

WOLTERS FIELD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL– 2010-11

The Wolters Field Advisory Committee met three times during the 2010-11 school year on the following dates: August 19, 2010, November 4, 2010, and May 5, 2011. The committee members include:

Brigid Ohlwein – Community Member
Kevin Fassett – Community Member
David Greenberg – Community Member
Marjie Sandlow – District 113 Board Member
Mary Anderson – City of Highland Park Director of Public Works
Jim Kirsch – City of Highland Park Council Member
Paul Shafer – City of Highland Park Police Chief
Chris O'Neill – City of Highland Park Police Sergeant
Bobbie Monroe – Highland Park High School Athletic Director
Brad Swanson – Highland Park High School Principal

August 19, 2010 Meeting Synopsis

During the first meeting of the Advisory group in November, a review of the Fall Light Schedule was presented, with the spring dates to be added as schedules were confirmed.

The parking and drop-off plan was reviewed. There will be no changes this year than what we used last year. Signage will be provided directing the traffic on Park Avenue and the police department will monitor car and pedestrian traffic.

Principal Brad Swanson reported that the revisions to the current agreement with the City of Highland Park will be brought to the Plan Commission for consideration sometime in the near future. Those revisions were again discussed by the Committee and are as follows:

- In the future, we will look to keep the District 113 busses at Wolters Field on home football game nights to cut costs and support a green initiative.
- We will clean up language in the current plan so that we may park cars on grassy areas at Wolters Field, north of the baseball field and west of the Administration Building.
- The Police Department will limit the number of parking passes distributed in the fall to those neighbors living west of Beverly Street.
- We will request permission to park on both the west and east side of Athletic Drive, while still adhering to the plan that prohibits vehicles' headlights from shining into the neighborhood.

The Committee also agreed to review that Parking Plan at the end of each school year and make recommendations to send forth proposals as it relates to the Special Use Permit revisions.

Brad Swanson reported that he received on letter of interest for a position on the Committee for the 2010-11 school year. Current members will be contacted to see if they are still interested in remaining on the Committee.

November 4, 2010 Meeting Synopsis

The second meeting of the Advisory Group was held in November. Upon approval by the District 113 Board of Education and the Mayor of Highland Park, David Greenberg will join the Advisory Committee as a Wolters Field neighbor.

The Fall Light Schedule was reviewed. Thirteen regular dates were used for the light schedule and four special occasions occurred when the lights were turned on for one hour. Spring dates will be posted by late winter.

Officer O'Neill reported that there were very few incidents reported regarding traffic issues or other issues on Football nights this past fall.

Meeting times were discussed and it was agreed to set the August meeting time at 6:00pm and the November and May meeting times at 5:00pm.

Only two issues were brought up. Bridget Ohlwein questioned the signage that prohibits the public from using the artificial field. For liability purposes, the District is prohibiting use of the field. David Greenberg commented on the presence of geese in the backfield.

May 5, 2011 Meeting Synopsis

During the May 5, 2011 meeting, the Committee discussed the proposals that we approved last fall to take to the City Council. After watching parking patterns this past fall, and without an increase in additional parking spaces at Wolters Field, the school feels that we cannot leave the busses at Wolters Field on Friday night home football games. We will continue to move them back to the school, until the final paving is done at Wolters, creating more parking spaces. The other proposals involving parking north of the baseball field on the grass, parking on both the east and west side of Athletic Drive and limiting the number of parking permits to just those houses west of Beverly Street will still go forward to the City Council for approval.

David Greenberg raised a question of whether it would be possible to disable the back-up signal on the busses when they are brought back to campus on Friday night. He also asked if the Thor-Guard system at Wolters Field has to remain on 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

The lighted event schedule for 2010-11 was reviewed. Thirteen regular lighted event nights took place in the fall and four special occasions, where lights were turned on to finish an event safely. Five lighted events occurred in the spring, for a total of 22 times that the lights were used at Wolters Field during the 2010-11 school year. This remains well within the approved events as indicated in the ordinance.

Brought forward for discussion by the Advisory Committee was a proposal by the school to amend the City Ordinance regarding the use of lights at Wolters Field. In order to maximize the use of the field, the school district would like to propose the following:

- Use of the lights until 8:00pm on a weekly basis in the fall and spring Monday through Friday nights. This would allow us to schedule two full practices each night, or play a double-header contest. It should be noted that these events do not attract visitors in the same manner lighted football events do. According to past schedules, we would not need lights until mid-September through the end of the fall season. In the spring, we would only need to use the lights during the month of March and early part of April, as the days get longer.
- In addition, we would request 16 special lighted events per school year, where we would be allowed to use the lights until 10:30pm, or 30 minutes beyond the end of a contest, as in the current agreement. In reality, only Friday night football games require us to leave the lights on that long. For soccer, lacrosse and field hockey games, lights would be off before 9:30pm. This would allow every sport, in addition to football, to host a later night game or two in their seasons if they wish.

Mary Anderson made a motion to approve the proposal and David Greenberg seconded it. Brad Swanson and Bobbie Monroe will host a neighborhood meeting at Wolters Field Locker Room Facility at 7:00pm on Thursday, June 2, for the purpose of answering any questions pertaining to this new proposal.

On Friday, May 27, 2011, Principal Swanson, Police Chief Shafer, Community Development Director Blue and Athletic Director Monroe met to discuss the proposed changes to the SUP. Director Blue will be working with School District 113 to prepare recommendations for City Council consideration.

On Thursday, June 2, 2011, Principal Swanson and Athletic Director Monroe met with interested neighbors to discuss the new proposal for lights. A copy of the notes from that meeting are attached also as an addendum to the 2010-11 Annual Report.

. ADDENDUM TO 2010-11 ANNUAL REPORT to City Council

NOTES FROM WOLTERS FIELD

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

6-2-11 – 7:00pm at WF Locker Room Meeting Room

Representatives from the High School, Principal Brad Swanson and Athletic Director Bobbie Monroe, met with interested and concerned neighbors of Wolters Field on Thursday, June 2, 2011, to discuss an upcoming proposal for revising the Lighted Event Ordinance with the City of Highland Park. Those present included: Dr. Kim Ogden, Joni Shulman and daughter, Nanette Goltz and son, and Michael Buss. Bobbie and Brad explained the proposed changes to the light schedule as follows:

- **Reducing the number of Special lighted events from 35 to 16, dispersed between fall and spring**
- **Use of the lights until 8:00pm (if needed) Monday through Friday from mid-September until the end of the fall season and from the first of March until mid-April in the spring (approximately 40 dates in the fall and the same in the spring for a total of 80 dates). These will be known as Twilight events.**

Concerns expressed by the neighbors were as follows:

- **Going from the current 35 lighted events to a potential 80 dates (includes practice days and game days) The count of 80 includes the 16 special lighted events**
- **Concern over the use of the PA system. Brad and Bobbie assured the neighbors that the PA system would never be used on practice days for the main field. Also, for football games, the volume would be set on level 5, and on all other games (soccer, lacrosse and field hockey), the volume would be set on level 3.**
- **Concern over increased volume of traffic in general**
- **Concern about spectators parking in the neighborhood instead of at Wolters Field, because it's closer to the fields in many cases. Brad and Bobbie assured the neighbors that letters would be sent home and announcements made at parent meetings at the beginning of the season, and posted on our website, making sure parents understand that parking in the neighborhood is not acceptable. Neighbors suggested possibly placing a long yellow sawhorse at the end of Andean Ct. on softball game days.**
- **Concern over parents dropping off their student-athletes in the neighborhood, instead of at Wolters Field. Again, the same communication will take place with the parents of our athletes.**

- **Concern about PA system used for Poms and Jammers practices early in the morning. Brad and Bobbie will make sure that a boom box is used for practice, rather than the use of the PA.**
- **Concern about additional trash around softball fields. Brad and Bobbie will talk to maintenance staff about this issue and communicate with the Park District to monitor trash pick-up when they use our fields.**
- **Concern about property values going down because of the location next to Wolters Field and the lights**

Other questions which Brad and Bobbie will check into at the request of the neighbors in attendance at the meeting are:

Can all athletes/all levels be bussed over to Wolters Field each day and then bussed back to school afterwards?

Can there be more communication with the neighbors in the future? Bobbie will send out these notes by email to those present at the meeting and also include email addresses of current WF Advisory Committee members. When Bobbie mails out the August letter, she will invite the WF neighbors to share email addresses or phone numbers if they want updated information throughout the school year.

Can the school go back to placing the long yellow sawhorses with the sign in the middle for blocking off streets in the neighborhood for Friday night football games?

Can the softball scoreboard be moved from center field to the left field foul line?

Brad and Bobbie will make the following revisions to the proposed revised City ordinance regarding lighted events:

- **We will include a maximum number of days that the PA would be used in fall and spring for the twilight lighted events. That number will be 25 in the fall and 25 in the spring, for a total of 50 per school year.**
- **We will include a statement that indicates that the PA system will not be used for practices on the main field.**
- **We will include limits for the volume control, based on what kind of athletic event is taking place on the main turf field.**