

**HOMEWOOD-FLOSSMOOR PARK DISTRICT  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2010**

The special meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners was held at the Marie Irwin Community Center. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Executive Director Debbie Kopas. Roll call was taken with Commissioners Bertram, Nevins, Johnson, Camin and Haderlein present. Also present were Superintendent of Parks and Planning Doug Boehm, Superintendent of Recreation Tracey Anderson, Superintendent of Finance & Administration Renae Ross, Superintendent of Coyote Run Dave Ward, Coyote Run Manager/Golf Professional Brian Smith, Racquet & Fitness Club Manager Dave Thommes, Marketing & Public Relations Manager Nicole Castagna, Administrative Assistant Pam Melnyk, Facility Supervisor Erik Enslin, Irwin Manager Jodi Gosse, Accountant Supervisor Jerry Hazlett, Recreation Supervisor Lee Ann Fisk, Secretary Cathi Hurtubise and approximately 115 guests.

**CHANGE IN AGENDA – None**

President Haderlein was pleased that so many people were in attendance. Haderlein thanked everyone for coming and introduced himself, Commissioners Pat Nevins, Peter Camin, Sue Bertram and Steve Johnson, Executive Director Debbie Kopas, Superintendent of Parks & Planning Doug Boehm, Superintendent of Finance & Administration Renae Ross and Facility Supervisor Erik Enslin.

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:**

a. Swimming Pools

President Haderlein said the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District is an award winning agency that prides itself in providing the best services and recreational programs possible. Haderlein said as elected officials, commissioners have a responsibility to the tax payers to manage the district in a fiscally responsible manner. Haderlein said the slideshow to be presented is on the condition and financial status on Dolphin Lake Pool and Lions Club Pool. Following the presentation the Board will take public comments and questions.

**PRESENTATION –** A slideshow was presented on the status of Dolphin Lake Pool and Lions Club Pool.

**COMMENTS FROM VISITORS -**

Tina Chlopecki of Flossmoor has several concerns with Lions Pool including; too crowded, no lap lanes, cleanliness of sand area, parking lot is too small, additional chairs needed, adult swim time, larger changing rooms and doors on washrooms don't lock properly. Chlopecki said she did not receive the pool survey.

Anita Cheers of Homewood is concerned about what the area will look like if Dolphin Pool closes. Lions Pool is too crowded and far away. Willing to do something to help keep Dolphin Pool open.

Mary Deegan of Flossmoor asked if there will be lap lanes at Lions Pool and wondered where the Senior Olympics will be held? Supervisor Enslin replied that lap lanes will be added. Director Kopas replied that another agency would need to host the Senior Olympics.

Alice Gaus of Flossmoor has many years of wonderful memories at Dolphin Pool. Thanked the Board of Commissioners for making a hard but fiscally right decision. Is not happy that a pool must close but said Dolphin certainly sounds like the one that should close.

Renee Reeves of Homewood asked about revenue from people who visit the pool but are not pool pass holders. Commissioner Haderlein said those figures were taken into account and included in the presentation. Reeves asked what has been done to encourage or promote the sale of pool passes. Haderlein replied various marketing materials are used to promote all park district facilities and programs. Commissioner Bertram said the park district program guide is mailed to all residents of Homewood and Flossmoor. Reeves was concerned that Lions Pool is too far away and suggested a community fundraiser be held to help save Dolphin Pool. Commissioner Johnson said a long term solution is needed. Johnson said Dolphin Pool was built on a sand base on the side of a hill and washes towards the lake each year. Reeves said with the current economy the park district should be able to get discounted pricing for a new foundation and asked how many companies were contacted for bids. Director Kopas replied it would not be considered one construction project that would cost a certain amount of money. Kopas said these are equipment prices from manufacturers that must engineer new materials to match old equipment. Reeves asked why Lions Pool was renovated twice. Haderlein replied renovations are done at that time renovations are needed and not done just to make one facility better than another.

Patricia Lundstrom of Homewood is concerned that Lions Pool is too far away and questions if the pool will be able to accommodate all swimming lessons. Lundstrom is also concerned that junior high and high school kids prefer Dolphin Pool. Lundstrom said after viewing the presentation she understands there is no other responsible way but to close Dolphin Pool however she is very disappointed that she is only hearing about it now. Lundstrom said it appears not much attention has been paid to Dolphin Lake or the pool. Commissioner Haderlein replied all programming was discontinued on Dolphin Lake because of a drowning. Commissioner Johnson replied thousands of dollars have been spent on Dolphin Pool over the years. Johnson said a pool built today has a life span of 20-25 years; Dolphin Pool was built in 1965.

Jennifer Gorton of Flossmoor is curious why pool pass sales are declining. Suggested staff look at other communities to see what they are doing right. Concerned with the cleanliness of the locker rooms, cleanliness of the sand and too little deck space. Suggested a new marketing campaign and to make the pools more user friendly.

Student Raven Reeves of Homewood said closing Dolphin Pool would have a major impact on the community. Concerned that Lions Pool is too far. Suggested fundraisers may help solve the problem.

Alesia Young from the organization Strictly Teens USA based in Flossmoor is concerned that we are not listening to the youth in our communities. Suggested making Dolphin Pool better for the youth since the pool cannot be made ADA accessible. Suggested water boarding be offered.

Pat Denman of Homewood is concerned that water aerobics classes will not be offered at Lions Pool.

Doug Scholefield of Homewood grew up at Dolphin Pool. Scholefield is not happy but said it doesn't make sense to keep Dolphin Pool open because the infrastructure is bad and the pool is falling apart. Asked if it would be possible in the future to build a new water park with diving boards. Commissioner Haderlein said the park district would love to find a central location where a new pool community center could be built.

A member of the audience asked about Ravisloe as a possible site for a new pool. Commissioner Haderlein replied the park district previously looked at Ravisloe as a possible location.

Carla Porter-White of Homewood asked what the options were for the use of the land if Dolphin Pool closes. Commissioner Haderlein replied with funds not available at this time to build the land will remain green while brainstorming and planning takes place. Director Kopas replied that any time the park district renovates a park, staff first goes to the community to discuss their interests. Brainstorming sessions and master plan documents would be prepared and brought to the community.

Warren Jernegan of Flossmoor asked if other park district facilities cost money. Commissioner Haderlein replied that every facility is currently being affected by the economy. Haderlein said the difference with Dolphin Pool is that money is continually being spent on a facility that is past its useful life. Jernegan said that it seems to simply be a case of priorities and that Dolphin Pool has been allowed to deteriorate. Haderlein replied that Dolphin Pool has not been allowed to deteriorate. The park district has spent many years keeping the pool open and has reached the point where money can no longer be spent on the aging facility. Commissioner Bertram reminded everyone that Dolphin Pool is sinking every year.

Commissioner Nevins said there seems to be a misperception that Dolphin Pool has been let go. Nevins said the park district has not done things for the past fifteen years so that we could say we want the pool to close. Nevins spoke for all the commissioners saying they do not want the pool to close. Staff has done their best to keep the pool open but with the infrastructure falling apart we cannot continue to pour more money in to the pool.

Connie Anderson of Homewood suggested a new pool be built at Coyote Run. Commissioner Johnson replied the cost to build a new pool is a minimum of six million dollars.

Bob Silverman of Homewood enjoys Lions Pool. Suggested a survey be done on why people are not purchasing pool passes. Concerned that Lions parking lot is too small to accommodate everyone. Worried some people might park in residential areas. Congratulated Commissioners for hosting the meeting and for a wonderful presentation. Commissioner Johnson replied that additional parking is available in the School District 153 parking lot.

Student Erin Kelly of Flossmoor said a lot of people like Dolphin Pool and will be disappointed if the pool closes.

Charlotte Kelly of Flossmoor said that closing Dolphin Pool would be a huge disappointment especially for teens and junior high kids. Feels Lions Pool is not a great option for kids in this age group. Understands the issues involved with Dolphin Pool. Wishes there was another option for teens.

Gerald Torrence of Homewood expressed concern about possible parking issues at Lions. Said that Dolphin Pool, as well as the shopping center across the street, was built on a dune. Suggested that anyone that would like to examine the topography to see Bob at Izaak Walton, a civil engineer. Torrence said given the pools antiquated structure and location, no additional money should be spent on the pool. Torrence suggested checking with Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. on possible grant money from the state.

Kim Richardson of Homewood asked if the pool closes would the cost of the pool pass decrease. Director Kopas replied that staff is not anticipating a decrease in price for several reasons; there has not been an increase for three years, all swimming opportunities will still be offered and there will be an increase in programming. Kopas said the park district has been losing money on operations in excess of \$100,000 a year. By closing one pool it is estimated the park district will save \$85,000 to \$90,000 each year just on operations. This savings will get the park district closer to a break even figure however it does not include any major repairs. Richardson said if Dolphin Pool closes some families will go elsewhere. Kopas said staff realizes that some families will opt not to purchase pool passes which is another reason why the cost of pool passes cannot be discounted. Richardson was concerned about crowds at Lions Pool and asked if Dolphin Pool will close this year. Haderlein replied the Commissioners have not formally voted on the issue. Voting will most likely take place at the February 16th board meeting. Supervisor Enslin said staff will do their best to accommodate everyone. Enslin will also look at increasing the number of staff to ensure locker rooms remain clean and to control the deck. The park district's number one priority is to provide the safest environment for all swimmers.

Mike Nussbaum of Homewood, former park board commissioner, said for the twelve years he was on the board there was quite a lot of expense put in Dolphin and Lions Pools as well as all facilities. Nussbaum said that nobody in the park district likes to see anything closed or changed in a negative way. The fact that so many people are here tonight shows how important our park district is to our community and how important the facilities and programs offered in the park district drives the quality of life in the community. The board faces a difficult decision in doing something that many people in the community don't want, but at the same time everyone needs to understand the only way to keep a facility like this open is to affect tax dollars and nobody wants taxes to increase. Nussbaum said the comments made tonight were heard by the board that will now go back and try to figure the best way to resolve the issues. Nussbaum thanked the board for listening to everyone's comments.

Carol Lindstrom of Homewood operates a home day care. Each day the kids vote to see which pool they will go to with the group choosing Dolphin Pool ninety percent of the time because of the diving boards. Concerned that most parks are geared towards young children. Understands why the pool might need to close but is disappointed. Suggested the park district hold off on renovating other parks in order to save money to build a new pool. Commissioner Haderlein

replied that building a new community pool center that is accessible to both Homewood and Flossmoor is a long term goal of the park district.

Annie McLaughlin of Homewood is concerned about the decrease in pool pass sales. McLaughlin said she knows most of the Commissioners and is confident they would not close a facility if it didn't need to be closed. McLaughlin wondered if there is anything that could be done now to prepare for a new pool facility, such as seeking grants. Does not think it is unusual to have only one pool in the community. Is grateful for the parks we do have such as the Splash Pad, the Ice Arena and the Skate Park. Suggested making Lions Pool more exciting and to improve the cleanliness of the facility.

Commissioner Camin said he meets monthly with elected officials who understand the many issues park districts are facing however their hands are tied, funds are just not available. Camin said the park district is still waiting on grant money for equipment installed in Apollo Park three years ago. Camin said that many years ago Lions Pool drew crowds of 800-900 people each day.

Commissioner Haderlein said it seems that most concerns are maintenance issues such as not enough chairs, deck space, cleanliness and parking, all items that can certainly be addressed.

Karen McHugh of Homewood is concerned with the amount of traffic in and out of the driveway at Lions. Commissioner Haderlein replied that the park district would have to work with the village on that issue.

Noel Patterson of Homewood is concerned with the isolation of the west side of Homewood if Dolphin Pool closes. Patterson asked if there is a way to get bicycles safely across 183rd Street. Commissioner Haderlein replied traffic issues would need to be dealt with through the village.

A member from the audience asked if the February 16th board meeting is open to the public. Commissioner Haderlein replied that all board meetings are open to the public. Committee of the whole meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month and regular meetings on the third Tuesday.

An audience member asked if voting takes place at the February 16th meeting will they plan to close the pool this year. Commissioner Haderlein replied that the commissioners first need to vote on the issue.

A member from the audience said many people left tonight because they felt they were wasting their time and that the issue was already a done deal. Commissioner Haderlein asked if she felt she was wasting her time. Her reply was no, however she feels the pool will close no matter what the public has to say.

Commissioner Haderlein said the park district is in the business of improving recreation for the community and not closing facilities. Unfortunately, Commissioners are at a point where a difficult decision needs to be made. We cannot continue to throw money at a facility that we don't know can stay open two years, let alone one year.

## COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:

Commissioner Nevins:

- Thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Reiterated that what was said tonight does mean something to the board. Thanked staff for their work in preparing for the meeting.

Commissioner Camin:

- We have been very successful in being able to keep the pool open for so many years. There comes a point when we may have to say goodbye.

Commissioner Bertram:

- Happy to see so many people at the meeting. Commissioners have been talking about this issue for eighteen years. Putting money issues aside, we don't want anything to happen that would compromise the safety of the pool and it looks like that is where it's going. If one would remove the emotions and look at the financial aspect they will realize there are not a lot of options.

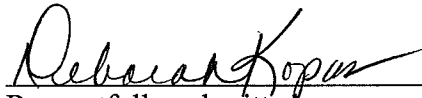
Commissioner Johnson:

- Thanked everyone for coming. Happy to see everyone come to the meeting with an issue they are passionate about. Asked that they continue to do so for the park district. Has been a commissioner for two years and there are more people in the audience tonight than there has ever been at any of the board meetings. Please continue to be involved with the park district.
- Two little kids walked out of the meeting tonight at 8:00 p.m. Those were my kids. There is no one who will be more disappointed than those two kids if Dolphin Pool closes.

Commissioner Haderlein:

- We have a responsibility to manage your tax dollars as best as we can. What makes me so proud to be part of this community is all of you coming out tonight to attend the meeting. Please know that all of you were heard. We will take your suggestions and do the best that we can.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Commissioner Nevins moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion was approved.



Respectfully submitted,  
Deborah Kopas, Secretary