

**CITY OF MAYFIELD HEIGHTS  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES  
March 11, 2019**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Council President Donna Finney.

*ROLL CALL:*            *PRESENT:* Mr. Michael Ballistrea, Mr. Robert DeJohn,  
Mrs. Donna Finney, Mr. Donald Manno,  
Mrs. Susan Sabetta, Mrs. Diane Snider.  
*ABSENT:* Mrs. Gayle Teresi.

Also present were Mayor Anthony DiCicco, Director of Finance/Clerk of Council Karen Fegan and Deputy Clerk of Council Lisa Benedetti. Also in attendance were Recreation Director Sean Ward and Service Director Joseph Fornaro.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future recreational needs and other capital expenditures.

Mr. Ward stated he sent a report (attached) to all members with facts, issues and future needs pertaining to the recreational facilities and the parks. Recreational facilities are the lifeblood of any recreation program and without them the recreation program dies. The pool is 60 years old and the question is does the City want to spend all this money to fix it on a temporary basis. There are multiple issues with it. All the recreation facilities are aging and are in need of upkeep or replacement. Since Issue 48, the Income Tax Increase, failed, he would like to know what direction to go, both short term and long term. He would like to see the City move forward with some plan similar to the POD design that the City had prepared. He is not suggesting it be everything in that plan. Mrs. Finney asked since the income tax increase did not pass, what is Mr. Ward suggesting for the current season. Every year it is an unknown as to what would be found when the pool is opened for the season. He wants to be prepared, if not for this year, in the near future. Perhaps a survey of the residents as to what they want could be done. Mrs. Snider commented the pool is been discussed for a long time and it is an issue. Her concern is safety and she knows a lot of residents go to other cities for a pool. Every year the City faces this issue and nothing is done. Mr. Ward reiterated he wanted to start a conversation about everything so there is not only reaction when something happens, but a plan in place. While the surrounding cities have been accommodating to our residents, if all of them have to go outside the City, there may be issues.

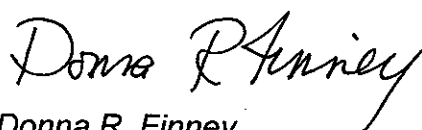
Mr. Manno suggested constructing an expanded new pool in the general area as the current one making sure to address the current issues such as low ground and water runoff, and putting up fencing or netting to stop baseballs from coming into the pool area. This may help economically. Perhaps having partnerships with the corporate park companies could be a means to paying for a new pool. Make the improvements to the entire park in phases and perhaps sell bonds to pay for the improvements. Mrs. Fegan noted to sell bonds the City would need a source of revenue to pay back the debt. Mrs. Finney commented that sounds good, but money is the issue. Mrs. Sabetta inquired as to the cost of a new pool. Mr. Ward stated when the park plan was prepared it was for the whole park. Items can be scaled back, but they still need to be respectable. He guessed a minimum of \$3 million. Mr. DeJohn remarked the plan done by POD was about 4 years ago at a cost of \$18 million for the whole park system. Why did not the City start with the pool instead of Oakville Park, which had work done already? He felt the pool was more important. Mrs. Finney noted the City got a grant for the recent Oakville Park improvements. Mayor DiCicco added the City looked for grants for pools and could not find one. The idea for the whole park renovation for the POD design was to determine the most efficient way to use the land the City has. It could have been pieced out, but the City wanted to find the best places for all the parts of the park. This meeting is to generate conversation and to see if there is a will to put something together for the park.

Mr. Ballistrea noted Mr. Ward's report shows 44% of the residents do not use the pool. Is it because they do not want to or they go to other places. Is it something that will not be utilized in the future or is it something the City would want to draw young families to the community? He thinks getting a survey done would be beneficial and then the residents can be asked if they would support a tax increase to pay for things. Mr. Ward pointed out most activities for children are organized now and not free play, so recreational activities will continue to increase. Mr. DeJohn asked if the POD plan suggested phases for the plan to be implemented. Mr. Ward stated they listed for POD all the issues and that is how the plan was prepared. He reviewed the issues throughout the park listed in his report, which included the community center. There is uneven ground, flooding issues, which include dirt runoff into the pool, balls being hit into the pool area from Fornaro Field (so the field has to be closed while the pool is open), underutilized areas, parking issues at the community center between the scheduled groups and the baseball participants, lack of flexibility of the rooms there and storage. The City is about 75 acres short for a community of this size and would not be getting more land of substance. The idea is to utilize what the City has and to try to make things multi-functional. Mrs. Finney believes the question is what is going to happen this year, as there is no money for a new pool. Mr. Ward responded the City is putting in money now to prepare for the season, but he wants to know what to do for the near future.

Mr. Manno asked if anything had been explored with the companies in the corporate park. Mayor DiCicco replied that was discussed, but there was not a plan or figures available, so they were not approached directly. It is a possibility and no matter if there is funding or not, it could be explored. Mrs. Snider commented she is for the pool and a lot of seniors use pools for exercise and therapy. It is not just for kids. She asked if there was a way to eliminate the use of or relocate Fornaro Field in order to keep the pool open. Mr. Ward replied it is the biggest field and is used. Mrs. Snider asked if the water slide is safe. Mr. Ward stated it would be sandblasted and painted this year. Mrs. Sabetta remarked she has heard of a lot of people who like the pool. She also has heard of communities that have a small spray ground too or instead of a pool. She too would like to see a survey done. Mrs. Finney noted the City has no money for major projects and she is concerned with the pool being able to be opened this year. Mr. Fornaro stated the staff does a great job just holding the pool together to keep it open. This year the rip in the liner would be repaired, the slide is getting renovated and the pumps are getting reconditioned. Mrs. Finney pointed out if the pool is closed, that impacts the Day Campers in a major way. Mr. Fornaro stated Fornaro Field would still need to be fixed, even with raising the pool, as there is a big dip in the ground there. Mr. Ballistrea suggested putting in a fence or netting along the left side to prevent balls going into the pool area, as a temporary fix. Mr. Ballistrea mentioned the slide repair was part of the Recreation budget for 2019. Mayor DiCicco stated the pool would need to be opened this year and he reiterated it comes to how much does the City want to put into the old pool and fencing or netting. If a survey is done, it would need to be done by a professional parks and recreation company and he would get quotes. Mr. Manno asked the survey be limited to pertinent questions. Also, there seems as if there is 20 to 30 feet around the community center for possible expansion of the rooms, similar to what was done when the kitchen was expanded. Mr. Fornaro replied that was explored and then the building would be more square shaped at the back. Mrs. Finney summarized that everyone wants a survey conducted of the residents; the pool will be opened and if there are issues, options can be explored.

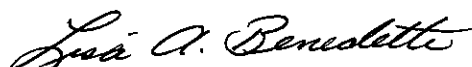
There being no further business to come before the Committee of the Whole, Mrs. Finney adjourned the meeting at 6:40 P.M.

Approved:



Donna R. Finney  
Council President

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa A. Benedetti, MMC  
Deputy Clerk of Council

From : Sean Ward

Now that the dust has settled on Issue #48, and a new park and pool have been shelved, I want to share the state of our recreational facilities and our thoughts about their future.

The goal of this communication is to:

- 1) Generate discussion on our recreation facilities
- 2) Inform everyone involved of the issues that repeatedly affect our facilities and the residents who use them
- 3) Use this information to better plan for the short-term and long-term future of our park facilities

As I was reviewing notes and reflecting back on my discussions with residents about issue #48, I realized that many were not aware of the problems at our parks and pools. Many thought we just wanted a new pool. Below I will better define these issues so everyone can be informed that the reasons behind a new park/pool go beyond the desire for a new pool; but address deeper issues that could negatively impact our expenditures, as well as the recreational opportunities for our residents.

#### Quick facts and realities:

- Our pool is 60 years old. While chronological age does not always equate to real age, our pool feels much older than 60 years.
- Our attendance at the pool has dropped 44% since 2010. Residents have been going to Mayfield Village and Highland Heights pools.
- We experience repeated flooding issues on our fields.
- The locations of our fields prohibit their use during swim season due to safety concerns (flying balls).
- Parking at the Community Center and fields have become a sore issue over the past several years.
- Storage has become an issue at the Community Center.

#### An in-depth look at the issues behind our need for a master park plan:

##### 1. The current location of the pool is in the lowest part of our park:

Roughly every 5 years we get a heavy rain storm that floods the pool with ball diamond clay. The water turns muddy and the pool has to be pumped out. We then have to wash the sludge off the walls and refill the pool. This process typically takes a few days.

The walls of our pool feel the pressure of outside ground water in the off season because of being in the lowest area of the park. The concrete walls are deteriorating both from age and this pressure.

We installed a Renosys PVC liner in 1999, and it had a 10-year warranty. The 2019 season will be the 21<sup>st</sup> year for the liner. For the last 5 to 6 years we have had to put maintenance time and dollars into finding and fixing leaks as it has begun to fail. The liner will continue to deteriorate as time passes. The cost of a new liner is \$80,000. The condition of the concrete pool shell is unknown, but it will undoubtedly need some work. The stainless steel gutter will also need to be inspected.

##### 2. Fornaro Baseball Field issues:

Fornaro Baseball Field and the pool cannot be used at the same time. Fornaro Field can't be used until the pool closes for the night because balls are routinely hit into the pool.

Fornaro Field is our most unlevel field – the outfield is 6-8 feet lower than home plate. Although this is the one field in City Park that doesn't have a home run fence (useful for other sports activities), the unlevel playing surface is less than ideal for all sport activities that take place there.

### 3. Better utilization of our current park space:

City Park and Marsol Fields have six baseball/softball fields. Note that permanent outfield fences reduce the flexibility within our park to use these for other sports and activities.

An artificial turf field would offer flexibility. It could be used for baseball and many other sports and activities, while also being usable in more seasons of the year.

We also have a large grass area behind Fornaro Field that rarely gets used due to the unevenness of the area.

Additional natural park space opportunities are available at Gates Mills Blvd. by installing bike/walking trails allowing residents to connect with nature in the open space.

### 4. Community Center/Marsol Fields Parking Issues:

When there are games at the Marsol ball fields, this causes parking problems for those using the Community Building. This is an ongoing issue that happens repeatedly during the season.

### 5. Community Center Issues:

Holding two meetings at the same time becomes difficult as sound travels and causes disruption.

We are limited on flexibility in room size. Both the large and small rooms are often not big enough to meet our needs.

Storage remains an issue. A suitable storage area on the first floor would improve the facility and would greatly improve recreation department efficiency while offering services for residents.

### Planning Ahead:

When discussing building a new pool, here are some starting questions and thoughts for a committee-of-the-whole meeting:

- First, we must determine if a pool is something the residents of Mayfield Heights want.
- Is a new pool in our future? Do we think utilizing Mayfield Village & Highland Heights pools are the way to go?
- Do we build a spray ground (and when the pool no longer functions, we close it)?
- Do we send out a survey to our residents on what they want? Do we conduct focus groups?
- Is the Turf field a better place to spend our money (if we have any)?
- Think about our city pool / park facilities in 5 – 10 – 15 years? Where do we want to be as a city?
- What can we do now to plan?

**Bottom line:** Quality facilities are what makes Recreation programs work and thrive. While we are currently limited in what we can offer, we can see that if we make improvements, we can set our city and its residents up for years of quality of life activities. The benefits are endless . . . !