

Bensenville Park District
Board of Park Commissioners
Regular Meeting—Public Hearing Minutes
“Klein Property”
October 26, 2011
Deer Grove Leisure Center
1000 W. Wood Street
Bensenville, IL 60106

At 6:22 p.m. President Wassinger opened the Public Hearing for the planned acquisition and proposed future outdoor recreational uses of property located at 5N101 and 5N125 Wood Dale Road commonly referred to as “Klein Property”. The following Commissioners were present: Wassinger, Earley, Anderson, Johnson, Crowe. Staff present included: Cherveney, Hoskin, Rhodes, Leider, Struck, Neumayer and Attorney Dickson. Students in Government Participants Stephanie Medina and Ellie Gonzales were also in attendance. The attached attendance sheet provides names and address (if provided) of public who were present.

Director Cherveney asked those in attendance to sign in (sign in sheet attached to official minutes) and restated for the record the reason for the Public Hearing.

Reason for Acquisition: In 1976, the Park District acquired 5 acres of land in part with federal grant funds through the Land and Water Conservation Act, which was combined with adjacent property and became known as Schuster Park. In 2007, the City of Chicago condemned the park through the O’Hare Modernization Program. Because the Park District acquired Schuster Park with LWCF assistance, it is required to replace the value of the land with like value. The requirement is known as “6F Property” in the Act. The Park District is acquiring this and other parcels as part of the “6F Property” replacement requirement. In compliance with IDNR requirements, a Public Hearing was published in the Press on 10/30/11. In addition, the Park District mailed the Public Hearing Notice to adjacent residents.

Property Overview: Approximately 5.5 acres of undeveloped open space, the Park District is acquiring the two parcels through negotiated agreement with the bank-owner. The two parcels are vacant (except for one garage) and are bounded by residential property on three sides and Wood Dale Road to the west. The site is primarily woodland and invasive understory. A home once existed on the site.

Potential Outdoor Recreation Activities: The Park District intends to use the site for environmental and conservation activities, with potential outdoor uses including one or more of the following activities: environmental interpretation trail; trailhead parking; comfort station; playground; court games; disc golf; and/or fitness trail. Director Cherveney explained that there would be a number of steps- surveys; discussions with neighbors- before any development. The money is to acquire not to develop. Through the Master Plan process, the Board will determine the development schedule.

Mary Dickson, Attorney for the Bensenville Park District, explained that this property is in the jurisdictional confines of the Park District. It is unincorporated and was never annexed in to the City of Wood Dale.

President Wassinger discussed the potential activities possible for this property. He reiterated that there would be a number of steps before the property would be developed. He expressed the parcel will "be an asset to the agency" and "will be the finest that it can be." He asked for any public comment at this time. The following residents asked to address the Board:

- Fred Pruin, 5N080 Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. Mr. Pruin informed the Board that he is a forty year resident and he tried to stop Klein Builders when they wanted to build homes on this property. His concerns are with traffic on Wood Dale Road and the safety of those who would use this property. He feels if the District developed the property with the entrance similar to Wood Dale Grove it would make a big difference. He expressed how he felt Klein Builders was going to over build the area and was concerned with water runoff in this area. He asked if people in the area will have some say.

President Wassinger said that the District is stewards of open space and we are not going to come in and clear out the area. The District will reach out to the closest stakeholders with questionnaires and surveys and encourage stakeholder involvement.

- Bob Itzkow, 138 Elizabeth Court, Wood Dale. Mr. Itzkow explained that he was not against the development by Klein Builders. He has concerns about the park. "Who is it supposed to serve?" If it is to serve the neighborhood there are not sidewalks to it and miles of sidewalks would be needed to access the property. It sits on the bottom of a hill off a county roadway. It is a slopping site. It is zoned residential and would be an expensive site to develop. If it is to service entire Park District then would need to drive and larger parking lot would be needed. "Just acquisition for acquisition sake?" If that is the case then he is all for it. Clean up invasive and leave. He asked "who do you want to serve with this? Were other sites considered?"

President Wassinger responded that we do not see this as a park with playground apparatus. The Park District needs to replace the Schuster property and there are few other options available.

- Sharon Oddo, 5N062 Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. Ms. Oddo expressed the opinion that this area would be wonderful for outdoor walking activities. She said that many of the residents in the area enjoy walking outdoors and this would be "awesome." She said there is sidewalk access to this area from the north side.
- Francis Ilker, 5N125 Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. Mrs. Ilker lives adjacent to the property and questioned if she is stuck in their forever. President Wassinger believes the value of her property just increased as no one will ever build around her.
- Allan Devitt, 16W603 3rd Avenue, Bensenville. Mr. Devitt wished to reassure the neighbors of this area that the Board Members of the Bensenville Park District are stewards of open space. He spoke from experience and confirmed that the District would have hearings and send out surveys. "This Board is responsive to you. Do not be concerned about that."

- Monika Szczygiel, 298 S. Cedar, Wood Dale. Ms. Szczygiel expressed that water is a problem in the area. She feels there are a lot of recreational activities through Wood Dale, Addison and Bensenville. There are playgrounds, dog parks, golf, tennis and recreational centers within a few miles. She questioned who would police this area and is concerned with safety. She also likes the quiet of the area and does not wish to hear screaming noise. She would like the Park District to keep it simple and quiet. Put in trails, keep the forest and enjoy the beauty.

President Wassinger said that any stormwater management issues would be addressed. He used Breiter Palm with its permeable parking lot as an example. He explained that Breiter Palm has a wetland but still a park. We have birdhouses there and at Fischer Farm. As to safety the Park District polices our parks and we know if we have problems we get the police involved. We have the ability to put up cameras that would not be intrusive.

- Linnea Ilker, 5N125 Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. Ms. Ilker said that the builder took down trees and would like to see more planted. A lot was disturbed by the developer and she has worked to replant trees and wild flowers. She asked the District to restore the ecosystem.

President Wassinger responded that we have hired Pizzo and Associates in the past to restore other areas. He informed Ms. Ilker of the need for volunteers.

- Fred Pruin, 5N080 Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. He informed the Board that if Klein Builders had developed the area water problems would have been severe. He asked about retainage ponds when begin to develop.
- Francis Ilker, 5N125 Wood Dale Road, Wood Dale. She said that if the property had retainage it could solve some of the neighborhood flooding.
- Bob Itzkow, 138 Elizabeth Court, Wood Dale. Mr. Itzkow expressed that after listening to comments "no one wants to see site developed. As little development of site as possible. Restore bullfrogs and trees. All for it."

With no further comments, President Wassinger closed the Public Hearing on the "Klein Property" at 7:15 p.m.