

## **ROBERTS PROPERTY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

September 20, 2006

Present: Co-chair Ellen Zoppo, Charles Cyr, Chris Cassin, Ed Swicklas, Ken Cockayne, Melanie Dumont, Nate Peabody, Board of Finance Liaison Delores Capers, Co-chair Kevin McCauley and Sean Moore.

The minutes of the August 2006 meeting were approved unanimously.

Under Public Participation, Jeff Caggiano of 27 Cricket Hill Road expressed his frustration with the delay in the Roberts Property plan. He stated he rents fields in Avon for his men's soccer league, as do other leagues. He stated he regretted that he had only watched the committee's work from afar, assuming it was on track and that it would be a solution for the field shortage locally. He offered his assistance in moving forward and selling the project to the Board of Finance and any others.

Joe Caggiano, 469 Farmington Ave., stated that Bristol is the only town this size that doesn't have adequate fields and space and that the deterioration of the parks has been a disgrace.

Dan Wolf, 35 Peyton Terrace, stated that he represented a growing lacrosse league in town and they cannot find space to play or practice. He also noted that the lack of lighting on several fields is another factor which is detrimental to field use. He also stated that he was in Berlin over the weekend and there synthetic field withstood the weather and they played their games. He asked what the meeting schedule was for Board of Finance.

Ken Cockayne thanked the members of the public for coming and stated that their appearance at other city meetings would be a very positive action to move the project along, since it has been represented that there is no community support for the project.

Ellen reported that based on the comments by the Board of Finance members, she and Kevin have researched various other revenue opportunities. She distributed three summary sheets for a grant program through the U.S. Soccer Federation's foundation which Jeff Caggiano had sent to her; a grant program through The Tomorrow Fund, which is the foundation arm of Major League Baseball; and third, a formal request to Congressman John Larson regarding whether the project is eligible for Congressional earmark funding. A motion was made to request that the Grants Administrator evaluate the grant potential of these programs.

Sean Moore stated that the Big League Dreams program that he had circulated earlier in the year be added back to the list of alternate funding sources. Ellen stated that she would add it to the list. Jeff Caggiano stated that ESPN or other corporate sponsors be identified as well. Ellen stated that the Committee had an earlier discussion concerning sponsors and naming rights and will now re-visit that as well.

Under Old Business, the parking situation was discussed and Kevin reported that the some people are having difficulty navigating the slope and he will be discussing a zip line with the Public Works Department as a remedy.

Ellen stated that she had put “Status of the Committee” on the agenda since the Committee has an intact plan but no funding, and wanted to hear from the committee as to whether they wanted to take a recess and then come back to lobby for the plan when the budget process begins after the holidays.

The committee was unanimous in its decision to not recess:

- Ken Cockayne stated he wanted to continue to advocate for the project and move it forward;
- Melanie stated that she would distribute the information flyer that she created to the youth sports leagues and anyone else who wanted them. She stated that the Board of Finance meeting dates are on the forms.
- Charlie suggested that another positive argument would be the health benefits of having this recreational space developed.
- Sean Moore said he felt strongly that the Board of Finance and others should be held accountable and that we needed to rally people to show their support;
- Chris stated that the time was now to push this plan through and that the documentation exists to prove it’s needed.
- Nate stated that the momentum needed to continue and a recess would stall that
- Ed Swicklas stated that it has been hard for him to see a vision that has emerged over the last five years become feasible, blossom, and then have its legs cut out from under it. He stated that there is a community need as seen by the destruction of Muzzy Field last weekend during the football games that were played in the rain. The field has now been damaged and the soccer teams will not be able to use the facility.
- Delores Capers, Board of Finance liaison, stated she is concerned about the costs and while she supports the committee she voted her conscience.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00pm. The next meeting will be held on October 18 at 5:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ellen Zoppo, Co-Chair