Urbana Park District
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TO: UPDAC
FROM: VICKI MAYES
RE: FEBRUARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT
DATE: FEBRUARY 16, 2011

The district has a number of capital projects in progress. This is a summary of those projects and their status. All of these projects are possible because of the 15 cent rate increase approved by the voters in 2009. For most of these projects there are several sources of funding. In addition to using the $8,000,000 bonds sold in June 2010 to build the new planning and operations facility, the bond funds will support several other critical projects that protect and extend the useful life of recreation facilities. Applying for grants that require a match is possible. Donations and operating funds are available for several projects.

The district also levies a Special Recreation tax of 4 cents per $100 of assessed valuation. Two cents of this levy is dedicated to providing a joint recreation program for individuals with disabilities. UPD's partner is the Champaign Park District. The other 2 cents of this levy is dedicated toward making improvements in UPD's parks and facilities to increase accessibility. Staff often refer to these funds as ADA funds.

DEMOLITION OF CRYSTAL LAKE POOL – The district is seeking a formal proposal for demolition of the old Crystal Lake Pool. Frauenhoffer and Associates will provide the estimate. This firm did the demolition of the old Thornburn School/Recreation Center. The original 1928 pool is underneath the 1980 pool. It will be important to know what is there prior to demolition. The Board of Commissioners will review this proposal at their March meeting. If the 11 cent referendum is supported, a contract for demolition services will not be awarded.

If the referendum to construct, operate and maintain a new pool is not approved, then the old pool site will need to be demolished and opened to parkland. The rectangular pool and the bathhouse will need to be removed and the site restored so that it does not impact the attractiveness of the neighborhood and of the park. Also a facility that is not in active use and appears to be abandoned becomes a safety concern; one that increases the district's exposure to risk and liability. Funds for demolition will come from the $8,000,000 bond that was sold in June 2010. I expect that demolition would occur in the fall after school starts.

MEADOWBROOK INTERPRETIVE CENTER – The historic barn will be renovated into a 3 season program center and an interpretive focal point for the park. This is what will be accomplished in the renovation. The barn structure will be stabilized and its historic appearance protected. It will be renovated into an interpretive center that can be used for programs such as the district's environmental education programs. A wonderful space will be created that will be used for events such as Strawberry Jam and Jazz Walk. A unique design feature will open the center of the barn to reveal the second floor, loft and roof. It will become a focal point to interpret the many features and stories of Meadowbrook Park.

There will be accessible connections to the nearby gardens, pavilion, restrooms and into the park. Classroom groups, day camps, scout groups, and so on will be able to learn about the park and our natural environment in a wonderful place.

The contract for this project was awarded in February to English Brothers Construction, Ratio Architects did the design and engineering. The bids were very competitive. Construction will begin in March and be completed in July.

The funding for this is from a variety of sources including:

- $200,000 grant from the state,
- $20,000 gift from Ed and Carol Scharlau.
- $50,000 gift from Victor and Susan Stone,
- $15,000 gift from the former Jaycee's,
- Additional small donations, and
- ADA (accessibility) funds of the district to make connections from the barn to the restroom and pathway system in the park.

ANITA PURVES NATURE CENTER –Several projects will be completed this year at the Anita Purves Nature Center. The original siding that had deteriorated significantly was replaced last fall with environmentally responsible, highly durable and low maintenance siding. The floors in the offices of the center were replaced in January. These were the floors from the original building. The funding for these improvements were from the district's annual property taxes.

Currently, IGW Architecture is completing the design and engineering to replace the roof of the nature center with a standing seam metal roof. We hope the bids will be competitive enough that the section of flat roof can be replaced with a pitched roof to extend the life of the building. This project will be bid in March, the contract awarded in April and construction will be during the summer. The funding for this project is from the $8,000,000 bonds that were sold in June 2010.

BUSEY WOODS GATEWAY TRAIL – This project is currently in design and engineering with Frauenhoffer and Associates. This is the same contractor who completed the boardwalk trail in Busey Woods. The trail will create an accessible entrance from the nature center to the bridge over the Saline and to the boardwalk. Currently access to the trail for individuals with disabilities requires a lot of preplanning on the part of the visitor and the staff along a difficult to manage route. The project will also provide attractive landscaping and interpretive signage.

Funding for this project is through a state museum grant, individual donations, the districts accessibility funds (ADA) and the district's annual property taxes. The project will be bid in March.

LIGHTING RETROFITS – Five facilities will have lighting improvements made converting old fixtures to high efficiency, low energy consumption fixtures. The buildings are the cottage in Leal Park, Phillips Recreation Center, the Lake House and the nature center. A contract for this work was awarded in February. An incentive from the state's Department of Economic Opportunity will cover about 1/3 of the cost of these retrofits. The remaining funding comes from the district's annual property taxes. The payback for this retrofit is estimated in 2-3 years. Waters Electric out of Rantoul is the contractor.

Also the tennis court lights at Blair Park will be replaced this year. These are the original lights for the courts. They are no longer manufactured and we used the last one in UPD's inventory this year. The light poles are set inside the fence. The ballasts are too high for UPD's bucket truck to reach. So to re-aim the lights or to replace the lights or the ballasts, the fence must be taken down and a truck with a higher bucket must be rented. The new lights will be energy efficient and will have a lower level of light spillage into the neighborhood. There is not a great deal of energy savings payback on this improvement because the lights do not operate that long during the year. However, the savings in maintenance costs will be significant. The new lights will be set outside the fence and the lights and ballasts can be reached using UPD's bucket truck. The design and engineering will begin sometime this summer. This improvement will be funded through the $8,000,000 bond.

KERR ST. PLANNING AND OPERATIONS FACILITY – The new operations facility is beginning to take form. The foundations and all the footers for the shops, office/crew assembly and equipment/vehicle storage have been poured. The framework for the equipment/vehicle storage is up and the trusses have been set for the roof. The exterior walls for the vehicle/equipment storage will be the next thing to go up. The General Contractor for this project is Broeren Russo. The architect/engineer is BLDD.

This project is funded through the $8,000,000 bond. The district has received a grant of $52,700 for the geothermal system. The district has also applied for another grant to help develop the rain garden that will help with storm water management at the facility.

KING PARK LOOPING PATHWAY – Working with the city, the district will construct a looping pathway system within King Park. The trail will connect with the path/sidewalks to King School and the Goodwin Ave. bike path. This project will be funded as a TIF #3 City of Urbana project.

EMERALD ASH BORER, HAZARD TREE REMOVAL, PROTECTIVE PRUNING – The district has been able to address the Emerald Ash Borer threat aggressively. Last year the district completed a park-wide inventory and assessment of all the trees including an evaluation of their condition for Carle Park. Then the district completed removal of trees threatened by Emerald Ash Borer, trees that were in decline. Also a part of this project was protective/preventive pruning and replanting. A similar process of inventory and evaluation, removal and pruning and replanting is being done at Crystal Lake Park, Leal Park and King Park. The presentation for the 2-22 UPDAC meeting will focus on the district's urban/park forest activities. For the current tree work being done in Crystal Lake Park, the contractor is Arbor Smith. This urban/park forest activity is funded through the district's annual property tax funds.

SMALL PROJECTS - In addition to the major projects, the district has numerous small projects. The district has a light construction crew who complete these small projects. The light construction crew installs all of UPD's playgrounds. The small projects are funded through the district's annual property tax funds.

- Replace air conditioning in Phillips,
- Complete the site master planning for Chief Shemauger Park with neighborhood input,
- Complete site master planning with for AMBUCS Park with AMBUCS Club and community input,
- Replace the overlook in Busey Woods,
- Repair the upper and lower deck at Lake House,
- Install several small pieces of play equipment at Blair Park until a new playground can be built (remove equipment that doesn't meet safety guidelines),
- Replace the storm sewer at the North Woods pavilion in Crystal Lake Park,

- Replace the zig-zag bridge in the Koishikawa Garden in Crestview Park and remove some of the older plant materials,
- Reorganize the office layout in the cottage to improve work space efficiency and effectiveness,
- Complete sidewalk repair in all parks as needed.