

**TO: Urbana Park District Board of Commissioners**  
**FR: Timothy A. Bartlett, Superintendent of Planning and Operations**  
**CC: Vicki Mayes, Executive Director**  
**DT: January 6, 2010**  
**RE: Meadowbrook Park – Interpretive Center**

Attached is a memo that details the background, purpose and programming for the intended use for the proposed “Meadowbrook Park Interpretive Center”. As you know, staff has been working with Ratio Architects, Champaign, IL to prepare design and construction documents to rehabilitate the dairy barn at Meadowbrook Park for use in programming and site interpretation.

Major funding for the project has been identified through private donations and state legislative initiatives. At this time, there is no schedule on when the UPD will receive the major funding from the state of Illinois. Staff is working to complete the design process and have the project “shovel ready” in the event the funding is forwarded to the UPD.

# URBANA PARK DISTRICT MEADOWBROOK PARK

## “MEADOWBROOK PARK INTERPRETIVE CENTER”

### BACKGROUND:

The Urbana Park District acquired Meadowbrook Park in a series of land acquisitions in the early 1970s. As part of the 130 acre park, the former McCullough farmstead has been a focal point for the cultural aspects of the park's use and success. The farmstead includes the farmhouse, windmill, corn crib, dairy barn and the landscaped areas around the home and gardens. The Urbana Park District has committed to retaining the main structures to serve as the cultural heritage of the park. Over the years, many of the out buildings, storage buildings, animal enclosures and other smaller structures have been removed. The metal storage shed located adjacent to the dairy barn will be removed after other suitable storage space is established.

In 1997, the Garden Pavilion was constructed to serve as a picnic and event area for the west side of the park. Restrooms with sanitary service and a small storage area were included in the pavilion to support the various uses. The Race Street parking lot and night lighting was jointly established as a collaboration by the Urbana Park District and Clark-Lindsay Village to serve park users and overflow parking needs for employees of Clark-Lindsay Village. Approximately 90 regular and accessible parking spaces are available.

In 2002, the utility infrastructure supporting the farmhouse, gardens, dairy barn and corn crib were improved to remove several overhead lines/power poles; provide upgraded electrical service to the pavilion, barn and corn crib; provide upgraded water service and separate water service lines for the various park uses. The intent was to improve the visual and functional quality of the farmstead so that it could be enhanced over time to serve as the cultural center for park users and park programs.

In 2004, the corn crib was incorporated into the Meadowbrook Park Sensory Garden. The structure was rehabilitated to a level to allow the crib to serve as the focal point of the garden. New pathways and watering stations were installed to support the Sensory Garden. A new metal seamed roof was installed on the main roof and cupola. Some of the siding on the corn crib was replaced and the entire structure was painted. Improvements to the Sensory Garden are planned for the future and will be added as funding and staffing allows.

In 2006, the farmhouse was evaluated by District staff with the assistance of a professional home inspection professional to prepare a conditions report for the house. A complete list of recommended improvements has been included in the District's Capital Improvement Program to be phased in as funding allows.

In 2007, District staff began the process of evaluating the current condition of the dairy barn. Few improvements to the barn have been made over the many years that the District has operated the park. Various maintenance repairs to the siding, doors, windows, roof and milk station have been made in an attempt to keep the structure viable for future use. Staff recommends that the barn be rehabilitated to insure that the structure will remain intact for the future and that it can be used as an educational and interpretive resource center for Meadowbrook Park. The improved facility will be named "Meadowbrook Park Interpretive Center". It is also assumed that major donors will be recognized appropriately.

In 2008, District staff authorized Ratio Architects to serve as lead architects for the Meadowbrook Park Interpretive Center. An OSLAD grant application was prepared and submitted to IDNR. The grant request was denied.

### **CURRENT USES:**

- ❑ Storage space for the UPD equipment and supplies
- ❑ Satellite program space for Environmental Education programs during inclement weather
- ❑ Limited Special Event space for Strawberry Jam

### **POTENTIAL USES:**

- ❑ Satellite program space for Environmental Programs at Meadowbrook Park
- ❑ Program space for environmental education
- ❑ Special event space – Strawberry Jam, Jazz Walk, other small events like artist receptions
- ❑ Interpretation of Meadowbrook Park and specific themes/areas in the park
- ❑ Potential program space for Art/Sculpture Programs offered by UPD/partners
- ❑ UPD staff uses/program opportunities
- ❑ Other uses to be determined depending on staffing/funding impacts

### **INTERPRETIVE CENTER - SCOPE OF WORK - Safety/Accessibility**

The goal for the barn rehabilitation is to improve the facility to a basic level to meet City of Urbana building codes for use as a rustic barn setting for seasonal use for programs and small special events. The process may require multiple phases to allow the District to fund and staff the facility depending on level of use. The barn is considered for seasonal use during spring, summer and fall. Parking and restrooms are currently provided at the park. The Meadowbrook Park Interpretive Center rehabilitation should consider and include the following:

- ❑ Architectural assessment
- ❑ Structural assessment – site/foundation/conditions report
- ❑ Topographic Survey
- ❑ Utilities assessment – water, electrical, to allow for intended uses
- ❑ Improvements to roofing – metal seamed roof
- ❑ Improvements to siding – prefer wood siding

- ❑ Improvements to doors, windows – allow for easy ingress/egress; energy benefits
- ❑ Universal access to/from the facility – path system
- ❑ Improvements to the interior to allow for park interpretation, UPD programs, general circulation, and limited storage
- ❑ Landscape Interpretation
- ❑ Meadowbrook Park Interpretation
- ❑ Farmstead Interpretation
- ❑ “Sustainable Design Principles” and Interpretation
- ❑ Access road – front of facility
- ❑ Site lighting improvements – recommended interior lighting; site sensitive night lighting
- ❑ Site Furnishings, equipment, etc.
- ❑ Other improvements deemed necessary for intended use

**PROJECT BUDGET:**

- ❑ Approximately \$400,000 potentially available from legislative initiatives for improvements
- ❑ Approximately \$86,000 currently available for A/E fees (current contract underway 2009)

TAB  
Revised 1-5-10