



TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Recreation Department

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

Special Meeting – April 26, 2007

- I CALL TO ORDER** – A meeting of the Town of Palm Beach Recreation Advisory Commission was held on April 26, 2007 in the Council Chambers at Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Michael Spaziani, Chairman at 9:30 a.m. Commission members in attendance were Mr. Spaziani, Mrs. Milissa Agnello, Dr. Timothy Coffield, Ms. Danielle Hickox, Mr. Kenneth Schechet and Mr. Stuart Shulman. Alternate member in attendance was Mr. Joseph Della Giustina. Absent from the meeting were Mrs. Rita Taca and Mr. Henry Jamison. Staff members in attendance were Director Mr. Jay Boodheshwar, Assistant Director Mr. Rod Gardiner, Assistant Director Mr. Alan Brown and Office Manager Mrs. Lisa Walkowich.
- II APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA** – There were no changes to the agenda
- III OLD BUSINESS**

A. Proposed Lighting of the Seaview Park Multipurpose Field - Mr. Boodheshwar gave a report on staff's findings regarding pole height, retractable lighting systems, current use of the field and potential use if lighting is approved. He also conveyed the revised cost estimate of \$373,120 and the revised funding commitments from Mr. Borislow and The Palm Beach Day Academy to each pay half of the project cost.

Mr. Spaziani invited those in attendance to make public comments.

Ms. Cathy Wallace of 1472 South Ocean Blvd., representing the Garden Club of Palm Beach, was opposed to the lights stating that a lighted field was not the answer to obesity and pornography concerns for the children and that family and home were the best places to address those issues. She also listed several lighted facilities in Palm Beach County that were available for use. She stated that a lighted field would be an invitation for non residents to gather at the recreation center and would also have an effect on security measures and our police staff. Lighting this field would cause disruption, light pollution and a radical change to the peace and quality to life in Palm Beach and that the Town should serve the needs of the majority and not just the desires of a few.

Ms. Hickox stated for the record that she was also a member of the Garden Club of Palm Beach.

Mr. Morgan Wheelock of 301 Australian Avenue, who is opposed to the lights and agreed with the statement made by Mrs. Wallace, also felt that rescheduling of school programs would eliminate the need for lighting.

Mr. Paul Leone, representing the Palm Beach Day Academy, was in favor of lighting the field and stated that at the last Town Council meeting it had been pointed out that we provide lighting for the adults of the community to play tennis giving them more flexibility and more time on the tennis courts but we do not do the same for our children. He said that he and others involved in this project could not think of a community in this country that within their park system does not have lighting to support additional use of those facilities. He felt that comments that were made showed that people were out of touch with the needs of our children today and wanted to make a strong case for more than just lights, but for the physical and mental health of our children. He was offended by the Garden Club's suggestion to send our kids out of our Town to utilize county facilities, as we should be able to serve our Town by increasing programming and the quality of programming for our children.

Alex Hufty Anlyan, a Palm Beach resident who is opposed to the lights, stated that the Recreation Department was extremely responsive to the needs of the children and adults of this community, providing incredible and diverse programs and that these light will not be a benefit to the children. She spoke with 43 families in the community and said that they were very much opposed to lighting the field. They wanted their children home in the evening for dinner, homework and family, they did not feel the need for extra hours out on the field.

She stated that on Tuesday evening she came to the field at 5:45 and an adult soccer team was playing. She asked them if they had a permit and found out that they did not. She explained to them that this was a Town serving facility and confronted them about being residents. They called her obscene names and threatened her with physical violence. She stated that this incident made her realize that to have a team like that practicing on our field is a deterrent to our children.

Mr. Borislow of 1045 South Ocean, who is in favor lights, stated that Mrs. Hufty deserved no credibility at all. He said that the reason we don't have practices at night is because for half of the season the field is dark. He stated that you can't have a schedule with children where you keep changing the practice times because of the light. Mr. Borislow said that the fastest growing population in Town is children and if you are not going to light the only field in town then we should find public funds to build another field. He felt that it was ridiculous to expect parents to bus their children out of town. He said to get the quality professionals that we need to coach these children, it can only be in the evening. He felt that these kids will never get into a better program unless it is at night. Mr. Borislow stated that the team that he coaches was an amateur team, was not here on Tuesday night, and had not practiced on the Recreation Field for over a year. He said that we have to take care of our

children and told the Commission that they are the champions of our children and they have a responsibility to take care of these children.

Mr. Henry McIntosh of 124 Via Bethesda, who is opposed to the lights, stated that when he had heard Tuesday night that Mrs. Anlyan had been physically threatened and called vile names he went to the field and witnessed that there were in fact 10 – 12 young men playing soccer. They were questioned by the police and when it was discovered that they did not have a permit they were told to leave. He said that this is a town serving facility that is paid for by the tax payers of this Town and the schools that operate here and it should be reserved exclusively for the use of residents.

Gary Walker, of Palm Beach Gardens, stated that his involvement with the Town of Palm Beach is as the coordinator and coach of the traveling soccer team, with sixty two children who play every Sunday and Monday from 4:30 – 6:30. He said that the parents are extremely happy with the program which consists of approximately 85% residents.

Mr. John Thompson of the Palm Beach Day Academy stated that the school has had a joint use agreement with the Town for 30 years, sharing facilities. He suggested that the Town work together with the two schools to create a master plan to discover what the needs are of the community instead of piecemeal projects. He stated that the Day Academy would be more than happy to cooperate, not just with dollars and scheduling, but with the planning.

Mr. Richard Danton of El Dorado Lane stated that the Day Academy had a hidden agenda, they want to become a high school and they want to change the exclusive agreement that they have with the Town of Palm Beach so that they can't be put off the field. Everyone keeps saying donation but this is a business deal. They give us \$800,000 and we will give them a 10 year exclusive to that field. He stated that the Day Academy was not Town serving with 68% of the student body being non-residents. He also stated that school does not meet their financial obligation to take care of the field on a yearly basis.

Mr. Thompson stated that the Day Academy's plans for a high school do not include placing a high school in Palm Beach, as it is simply impractical and the statement that they have not met their financial obligation for the field was incorrect.

Mr. Boodheshwar clarified, "Mr. Danton may have misunderstood, as the Day Academy does contribute about half of the cost associated with maintaining the field. I think where the miscommunication was with our staffing. We pay exclusively the staff costs associated with mowing and the Day Academy does contribute about half of all the other costs associated with maintenance. The Day Academy, since I've been here and from what I understand, has never said no to a funding request. Everything we have asked for has been granted. They have been great partners in helping with the cost associated with maintenance."

Mr. Thompson said that there was no intention to stop that and they will enhance their monetary contributions if needed.

Mrs. Doreen Danton of El Dorado Lane, who is opposed to the lights, stated that putting lights on the field would take away from the beauty of Palm Beach. We should be happy with what we have and work with what we have and remember it is for the people who live in the Town.

Mr. Borislow said that Mr. & Mrs. Danton had an agreement with him that they would not oppose the lights if he agreed not to push for the synthetic field. In addition Mrs. Danton at the last Town Council meeting supported the lights. He said that these people violated an agreement with him and should not get be given any credibility.

Mrs. Danton stated that Mr. Borislow was lying that she did not have an agreement with him and felt that after speaking with fellow residents and parents, now feels that there is no need for lights.

Mrs. Ann Sommers of 215 El Bravo Way, who is opposed to the lights, stated that she felt that there was not a need for lights, they would be unattractive, and that a facility with lights would invite and possibly increase crime, requiring additional staffing costs and additional police supervision.

Mrs. Yvelyne de Marcellus Marix of 1570 North Ocean stated that the statistical information regarding children was incorrect and in fact the average age in Palm Beach over the past two years was getting older. She also felt that if the Town was prepared to allow lights on their field then they should be prepared to give them to others as well. She felt that if we had not already done so that we needed to take this project to the Zoning Commission.

Mr. McIntosh stated that the Commission may want to reconsider elevating the tennis courts because of the lighting.

In addition to the public comments received during the meeting, an email from Mr. Leslie Shaw in support of limited field lighting use was distributed to Commission members. See attached.

With there being no further comments from residents, Mr. Spaziani asked the Commission for their comments and questions.

Mrs. Agnello asked Mr. Boodheshwar if we knew how far the light spill would be with the shorter lights. Mr. Boodheshwar stated that it depended on the angle of the light fixture but knew it would be greater than with a seventy foot pole. She asked how high the lights were on the tennis courts. Mr. Boodheshwar said they were approximately 22 feet high. Mrs. Agnello asked what the plans were for the new travel team in regards to the use of the field. Mr. Boodheshwar said that it was a pilot

program, utilizing the field two days a week. He said that the program was very well received and if we wanted to expand it lights would be beneficial. Mrs. Agnello asked what percentage of the children in recreation center programs were residents. Mr. Boodheshwar said that overall the average was approximately 65%.

Mr. Schechet said that he felt that the natural field would not be able to take any additional use if lights were to be installed. That combined with the fact that the schools could not come forward with additional programming and that he felt that we needed additional rules and procedures to ensure that the field is only used by town sanctioned activities, he felt that he could not support putting lights on the field.

Ms. Hickox asked, “What was the number of children in Town programs who utilize the field?” Mr. Gardiner said that in just the sport programs there area approximately 5,500 youth visits to the field throughout the year. Individual children in our athletic programs amount to a little less than 300.

Mr. Spaziani asked what zoning restrictions there were in regards to the height of the poles. Mr. Boodheshwar said that zoning review would still be required with the revised plan and there two variances area required, one for the height of the pole and one for the screening of the lights.

Mr. Shulman asked if anyone had calculated the additional cost there would be for staff if lights were installed. Mr. Boodheshwar said that we hadn’t because for other than the possibility of expanding the travel soccer program and having soccer practices at night, we haven’t determined exactly what else could happen. He said that most of the staffing would be with part time staff and there would be the flexibility of putting lights on a timer. Mr. Shulman asked if staff had considered who was going to control the field and how the lights would be used. Mr. Boodheshwar said that if the lights were approved staff would formulate policies to control how the lighting was used.

Mr. Boodheshwar added that the recreation center field has historically been used for drop in purposes for many years. Last year, early in the budget process, staff recognized that the use by adult teams caused a monetary impact on the field. The thought process was to develop a fee schedule and permitting system where staff can recoup some of the costs associated with this type of use. Currently we are going through a public education period where we have posted signs to let these users know that if you want to use this field in an organized way, there is a process you have to go through where you apply, prove that you’re town serving and pay a fee. Our goal was to begin enforcement this coming weekend. He said, “However, the reality is that this is an open public area and it is going to attract people. Policies are ways that we can gain some control.”

Mr. Della-Giustina made the motion to reject the installation of lights on the Seaview Park multi purpose field. Seconded by Mrs. Hickox.

Mr. Spaziani asked if there were any other comments before a vote was taken.

Dr. Coffield stated that before supporting a plan to install lights he would like to see a specific plan for non daylight savings time utilization that is town serving, and of significance and at this time he didn't feel there was an adequate plan.

Mr. Shulman said that he felt that lights were a small price to pay for anything that the Commission could do to help the children in this town. The inconvenience or the esthetics should be put a side.

Mr. Schechet stated that he felt that this was not the time to do this project that there were not firm enough plans for the use or control of the lights but he would be open to talking about this in the future.

Mr. Spaziani called for a vote. Motion passed with five votes in favor and two against. Mr. Spaziani thanked the Commission and residents for their input and stated that at this time the Recreation Advisory Commission would recommend to the Town Council that lights should not be installed.

IV NEW BUSINESS – None

V ANY OTHER MATTERS - None

VI ADJOURNMENT – Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

**RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Record of Attendance 2007**

<u>Regular Members</u>	1/10/07	3/14/07	4/26/07	5/9/07	9/12/07	11/14/07
Mr. Spaziani	P	P	P			
Mrs. Agnello	P	U	P			
Mr. Andrews	U	E	P			
Dr. Coffield	P	P	P			
Ms. Hickox	P	P	P			
Mr. Schechet	P	P	P			
Mr. Shulman	E	P	P			
<u>Alternate Members</u>						
Mr. Della-Giustina	P	P	P			
Mr. Jamison	P	E	A			
Mrs. Taca	P	P	A			

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

**RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
Conflict of Interest Record 2007**

<u>Regular Members</u>	1/10/07	3/14/07	4/26/07	5/09/07	9/12/07	11/14/07
Mr. Spaziani						
Mrs. Agnello						
Mr. Andrews						
Dr. Coffield						
Ms. Hickox						
Mr. Schechet						
Mr. Shulman						
<u>Alternate Members</u>						
Mr. Della-Giustina						
Mr. Jamison						
Mrs. Taca						

LEGEND: X = Conflict of Interest