

Wolters Field Advisory Committee Annual Report to District 113 and City Council, 2015-2016

The Special Use Permit for Wolters Field requires an annual report be provided to Township High School District 113 and the City Council by July 30 each year. The following report fulfills that requirement and provides an overview of the activities of the Wolters Field Advisory Committee during the 2015-2016 academic year, July 1-June 30.

Meetings and Reports

As required, the Wolters Field Advisory Committee met twice during the 2015-2016 school year: on November 5, 2015 and on June 8, 2016. Minutes and supporting materials from all meetings can be found on the Highland Park High School (HPHS) website and on the City of Highland Park website. The committee did not draft an annual report for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 years, but other reports dating back to 2004-2005 appear on the City and HPHS websites.

Leadership and Administration

Both meetings during the 2015-2016 academic year were co-chaired by Councilman Michelle Holleman and District 113 School Board Member Julie Gordon. Ms. Holleman was newly appointed at the November 2015 meeting, and Ms. Gordon's first meeting was June 2015. Their predecessors were Councilman Tony Blumberg, who had served since 2013, and District 113 School Board Member Debbie Hymen, who had served since 2012. We thank Mr. Blumberg and Ms. Hymen for their service.

In preparing for the 2015-16 meetings and future meetings, Gordon and Holleman agreed on procedural and administrative issues. Each organization is to host a meeting during the year, with District 113 hosting the fall meeting and the City of Highland Park hosting the spring meeting. Meeting times and dates are set well in advance; they are posted on both organizations' websites and included on the City's calendar. Meetings are recorded, and minutes are taken at each meeting. The City is responsible for fall minutes and the District is responsible for spring minutes. Minutes from 2015-2016 were posted when completed in draft form, after review by both co-chairs, and approved at the following meeting.

Meetings were held on November 5, 2015, at the Administrative Center at Wolters Field and on June 8, 2016 at City Hall. Below is a list of the Wolters Field Committee members for each meeting during the 2015-2016 year:

November Committee

Members:

Co-Chairs

District 113 Board
Member Julie Gordon
City Councilman Michelle
Holleman

Residents

Maria Barraza
Matt Ericson
Jeff Gilbert
Gary Kirshenbaum
Brigid Ohlwein

City Staff Liaisons

Joel Fontane
Police Chief Paul Shafer

School Dist. Staff Liaisons:

Eileen McMahon
Jon Rowley

June Committee Members:

The Ordinance requires that neighborhood representatives be rotated every two years. In spring 2016, postcards were sent to 420 neighbors to solicit membership for the committee. Nominations were accepted and five new members were approved by the Mayor of Highland Park and the President of the District 113 Board of Education. New members joined the group at the meeting on June 8, 2016. These residents will serve a two-year term from June 2016 through November 2017.

Co-Chairs

District 113 Board
Member Julie Gordon
City Councilman Michelle
Holleman

Residents

Judith Magel Cohen
Mindy Deutsch
Michele Goldstein
John Helander
Scott Liberman

City Staff Liaisons

Joel Fontane
Police Chief Paul Shafer

School Dist. Staff Liaisons:

Eileen McMahon
Jon Rowley

November 5, 2015, Meeting Summary

[Click here for a copy of the November 5, 2015, meeting agenda.](#)

A meeting of the Wolters Field Advisory Committee was held at the Wolters Field Administrative Center on November 5, 2015. Co-Chair Julie Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: Matt Ericson, Jeff Gilbert, Bridget Ohlwein, Chief Shafer, Joel Fontane, Jon Rowley, Eileen McMahon, Michelle Holleman and Julie Gordon

Absent: Maria Barraza, Gary Kirshenbaum

Minutes from the June 4, 2015 meeting were approved. [Click here for a copy of the June minutes.](#)

After welcomes and introductions, Councilman Tony Blumberg was recognized and thanked for his service on the committee. Gordon reviewed the mission and purpose of the group and then Holleman reviewed a summary of the Special Use Permit regulations. [A copy of the highlights document](#) has been posted on both the City and District websites.

Gordon updated the group on parking enhancements, including new pavers and new signage. Parking on Athletic Lane is now done from north to south. The Ordinance also requires a dust-proofing treatment. The District contacted Ravinia Festival to investigate the method they use, but discovered it may not be safe to use at Wolters Field because the treatment contains magnesium chloride. The City and District continue to research the issue and look for other possible solutions.

Lighted Events

A committee member brought up a concern from a previous year when a game, due to a lightning delay, went until 10:45 p.m.; the lights were shut off at 11 p.m. 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.

Both Chief Shafer and Mr. Fontane indicated that there are instances when strict adherence may not reasonably 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 in which various land uses go out of compliance. Sometimes there is a lack of compliance for a very short

duration, as was the case in this instance. The District noted that this was an event in the previous year and Chief Shafer supported the decision.

Sound System and Sound-Related Topics

Gordon stated she heard loud and clear that the sound (too much or too little) is a problem from multiple perspectives, including those of residents and members of the school community. Gordon reported on a solution a small task group developed to specifically address sound issues on the field; this solution involves a west-facing speaker by the visitor stands that allows good sound on the field but significantly reduces sound emanating to the neighbors. Gordon indicated that they are still working with the sound consultant, Lewis, to get this to work in a completely satisfactory manner. Residents also raised an issue with leaf blowers violating the sound ordinance too early on one Saturday morning. The District has talked to its people to alert them to the violation and prevent this problem from reoccurring.

Neighbor Communication

Gordon stated that a great deal of work has been done to improve communication with the neighbors, and the District's e-mail list is growing. Communications will continue to go out to help share information about field usage. The group acknowledged the improved communications. The District has shared Mr. Rowley's email and phone number as the District's contact person. The City has also included minutes and information on their website (in addition to the postings on the HPHS website).

New Members

Residents can serve on the Advisory Group for no more than two consecutive one-year terms; other members serve indefinitely. Gordon stated that membership recruitment will take place prior to the next meeting. The next meeting date was set for June 8, 2016 at City Hall.

June 8, 2016, Meeting Summary

[Click here for a copy of the June 8, 2016, meeting agenda.](#)

A meeting of the Wolters Field Advisory Committee was held at Highland Park City Hall. Co-Chair Michelle Holleman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: Judy Magel Cohen, Mindy Deutsch, Michele Goldstein, John Helander, Scott Liberman, Chief Shafer, Joel Fontane, Jon Rowley, Eileen McMahan, Michelle Holleman and Julie Gordon

Absent: None.

Minutes from the November 5, 2015 meeting were approved. [Click here for a copy of the November 2015 minutes.](#)

Holleman welcomed the new resident members and explained their responsibilities and expected tenure as part of the Group. Given the new members, and as a reminder for all, the mission of the Group was reviewed, as were the highlights of Ordinance 81-13 covering the Special Use Permit for Wolters Field. [A copy of the highlights document](#) has been posted on both the City and District websites.

Spring Activities

Jon Rowley (HPHS Athletic Director) provided an overview of the many activities that had taken place at Wolters Field during Spring 2016. There were as many as 7 different sports utilizing Wolters Field in the spring, and there were 21 dates when 4-6 events were going on during the same afternoon/evening. The District hired additional security personnel to help manage traffic and parking for especially heavy activity dates.

Chief Shafer reported on the number of reports and tickets issued during the 2015-16 school year involving Wolters Field.

Athletic Lane

Athletic Lane is the dirt road that runs alongside the eastern side of Wolters Field. This Lane is used primarily for overflow parking during football games. During the meeting, different dust proofing ideas were discussed, focusing on safely reducing dust during usage. The group recommended the District consider using water treatment versus chemical treatment to reduce dust.

The District would like to use Athletic Lane during select spring events to increase parking options; however, Advisory Group members and residents were opposed to additional usage.

Sound System and Sound-Related Topics

While recognizing some improvements regarding sound, several Group members and residents continue to find the sound emanating from Wolters Field to be very disruptive. One member stated his desire to restrict use of the PA system to football games only. All concerns were listened to and discussed, and further review will continue.

The Group also listened to concerns from the District about the inability of the pom poms to hear music during football halftime shows. The Group and residents have no issue with additional speakers being brought in specifically to enhance sound in this situation.

Compilation of Wolters Field Agreements outside of Ordinance 81-13

Due to significant turnover at the District and among the Wolters Field Advisory Group membership, the Group discussed the need to capture and record past agreements made between the District and residents that are not covered by Ordinance 81-13. A sub-committee was created and will meet in August 2016 to work on this summary.

Next Meeting of the Wolters Field Advisory Group

The next meeting date is set for November 3, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the District Office.