

## Porter Park Board

August 21, 2007

**Call to order:** 7:02 pm

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call:** Park Board Members Present: President - Zathoe Sexton, Vice President - Becky Maranto, Member – Patty Raffin. Also present: Park Superintendent Jim Miller and Park Administrator Stephanie Miller. Member – Rondi Wightman was absent.

**Approval of Minutes:** Approval of the Park Board minutes for June 19, 2007 is being postponed until the next Park Board Meeting due to a lack of quorum of eligible Park Board Members able to vote.

A motion to approve the Park Board minutes for the July 17, 2007 Meeting was made by Patty Raffin. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Consideration of Claims:** Becky Maranto made a motion to approve the budget expenditure report from July 17, 2007 to August 21, 2007 for \$1,312.07 as written. Patty Raffin seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Petition and Comments from the Floor:** Porter resident Karen Pisowitz asked the Park Board to reconsider a return of the \$500 rental fee for the use of Hawthorne Park, the Community Center, and both shelters for the Taste of Porter Festival. The one day Festival was scheduled this year for Saturday, August 25, 2007 but was cancelled by their Committee two weeks prior to the event. The Park Board unanimously feels that since the Festival Committee cancelled so close to their scheduled date, the Park Department did not have enough time to rent the Community Center and Shelters for that date and would end up with a \$500 loss for the day. Also, Nancy Whisler from the Taste of Porter asked Stephanie Miller to continue to hold that day for them because the Festival Committee was planning a picnic for their families and friends in the Community Center since the Festival was cancelled. The Festival Rental Form states that if the Taste of Porter cancels within 45 days of its rental date, the rental fee is not refundable. The request was denied, however the Taste of Porter's \$100 Security Deposit will be returned to them.

Elizabeth Tarchala from the Stevens family represented her sister Anita Serna, her brother Theodore Stevens and herself when she approached the Park Board with a donation of land. Elizabeth explained that the three siblings would like to donate to the Porter Park Department an 8,899 square foot (.2 acres) triangle of land on the corner of Hokanson Street and Rt. 20 in the Town of Porter. She specified that the one condition that must be met is that this land cannot be sold in the future. A flag will also be donated by the Stevens family. The Park Board discussed the land and decided that it would be to the advantage of the Park Department to accept the donation. Patty Raffin made a motion to accept this generous donation of land on the corner of Hokanson Street and Rt. 20 in the Town of Porter from the Stevens Family. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor. The Park Board thanked the Stevens Family.

Porter County Coastal Conservationist Bob Helmic talked to the Park Board about the restoration of the Hawthorne Park Wetlands and Dune Meadows Pond.

The wetlands are located at the East end of Hawthorne Park just north of Ackerman Drive and runs north to the Little Calumet River. Mr. Helmic gave the Park Board two options for the wetlands, either a Wetlands Enhancement Program or a Wetlands Restoration. He believes that a

Wetlands Restoration would most likely apply at Hawthorne Park. The Federal Government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture with either the Natural Resource Service or Resource Conservation and Development would get involved. A technical team would analyze, outline, and present a solution to enhance the area. If the Park Department decides to enter into a contract with the Federal Government, they would provide 40% to 50% of the cost. The Park's portion of the cost could be supplemented by different area conservation groups that would most likely want to help. Mr. Helmic gave the Park Board literature to look over.

Dune Meadows Pond is located next to the Dune Meadows Subdivision off of Rt. 20 in Porter. Mr. Helmic said that Dune Meadows Pond is a multi owned property which causes a problem. The Park owns 2/3 and Wendy Athens owns 1/3 of the property. Mr. Helmic recommended two scenarios to move forward smoothly. He called this property an Albatross around the Park's neck and said there are some real drainage issues there. If the Federal Government got involved on a professional level it would open up a real can of worms for your Town. Environmental issues, pollution issues through suspended solids, probably colloidal suspension, and chlorophorm bacteria would create a lot of problems. The problem is the surrounding drainage system that is going in there. Mr. Helmic highly recommended that the Park sell this property for a buck. Otherwise he said that we can enter into a wetlands management and probably restoration, but once the tech team came out here there would be problems. Mr. Helmic said that to be honest with you, if I lived here, I wouldn't get involved with the Federal Government with this property. What I covered are my observations after I inspected this. Testing by the Town would be proof before actions are taken. Mr. Helmic said that if you find that the drainage issues are not affecting the wetlands in a negative fashion and you can resolve the ownership problem, at that time it might be beneficial for the Park to enter into with the Federal Government a wetlands restoration. As far as the Reserve Program, I don't believe that this program would be available to you at this time. Mr. Helmic left information with the Park Board to review.

Porter Town Council President Bill Sexton approached the Park Board on behalf of the Redevelopment Committee to talk about the proposed Bike Trail. There have been changes since the last time the proposed Bike Trail was presented to the Park Board. Mr. Sexton showed the Park Board a detailed layout of how the proposed Bike Trail would parallel the roads through Hawthorne Park instead of cutting right through the middle of a large open space of grass as it was proposed the first time. The Park Board discussed this new revised plan and liked it much better than the first one. Becky Maranto made a motion to approve the proposed Bike Trail as presented today by Bill Sexton with the opportunity for the Park Board to have input as the project proceeds. Patty Raffin seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Park Superintendent's Report:** Jim Miller reported that he found a problem while he was doing his Park Property checks. At Porter Cove Park he found furniture, carpet, traffic cones, etc. that was located on the grounds and in the woods. After filing a report and taking pictures, he removed the items.

The grounds have been cleaned and the trash dumped at all the Porter Parks as needed. The mowing and trimming is being done as needed. Right now with all the rain, we will not be doing a lot of mowing. Porter Cove Park is under water right now and the lower part of Indian Springs is extremely wet.

The photo eye of the Memorial lights in Hawthorne Park has been changed.

The parts have been ordered from Learning Structures to repair the Space Trolley in the main playground of Hawthorne Park. It's an aircraft cable that was frayed and the old one lasted 10 years.

The Art Fair which was held this year at Hawthorne Park on Saturday and Sunday, August 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> went very well. We did have some rain come in Saturday night into Sunday so I had the

Portage ROTC who did the parking this year for the Art Fair block off the lower parts that were wet so the grounds would not get damaged. They did a good job.

There are three trees along Rankin Street that need to be considered for removal. There is one Silver Maple in particular that is very dangerous in my opinion and should be removed first. I have a Certified Arborist that is doing PACT time for me here at the Park who would be willing to remove the tree at no cost to the Park Department. Patty Raffin made a motion for these trees to be checked with a report brought back on their health, safety and structural soundness to the Park Board for a decision to be made at the next meeting. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor. Zathoe Sexton said that the Certified Arborist must be licensed with the Town of Porter before he can do something contractual like this because he will be bringing in his own equipment. Jim said he can do it himself if the Park Board will allow it.

Jim Miller asked Zathoe Sexton about the letter she presented to the Town Council about paving in Hawthorne Park. Zathoe said that the Park is now on the Town's paving list. Jim said that next year is the Sesquientennial year and it would be nice if the Park was paved before the celebrations in August. Zathoe said that a priority list should be made and given to the Street Department on what the Park needs to have done.

New and improved automatic towel dispensers and toilet paper dispensers have been installed in both bathrooms and a towel dispenser in the kitchen of the Community Center. Tilden's Enterprises in Porter donated and installed them at no charge to the Park Department as long as the paper products used in them are purchased from Tilden's.

**Park Administrator's Report:** Stephanie Miller gave the Park Board the Minutes of the August 21, 2007 meeting along with the Income Statement for July 2007. Stephanie said that the total income at the end of July 2007 is at an all time high and she believes the end of year total will be at an all time high. This is largely credited to the fact that the Park Board raised the rental fees in May of 2006 and the new fees affected almost all of the rentals in 2007. Zathoe Sexton asked Stephanie to show on paper how many times the facilities at the Parks are rented each year compared to the previous years. She asked if she could keep this running from year to year so the Park Board can get a better picture of the usage compared to the year before. Stephanie said she will do that and has an idea of how it could be done. Patty Raffin asked about the rentals for the coming months. Stephanie explained that there are many parties that will rent with only 4 to 6 weeks of planning time. She said that although there is room for more rentals in the remaining months of this year, most of the weekends will rent.

Stephanie said that the last few days of the Summer Park Program which finished on July 20<sup>th</sup> went very well and the Program ended on a very good note. The Porter Fire Department came out and sprayed the children with water as they do every year. On the last day they had a picnic with the food donated by Georges Gyros in Chesterton. Patty Raffin said she heard wonderful feedback from many parents who live in Chesterton about the program.

**Old Business:** Dune Meadows Pond: Jim Miller reported that he talked to a couple of contractors including Rudy Sutton about Dune Meadows Pond. Rudy said that it could cost up to a half million dollars to dredge the pond 20 feet deep at a 3 to 1 slope. Rudy figured that approximately 70,000 cubic yards of material would need to be removed. It would be difficult because we don't have a good access point in which to work off of. Rt. 20 is on one side, Wendy Athens property is on another side which leaves us Dune Meadows Drive to actually work off of which is not the best spot. Jim said that he is not sure how this work at the Pond will impact across the road down the way.

**Food Pantry Refrigerator:** Nothing at this time. Jim Miller reported that there is a different new refrigerator being donated to the Food Pantry by Bailey School. It will take the place of an old refrigerator in the Food Pantry area.

Festival Permit: The Park Board discussed the Festival Rental Form and decided to make improvements to the Cancellation Policy portion. Stephanie was asked to read over the form again and email Zathoe with any proposed changes. It is important for the form to be ready soon because the Art Fair and Taste of Porter are ready to sign it and pay their deposit for next year as soon as possible in order to secure their perspective dates.

Taylor & Bartholomew Surety Bond: Zathoe Sexton said that she signed the Surety Bond. Jim Miller reported that the signed release has been sent, it has been received, and confirmation has been made. They will be issuing a check for this work. Illinois Adhesive Bonding has complied with all the requirements by the Town of Porter to be a contractor. As soon as we receive the check we are set to schedule the work on the front porch of the Community Center. It would be best to get this done before the cold weather sets in. Jim said as soon as they are done he will sand out some rusty spots on the hand rail and paint it.

Part Time Help: Jim reported that the individual he wanted to hire for mowing about 10 hours a week has developed some health problems and declined the position. Zathoe Sexton suggested that since the mowing season will be ending soon not to hire anyone for the rest of this year and wait until spring. Jim agreed.

2007 Budget Update: Zathoe Sexton told the Park Board that the 2007 Budget has not been approved yet. No one knows what will happen. Another town had their Park Budget cut.

2008 Budget Update: The Park Board reviewed and discussed the 2008 Budget making changes as needed. Patty Raffin made a motion to approve the Town of Porter's Park Budget 2008 for \$150,968.00. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Salary Ordinance: Zathoe Sexton read the 2008 Salary Ordinance to the Park Board. Patty Raffin made a motion to accept the 2008 Salary Ordinance PB2007-01. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Patty Raffin made a motion to suspend the rules in order to have a second reading. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Patty Raffin made to motion approve Ordinance PB2007-01 by title only. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Missing Key: Jim Miller reported that the third key to the Community Center which is kept at the Police Station is still missing. Jim said that he didn't think the Community Center is at a huge risk right now. He would like to wait a little longer to see if the key shows up before replacing all the locks.

### **New Business:**

Porter Park Department Picnic: The Porter Park Department decided to cancel their planned "Picnic in the Park" scheduled for Sunday, September 2, 2007 of Labor Day Weekend. All their efforts at this point will be geared toward next years Sesquientennial Celebration in August.

Five Year Plan: The Workshop scheduled for September 8, 2007 has been changed to possibly Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> or Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> depending on the Park Board's availability.

**Items to Keep in Mind:** Halloween Party: The Porter Park Department will host a Halloween Party for children on Friday, Oct. 19, 2007, from 6pm to 8pm at the Hawthorne Park Community Center.

Christmas Party: The Porter Park Dept. will host a Christmas Party for children on Saturday, Dec. 1, 2007 from 1pm to 3pm at the Hawthorne Park Community Center.

**Park Board Members Comments:** None

**Next Meeting:** The next scheduled Park Board meeting will be on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 at 7pm in the Hawthorne Park Community Center.

**Meeting Adjourned:** A motion to adjourn the Park Board Meeting at 9:45pm was made by Patty Raffin. Becky Maranto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

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President

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Vice President

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Member

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Member

Minutes taken and prepared by the Porter Park Board's Secretary Stephanie Miller.