

**MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS
AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2010 IN
THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Niemietz called the Executive Session of the Parks, Playgrounds and Recreation Committee Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois to order at 8:05 p.m.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were:

Present: Chairman Niemietz and Aldermen Agne and Stumpf.

Absent: Alderman Ebersohl.

Quorum Present.

Others Present: Mayor Hutchinson and Aldermen Row, Hejna, Oberkfell and Roessler.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator Al Hudzik, City Engineer Ron Williams, Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis (arrived at 8:10 p.m.), Accounting Manager Linda Sharp and Accounting/Clerical Assistant Sandy Garmer.

Guests Present: None.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Niemietz stated the Executive Session was called to consider the purchase of specific parcel(s) of real estate.

III. CONSIDERATION OF THE PURCHASE OF SPECIFIC PARCEL(S) OF REAL ESTATE

Chairman Niemietz called upon Mayor Hutchinson to update the Committee members on the possible purchase of the Columbia American Legion property. Mayor Hutchinson reported that he and City Administrator Hudzik met on March 15, 2010 with Columbia American Legion Commander Bill Wolf, Parks Coordinator Jim Lawlor and member Jim Mertz. Mayor Hutchinson reviewed the issues discussed in the meeting, which included the following items:

- the land is not currently in the endowment trust
- Legion members are primarily interested in selling the park grounds/playing fields
- Khoury League rights and other partnerships that currently exist should remain a priority
- The park grounds/playing fields land is to remain a park/athletic fields in perpetuity
- Mr. Lawlor will take care of coordination, scheduling and daily operations this year

- Khoury League currently covers a large portion of the expenses to repair and maintain the baseball fields during baseball season
- Legion members would like to receive an offer on the property

City Administrator Hudzik briefly touched upon Endowment Trust language issues, but informed the Committee that none of those issues was currently relevant since the property has not been placed into the trust.

A discussion was then held by all in attendance pertaining to the costs involved in purchasing and operating the park grounds, including additional personnel expenses that may be incurred in the daily operations of the park grounds (the Legion currently operates with mostly volunteer labor, which the city would not be able to do). A discussion was again held on whether any participation in the grounds upkeep could be received by partnering with the groups currently using the park grounds – the subject of charging fees was also discussed. Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis then addressed the Committee and reviewed his Memo on Expanding Columbia's Parks. A general discussion followed with all in attendance given an opportunity to express their opinions and ask questions. The items discussed included (1) the possibility of the maintenance work being contracted out; (2) whether the land should be purchased outright or through a lease/purchase agreement, and the proper price to offer for either option; (3) the labor intensiveness in dealing with ball diamonds/soccer fields and the scope of work necessary for proper maintenance; and (4) possible funding sources, including bond funds, capital development funds and grant funds (the last page of Mr. Ellis' Memo contained various information on the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Program -- the purpose of this program is to provide funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public parks and open space (through grant proceeds)). It was the general consensus of the Committee that additional thought be given to the purchase of this land and that Community and Economic Development Director Ellis obtain additional information on the OSLAD grant program and the scope of work necessary to maintain the grounds.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Stumpf and seconded by Alderman Agne to adjourn the Executive Session of the Parks, Playgrounds and Recreation Committee Meeting of Monday, March 22, 2010 at 9:14 p.m. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Niemietz and Aldermen Agne and Stumpf voted yea. MOTION CARRIED.



MARY E. NIEMIETZ, Chairman
PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Minutes Taken By:



SANDRA GARMER, Accounting/Clerical Assistant