

Minutes of the Wolters Field Advisory Committee Meeting
November 5, 2015

I. Call to Order

At 7:00 pm Co-Chair Julie Gordon called the meeting to order. Location: Wolters Field Athletic Center Building, 1080 Park Ave. West, Highland Park.

II. Roll Call of Advisory Group Members

In Attendance

Matt Ericson
Jeff Gilbert
Bridget Ohlwein
Chief Shafer
Joel Fontane
Jon Rowley
Eileen McMann
Michelle Holleman
Julie Gordon

Absent

Maria Barraza
Gary Kirshenbaum

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion to accept the minutes from the June 5, 2015 meeting: All members present voted to approve, with Mr. Gilbert abstaining because he did not get to read the minutes ahead of the meeting.

IV. Scheduled Business

Introduction of Committee members

- Chair Gordon welcomed City Councilman Michelle Holleman as new Co-Chair and thanked outgoing Co-Chair Tony Blumberg.
- Bridget Ohlwein, Neighbor
- Matt Ericson, Neighbor
- Jon Rowley, Athletic Director, Highland Park High School
- Julie Gordon, Co-Chair, Wolters Field Advisory Group – District 113 School Board Member

- Michelle Holleman, Co-Chair, Wolters Field Advisory Group - City Councilwoman and City Council Liaison to School District 113
- Jeff Gilbert, Neighbor
- Eileen McMann, Assistant Principal, Highland Park High School
- Joel Fontane, Director of Community Development, City of Highland Park
- Paul Shafer, Chief of Police, City of Highland Park

Other Attendees:

- Tony Blumberg, City Council Member, City of Highland Park
- Ron Kasbaum, Director of Technology, District 113
- Bill Tellone, Security Manager – Highland Park High School
- Scott Lieberman, Neighbor
- Rudy ????, Neighbor

Purpose / Mission of the Wolters Field Advisory Group

Co-Chair Gordon stated there are a lot of new faces in District 113 and HPHS, e.g., a new Principal, Superintendent, and Athletic Director.

Wolters Field is zoned as R5, which is residential with a Special Use Permit (allows certain things based on the ordinance that sets forth the special uses of that establishment).

This group was formed in 2004 as a joint committee between the City and the District when the new lights went up. The responsibility of this group is to review the impact on the neighborhood of the Wolters Field lights, sound and traffic. In doing so, the group takes into account the educational, extracurricular and psychosocial needs of the District and its students.

Suggestions and ideas that come from this group are to be taken back to the City and the District to be worked out.

The five members who are residents on this committee can serve for two years.

Ordinance 81-13: Special Use Permit Details

Councilwoman Holleman reviewed a handout that summarizes the Wolters Field Special Use Permit. This handout is included at the end of these meeting minutes.

Discussion ensued regarding the details of the special use permit, including:

- Concern was expressed about non-residents inappropriately parking on the residential streets. Chief Shafer confirmed that they ticket cars for noncompliance. There was discussion about making the parking signs more visible or further restricting parking permanently to Residents Only.

- Concern was expressed about over-usage of access to field from the residential streets, as well as the speed of cars in the area. Locking the gates off of the side streets would mitigate this concern, but this approach would also limit access by neighbors.
- Concerns about misuse of the pole vault pit were discussed, and Jon Rowley relayed that he had recently addressed this misuse directly with the involved parties.
- Concerns were discussed about confusion over how to access Wolters Field parking when the gates off of Park Avenue are locked. Co-Chair Gordon will follow-up with the District to better understand reasons for locking the gate, and signs that could better direct traffic.

Jeff Gilbert shared that he feels many of the commitments made by the District when they received Special Use Permit, whether captured in the ordinance or not, are not being lived up to. (E.g., We promise never to have music playing for more than 20 minutes before games, we promise to keep the gate to Athletic Field Drive closed at all times except for meeting at the administrative building or during lighted events.)

Co-Chair Gordon stated she does not believe that the District has intentionally dismissed any commitments. The District is trying hard to comply with the Special Use Permit and other commitments. She reiterated the broad usage of the field and acknowledged that mistakes have happened, but when they do, action is taken to try to prevent additional issues from reoccurring. Co-Chair Gordon stated if there is something that we are not adhering to, to please point it out.

Parking Updates and Issues

Co-Chair Gordon updated the group on parking enhancements, including new Pavers and new signage. On Athletic Lane, they've implemented a process to park cars from North to South.

The Ordinance also talks about the dust proofing treatment. Following a recommendation from Chief Shafer, the District has spoken to Ravinia as to the dust proofing treatment used on their lot. However, it may not be safe to use the same approach on Wolters Field since the treatment contains magnesium chloride, which may be hazardous because the field is used to play on. They are still looking into that concern.

Resident expressed concerned about the environmental health hazard, the dust is everywhere, and their cars are covered in dust.

Mr. Rowley updated the group on a recently reported violation of usage of Athletic Lane. It turned out to be that an official that was running late, hopped the curb and inappropriately parked his car on Athletic Lane. That official has been contacted.

Community and Neighbor Access to Wolters Field

Everyone acknowledged that the Field is an important asset to neighbors and the community. However, misuse and abuses do occur, so the challenge is how to ensure the field remains accessible to the right people, but that controls are in place to prevent inappropriate usage.

Mr. Rowley mentioned it is difficult to manage the field because he is not there all the time. Access to the field off of Centerfield Court and side streets adds to the difficulty, but also provides important access to neighbors. Discussion ensued about options including the possibility of locked gates and improved communications.

For the one gate that is permanently locked (due to a past injury and presence of a drainage ditch), discussion occurred about whether that gate can be unlocked in the future to allow residents of that street improved access.

Lighted Events Limitations and Issues

Details of the lighted events were covered earlier in the meeting, during the discussion of the Special Use Permit.

Mr. Gilbert expressed concerns that the ordinance allows 5 lighted games, but actually there were six lighted events this year (including the scrimmage game). Chief Shafer stated scrimmages were always held and never counted as a lighted event.

Mr. Gilbert also expressed concerns about a game in 2014 that, due to a lightning delay, ended up being permitted to go to 10:45, with the lights went out at 11pm.

The District discussed the many factors that are considered when dealing with weather-related delays, including impact on the neighbors, participants, students, fans and officials and the choice to continue versus rescheduling a game. Examples were given of games being rescheduled to a different evening due to concerns about violating the Special Use Permit.

Mr. Gilbert's concerns were mostly about whether there are circumstances which support not following the Special Use Permit, or whether strict adherence is required.

Both Chief Shafer and Mr. Fontane indicated that there are instances when strict adherence may reasonably not be achieved. These are judgment calls based on whether there was a reasonable good faith effort to comply. The frequency, manner and degree of the violation are also considered when determining the enforcement response. There are instances that various land uses go out of compliance. The City seeks compliance through our enforcement efforts. Sometimes there is a lack of compliance for very short durations as was the case in this instance.

Ms. Ohlwein excused herself, she needed to leave the meeting.

Sound System and Sound-Related Topics

Co-Chair Gordon stated she heard loud and clear that the sound is a problem from multiple perspectives, including resident sound/noise concerns. E.g., We have a real issue with the Poms performing; they can't hear the music and their half-time performance is negatively impacted.

Co-Chair Gordon reported on a solution a small task group developed, involving a west facing speaker by the visitor stands, that allows good sound on the field, but at a much reduced sound to the neighbors. They stood on Mr. Gilbert's patio and the solution was very promising.

The District got a proposal approved. The company took a while to get out to install and when they did come out to install, they recommended a different location and padding.

Mr. Gilbert raised valid concerns.

Co-Chair Gordon indicated that they are still going to work with Lewis to get this to work.

Mr. Gilbert appreciates the effort and money that has gone into improving the sound, he just wishes it would go a little faster. He still wants to acknowledge the District for following through.

There has also been an issue with leaf blowers violating the sound ordinance too early on one Saturday morning. The District has talked to their people to alert them to the violation to mitigate this problem from reoccurring.

Resident also expressed concern that when they sweep the bleachers, it makes a lot of noise. The District stated their need to clean up before the morning game.

Neighbor Communication Enhancements and Opportunities

Co-Chair Gordon stated a lot of work has been done to improve communication with the neighbors. We have a much better email directory for all communication. The group acknowledged the improved communications.

Resident asked for contact information to report something bad going on in the field. Discussion was held on when you call the Police and when you call the District. The District has shared Mr. Rowley's email and phone number as our District contact person.

Matt Ericson asked if they can get notification of morning practices.

Co-Chair Holleman stated the City has included information from the Wolters Field Advisory Group on the City website.

V. Other Business

Co-Chair Gordon stated the advisory group membership terms can be for no more than two consecutive one year terms for residents only, the rest serve indefinitely. ***Prior to next meeting we will send out a notice to find new residents to serve on the group.***

Next meeting is setup for June 8, 2016.

VI. Business from Public

Resident stated the lights on the field house building are very bright and light up his house. Is there a way to shield the lights?

Co-Chair Gordon stated that these are security lights but that they can look into options.

VII. Adjournment

The Wolters Field Advisory Committee adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Summary of Wolters Field Special Use Permit

The following provides a summary of the key provisions of each of the ordinances and resolutions related to the Wolters Field Special Use Permit initially granted in 2004. Please note that this is only a reference and is not intended to be a substitute for the adopted ordinances and resolutions. If there is a conflict between this document and an ordinance or resolution, the relevant ordinance or resolution holds.

Ordinance 56-04; Adopted 8/9/04
Document No. 5630559

Use of Lights, Section 5: B (page 2)

Lights can only be used for events in which a HPHS athletic team is participating or was eligible to participate.

Maximum Lighted Events and shut off times, (page 3/4)

The SUP spells out the number and time cut off time for events that can be held in a year.*

5	Lighted football events: 10:30 p.m. or 30 minutes after the completion, whichever is earlier
11	9:30 p.m. lighted events or 30 minutes after the completion of the event, whichever is earlier.
44	8:00 p.m. twilight events**

60 Total Lighted events per year

3 Possible additional post-season football events.

* If there are no post-season events the total remains at 60.

** Twilight events should not include lights unless they are necessary for safe completion of an event.

Reduced Lighting, (page 4)

Lights shall be reduced during post-game maintenance and spectator exiting and should not exceed 75% of the wattage at full levels permitted.

Traffic and Security Control, Section 5:C (page 4)

The District works with the City annually to develop vehicular and pedestrian traffic and Security plan with detailed levels of implementation for all lighted events. The plan includes specific information about:

- Traffic control for ingress and egress during lighted events
- Locking and unlocking of Athletic Drive Gate
- Prohibition of cut-through traffic on Beverly Place and Sunset Road
- For football events, at least 3 City police officers, or more at discretion of police Chief, shall be assigned to security detail on the property, fees shall be reimbursed by District

Special Parking for Lighted Events (page 6)

- Parking prohibited on east side of east lot on Property
- District shall arrange for remote parking and shuttling when necessary
- Parking is permitted on grass at least 5 feet from any residential lot, provided that it is designed to prevent shining of headlights into residences

Special Parking for Lighted Football Events

- District shall post barricades and volunteers to prohibit through traffic
- District shall comply with a resident only parking pass system limiting parking in neighborhood notification area to vehicles with a pass.
- District shall provide traffic control personnel at main ingress and egress area to Brook Estates

Parking Lot lighting (page 6)

- Parking lot lights shall only be turned on during a lighted event.

Parking on Athletic Field Drive (page 7)

- All parking on Athletic field drive is prohibited other than head in westerly facing.
- The District shall provide dust-proof treatment of Athletic Field drive.

Public Address System Upgrade and Use (page 7)

Noise Control

At all times the District shall to the greatest extent practicable minimize the volume and noise emitted from the Public Address system

Wolters Field Advisory Group (page 9)

Responsibilities

The Advisory Group is a joint committee between City and District. The Group’s responsibility is to review the impact on the surrounding neighborhood, if any of:

- Lights
- Sound emanating from the property
- Vehicular traffic related to lighted events

The Advisory Group shall take into account the educational, extracurricular, and psychosocial needs of the District and its students. The Advisory Group shall present, and the City and the District shall consider the issues, concerns and recommendations identified in the course of such review.

Membership includes 11 individuals, co-chaired by the city council and District representatives.

- 5 residents (1 year term, up to 2 consecutive terms unless no resident’s will or are able to serve).
- 1 Member of the City Council (indefinite term)
- 1 Member of the Board of Education (indefinite term)
- 1 Chief of Police or Designee (indefinite term)
- 1 Member City Staff (indefinite term)
- 2 Members of District Staff (indefinite term)

<p>2015-2016 Co-Chairs School District Official Julie Gordon City Councilman Michelle Holleman</p>	<p>Residents Maria Barraza Matt Ericksen Jeff Gilbert Gary Kirshenbaum Brigid Ohlwein</p> <p>City Staff Liaisons Joel Fontane Chief Paul Shafer</p>	<p>School Dist. Staff Liaisons: Eileen McMahon Jon Rowley</p> <p>Other School District Representatives Ron Kasbaum Bill Tellone</p>
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Meetings (page 9)

June and November open to the general public. November 5, 2015 and proposed June 8, 2016, at City Hall.

Notice to Neighbors (page 9)

At least 2 weeks prior to the first event of each school fiscal year, the District shall mail written notification or send notice by e-mail for those that request it, containing the schedule of all lighted events to the owner of each residence in the neighborhood. Changes should be posted to the website.

Post Season Events (page 4)

Notice of post-season events must be made to the City Manager and posted on the District’s website.

Usage Log (page 4)

The District must post a usage log of lights at the conclusion of each School Fiscal year (June 30), which includes the date, event, and times when lights were used.

Advisory Committee Report (page 9)

The Wolters Field Advisory Committee shall prepare and deliver to the District and the City Council a written annual report within one month after the end of each School fiscal year addressing issues and matters which the group has been charged.