design, while laudably saving the historic structure on the corner, still takes away a significant amount of existing green field space and is therefore absolutely against the best interest of the Town, all its citizens and the children who use the school. 2. That the Recreation staff and Commission members have studied the issue and can objectively prove that the proposed loss of green field space will result in at least a 50% reduction in outdoor function of the Recreation Center and that such a loss is absolutely unacceptable. 3. That the Commission acknowledges that the talented architect who designed the new building is severely handicapped in that process because she must design any new building around non-historic structures such as the media center which apparently cannot be torn down or replaced by the School Board with its funds due to limitations imposed by the State. 4. That the Town Council remember there

is significant precedent for using public and private funds to accommodate the school within the special and unique needs of this Town. Specifically: Early Palm Beach residents and a prior Town Council put up the money to build the school itself almost 80 years ago when school officials could not or would not pay to do it; and in 1981 and again in 1986 the Town Council successfully forced the School Board to significantly redesign the campus when the media center was built so that the existing green field space would remain in tact. 5. That this project deals with several competing interests of equal importance. Specifically, the school children, the residents who use the outdoor recreational space, and the important location and historic nature of the site; 6. Therefore, the Commission strongly recommends that the Town Council reject the School Board's latest plan and postpone further consideration and approval of the project for at least one year while the Town, School Board and any other appropriate organization study the following possibilities. A. Whether a modernized school facility can be designed and built entirely on the East side of Cocoanut Row in such a way that it does not encroach on any of the existing green field space if the architect is not constrained by the presence of non-historic structures like the media center. B. Whether there is a difference in cost between the proposed modernization plan built around the media center and an alternative modernization plan that is not constrained by a limitation on the destruction of non-historic structures. C. If there is any increased cost attributable to such an alternative plan that cannot legally be paid by the School Board because of State regulations, whether it is feasible to solicit private donations or allocate money from the Town to pay those costs rather than lose 50% of the function of the existing green field space. D. Or as another alternative, whether the School Board can and should make an exception to its desire of building the entire school campus on the same side of the street by designing a modernized school that uses existing property on both sides of Cocoanut Row and keeps the green field space intact. (The Commission notes that many other aspects of the modernized school is an "exception.") E. And finally, determine whether the new constitutional amendment limiting classroom size will have an effect on the School Board's modernization plan. The motion was seconded by Mrs Agnello, and all were in favor.

Mrs. Coniglio gave the fax number of the School Board and suggested to the Commission that they fax letters to the School Board so they know how we feel. Mrs. Agnello said that she didn't think the School Board was aware of how much green space their kids used and how much they were going to lose. She said that she was concerned that the children were not going to have any place for physical education which was important especially in light of the recent report released by the School Board that stated that 20% of Palm Beach County kindergartners were obese. The other Commissioners agreed with her.

(Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting - November 13, 2002)

VII. ANY OTHER MATTERS - None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Record of Attendance 2002

<u>Regular Members</u>	1/9	3/13	5/15	9/11	11/13
Gail Coniglio	P	P	P	P	P
James Gavigan	E (legal)	E (legal)	P	P	P
Arthur Gross	P	P	P	P	P
Eileen Morris	P	E (illness)	P	E (illness)	P
Larry Ochstein	E (illness)	P	P	P	A
Michael Spaziani	E (illness)	P	P	P	P
Stuart Shulman	P	P	E (illness)	P	P
<u>Alternate Members</u>					
Milissa Agnello	P	P	P	E (illness)	P
Bill Bone				P	P
Ken Fishman	P	P	P	P	P

LEGEND: P = Present
 E = Excused
 U = Unexcused
 A = Absent Pending Classification as "Excused" or "Unexcused"

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Conflict of Interest Record 2002

<u>Regular Members</u>	1/9	3/13	5/15	9/11	11/13
Gail Coniglio					
James Gavigan					
Arthur Gross					
Eileen Morris					
Larry Ochstein					
Michael Spaziani					
Stuart Shulman					
<u>Alternate Members</u>					
Milissa Agnello					
Bill Bone					
Ken Fishman					

LEGEND: X = Conflict of Interest

Schedule of Facility Usage In-School Hours Usage

Area #1 Multipurpose athletic field:

Mondays: 9:30-10:00 2nd grade PE from Palm Beach Day School
10:45-11:25 4th grade PE Palm Beach Day School
11:30-12:30 5th and 6th grade sports PB Day School
2:15-3:05 JV and Varsity sports PB Day School
Occasional use by Public School at various times as schedule permits

Tuesdays: 8:55-9:25 1st grade PE PB Day School
10:10-10:40 3rd grade PE PB Day School
11:30-12:30 5th and 6th grade sports PB Day School
2:15-3:05 JV and Varsity sports PB Day School
Occasional use by Public School at various times as schedule permits

Wednesdays: 9:30-10:00 2nd grade PE from Palm Beach Day School
10:45-11:25 4th grade PE Palm Beach Day School
11:30-12:30 5th and 6th grade sports PB Day School
2:15-3:05 JV and Varsity sports PB Day School
Occasional use by Public School at various times as schedule permits

Thursdays: 8:55-9:25 1st grade PE PB Day School
10:10-10:40 3rd grade PE PB Day School
11:30-12:30 5th and 6th grade sports PB Day School
2:15-3:05 JV and Varsity sports PB Day School
Occasional use by Public School at various times as schedule permits

Fridays: 8:20-10:45 K-4th grade PE PB Day School
11:30-12:30 5th and 6th grade sports PB Day School
2:15-3:05 JV and Varsity sports PB Day school
Occasional use by Public School at various times as schedule permits

Area #2 Grass baseball infield and outfield activity area west of athletic field and/or basketball court:

Mondays: 8:15-9:45 PB Public PE
1:10-1:50 PB Public PE
Occasional overflow use by Day School as schedule permits

Tuesdays: 8:15-9:00 PB Public PE
10:30-11:10 PB Public PE
12:25-1:05 PB Public PE
Occasional overflow use by Day School as schedule permits

Wednesdays: 8:15-9:00 PB Public PE
12:25-1:05 PB Public PE
Occasional overflow use by Day School as schedule permits

Thursdays: 8:15-9:45 PB Public PE
 10:30-11:10 PB Public PE
 12:25-1:50 PB Public PE
 Occasional overflow use by Day School as schedule permits

Fridays: 8:15-9:45 PB Public PE
 10:30-11:10 PB Public PE
 12:25-1:50 PB Public PE
 Occasional overflow use by Day School as schedule permits

Note: Depending on the activity either the basketball court, open outfield green space area or both may be used.

Area #3 Open green space activity area on north side of recreation center:

Mondays 9:45-10:15 PB Public 1st grade
 through 11:45-12:00 PB Public 3rd grade
 Thursdays: 12:40-12:55 PB Public 2nd grade

 Fridays 11:00-12:45 PB Public 4th grade
 11:30-12:45 PB Public 5th grade

Area #4 Palm Beach Recreation Department Playground:

Mondays: 11:15-11:45 PB Public pre-K recess
 12:00-12:30 PB Public Kindergarten

 Tuesdays: 11:15-11:45 PB Public pre-K recess
 12:00-12:30 PB Public Kindergarten

 Wednesdays: 11:15-11:45 PB Public pre-K recess
 12:00-12:30 PB Public Kindergarten

 Thursdays: 11:15-11:45 PB Public pre-K recess
 12:00-12:30 PB Public Kindergarten

 Fridays: 9:45-10:05 PB Public 1st grade
 11:15-11:45 PB Public pre-K recess
 11:30-12:10 PB Public 1st grade
 12:00-12:30 PB Public Kindergarten
 12:40-1:00 PB Public 2nd grade

Note: Occasional daily use by PB Day School lower grades as schedule permits.

Schedule of Facility Usage

After-school Hours Facility Usage

Area #1 Multipurpose athletic field:

Palm Beach day school uses this field as their home athletic facility.

Game times vary depending on schedule but on average there are scheduled home games 2 to 3 days a week from 3:00 -5:00. Usually Monday, Tuesday and Thursday with an occasional Wednesday.

The Palm Beach Recreation Department schedules all games on Saturdays. However there are scheduled team practices Tuesday through Friday from 3:30-5:30 on the main field. On the days that the Day School has a scheduled game these practices are split and held on the grass area in the outfield west of the athletic field and on the Day School practice area on the north side of Seaview Ave. As neither of these areas is large enough both must be used at the same time.

Area #2 Grass infield and outfield area:

Tuesday through Friday used as overflow practice area when Day School has a scheduled game.

Monday through Friday used by Public School after-school program on a daily basis between 2:30 and 5:30 whenever it is not being used as overflow practice area.

Also used as practice warm up area for visiting teams when Day School has a scheduled game.

Area #3 Open green space area on north side of recreation center:

Monday through Friday used on a daily basis between the hours of 3:00 and 5:00 pm by the Recreation Department after-school program.

Thursdays from 3:30-4:15 by the Recreation Department IttyBitty sports program.