



PROJECT NUMBER: # 15-065PLN ISSUE DATE: April 29, 2015
PROJECT NAME: Clark County Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan

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TO: FILE
PRESENT: Kevin Seewer, Battle Ground Little League
Scott Smith, Vancouver Girls Softball
Brad Hill, Salmon Creek Little League
Sean Mitchell, Evergreen Little League
Ryan Reese, Salmon Creek Little League
Danelle Schaff, Vancouver Youth Lacrosse
Cyndi Johnse, Vancouver Girls Softball
Brent Bates, Harmony Sports Association
Greg Foster, Parks Advisory Board
Kelly Punteney, Parks Advisory Board, co-chair
Bill Bjerke – Clark County Parks
Laurie Lebowsky – Clark County Community Planning
Jean Akers – Conservation Technix

SUBJECT: Stakeholder Session Meeting Notes: Sports Organizations (04/28/15)

Bill Bjerke welcomed the representatives from various sports-related organizations to discuss sports field and recreation facilities priorities for the county parks plan. Participants introduced themselves and shared their relative roles within their organizations. Bill provided a short summary of the project and thanked the stakeholders for their time.

DISCUSSION / COMMENTS

- 1. What does your organization see as the key priorities for the county's regional and urban sports field system?**
 - Luke Jensen Sports Complex is “almost” good enough for attracting regional tournaments. The natural grass surface is a limiting factor. And complex should have slightly more fields. Eight fields would enable them to have a tournament at Luke Jensen where they could have multiple games occurring at the same time.
 - Clark County should be ready for something bigger.
 - Synthetic fields are the answer. Happy Valley (Oregon) is a good example.
 - Softball needs dirt infield (not synthetic). Centralia has a great sports complex facility.
 - Major events seek 12 fields – all accessible (all weather play surfaces).
 - Major events need support/back up facilities and services, like hotels and/or RV camping.
 - Potential partnering for big tournaments could work with Delta Park if large sports complex was near the bridge (in Vancouver).

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- Battle Ground's field is among the oldest in the county and needs a new location. Current space and field is very limiting and BG population is growing. They could share a new space with other north county leagues.
- Battle Ground field is within Fairgrounds Park whose master plan shows a future build-out without the field.
- New complex in Woodland being proposed (by Rotary in partnership with city). Need a similar facility in Clark County.
- All weather fields are needed for lacrosse and soccer. Their seasons extend into wet winter weather.
- Lacrosse has reached the PacNW and is growing rapidly. Limited growth allowed due to few available and affordable fields.
- Luke Jensen is a good example of a great improvement using tax dollars.
- Harmony is an example of a user-based volunteer facility improvement.
- Harmony's nine fields are fully utilized. There is some room for expansion.
- Harmony soccer is seeking funding for all-weather surfacing.
- Moving to synthetic fields will increase use but for youth leagues the extension into evenings is limited due to curfew times.
- Harmony wants to pave their parking lot.

2. What are the shortcomings with the existing facilities? Where are the challenges for future recreation facilities?

- Weather challenges create a need for indoor facilities. No school gyms are available for winter or wet weather practices. Need practice and training facility. Centralia has a good facility and draws folks from Clark County on a regular basis.
- Centralia facility is the result of a public/private partnership between school districts, leagues and public utility.
- Indoor training facility may not be used sufficiently when weather is good.
- The Sports Council works only within the Vancouver School District in coordination with VSD for field scheduling. A similar entity does not exist for Evergreen School District who works out contracts with each sports organization individually.
- There are different organizations – no unifying entity.
- Tournaments often allow RV parking - overnight stays - at other sports facilities in the state. Without that feature, it's not very welcoming for out-of-town participation.
- Tournaments have a captive audience so revenue generation from RV parking permits and extended concessions could result from tournament play.
- Hockinson Park sports fields could benefit by adding lighting (in the approved master plan).
- Waste stream management will be a new task for tournament planning. Lots of concession sales will generate more waste. Need to do more recycling.

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- Tournament revenue can generate other economic effects if there are more support facilities to capture that revenue: lodging, food services, etc.
 - How much revenue could come back into the sports fields?
 - Luke Jensen is reaching its capacity, pushing against evening lights out deadlines.
- 3. What does your organization see as the future role for county parks in providing public sports field/recreation facilities?**
- Partner with sports organizations (acknowledge this is already happening).
 - County has access to more data and information and this needs to be readily available to help support volunteer-run groups.
 - County expertise could help with applying for grant funding and assist with permitting.
 - VGSA will partner with Vancouver lacrosse and convert one of their fields to a lacrosse field. They hope to add some expanded field capacity (if allowed) into greenway.
 - VGSA also hopes to add some support facilities like a concession stand and batting cage.
 - County staff could be in a role of helping to coordinate a group “council” that is county-wide and serves all sports organizations.
- 4. What contribution, collaboration, and responsibilities can your organization bring to the future implementation of the county-wide public park and recreation system?**
- We’ll help fund-raise and are happy to partner with the county.
 - Consideration for a county-wide sports council – what type of organization is desired?
 - Two items to consider: 1.) Comp plan CFP priorities, and 2.) future sports alliance for greater power.
 - Vancouver USA – can help tourism promotion through sports events. They can also help with measuring economic value of tournaments.
 - We could increase our clout by working together.
 - Economic development is an important value of sports events and activities.
 - There is strength in partnership.
 - Would a “council” carry more weight on getting private foundation grants?
 - Public/private is a good combination.

Every effort has been made to accurately record this meeting. If any errors or omissions are noted, please provide written response within five days of receipt.

-- End of Notes --

cc: Bill Bjerke
Project file