

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: March 26, 2009

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:03 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 6:14 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attending Members

Susie Day, Chair
Vernon Brown
Monroe Gray
Janice McHenry
Mike McQuillen
William Oliver
Mike Speedy

Absent Members

AGENDA

Update - Arts Funding - Greg Charleston, Director, Arts Council of Indianapolis

Update - Pools - Stuart Lowry, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

Update - Pennsy Trail - Stuart Lowry

Update - Indy Parks Foundation Mayor's Luncheon - Stuart Lowry

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council met on Thursday, March 26, 2009. Chair Susie Day called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. with the following members present: Vernon Brown, Monroe Gray, Janice McHenry, Mike McQuillen, William Oliver, and Mike Speedy.

Update - Arts Funding

Greg Charleston, Executive Director, Arts Council of Indianapolis, introduced Erik Johnson, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors. Mr. Johnson said he is also a volunteer, and a downtown business owner and resident. He thanked the committee for the allotment of funds which they approved, even though the Arts Council took a large cut in funding. He said the funding means jobs for not only singers and artists, but jobs for stage hands, facility managers, and general management operations. He said there is a significant multiplier effect that occurs. Mr. Johnson said the Arts employs about 15,000 people throughout the city and county, and he asked that the committee think about increasing funding as the economy turns around.

Mr. Charleston also introduced Dave Lawrence, Vice President and Grants Manager, Arts Council of Indianapolis. Mr. Charleston talked about the current state of the arts, the work in securing additional funding, and the process for awarding grants for 2009. Mr. Charleston said that the Arts Council has had a contract with the city for 20 years. In addition to grant funding, they also do outreach, helps artists secure full-time jobs, public art programs, research and information, websites, promotions, and they work with anything that will help build the Arts community. He said the city's funding was reduced 33% for 2009 to \$1 million from \$1.5 million. Mr. Charleston said they received some money from the Capital Improvement Board (CIB) for marketing and tourism efforts, but that also has been reduced by 13%, and the money from the state to re-grant Marion County has been reduced by 10%. He said there is a tremendous amount of money that has left the arts community, and it is affecting and significantly altering the work among the arts organizations. The Arts Council's number one priority job is to keep the Arts flourishing during the recession. He said that the Arts Foundation's goal is to keep the arts education and community efforts flourishing. He said the Arts Foundation has reduced its own administration by 11%.

Mr. Charleston listed some ways a reduction in funding is affecting some art groups. He said Art with the Heart will serve over 300 less children; Clowes Memorial Hall will stop two of its eight programs, and will drop 3,000 free tickets to at-risk students; Dance Kaleidoscope will reduce their class offerings by half; Free Towne Village will reduce their monthly outreach programs to five or six from about twice that number; summer day camp will be reduced this summer;

the Harrison Center will cut back on Crime reduction programs; the Indianapolis Children's Choir will consider raising tuition costs; the Symphonic Choir will reduce outreach programs that impact 1,800 students; Music for All will lose its ability to continue programming to Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and Marion County students; VSA Arts of Indiana will cut their weekly program schedule; and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra is cutting their free summer concert at Garfield and Holliday Parks. Mr. Charleston said the reduction in funding has caused a tremendous impact. He said, on a positive note, they are seeing more and more collaborations among other Arts organizations. He said they are working to produce a campaign called "What the Arts Mean," and they have comprised some publications that detail the benefits of the Arts. Mr. Charleston said the Arts affect economic development for the city, as well as public safety, and they add to the vibrancy of this city.

Mr. Charleston said he has been meeting with Councillors, the Mayor's Office, Arts Leaders, CIB, and State Legislators regarding funding issues. He said they are looking at funding models in other cities throughout the Midwest and beyond. Mr. Charleston said this is a huge financial challenge, but he wants the committee to know that the Arts Council is working with several groups to ensure the city's investment in the Arts. Mr. Charleston said they applied for stimulus money from the federal government yesterday. He said that money can be re-granted to Arts organizations to help with some of these efforts.

Mr. Lawrence said last fall, they started holding mandatory workshops with the organizations that received funding in 2008. He said these organizations were the only ones eligible to receive funding in 2009. During these workshops they stressed the importance of this funding, and the current funding situation. Following the workshops, 56 applications were accepted, and 52 of them were granted. Mr. Lawrence said the Arts Council has reduced its own operations by eliminating the out-of-state panel costs. He said they made funding decisions by using 2008 scores, and brought in a grants committee with the board of directors. He said even the smallest of the organizations that they fund will still face a 15% reduction in funding, and the maximum reduction will be 25%. He said the list has been presented to the Indianapolis Parks Foundation (IPF) board for their approval. Mr. Lawrence said the grants committee looked very carefully at organizations and whether they would be able to carry out the programs they said they were going to with this funding. He said there were two organizations that were denied funding this year that received funding last year. He said one of those organizations was unable to show a significant match to the dollar granted to them, and the other organization was in a deficit situation. Two other organizations did not turn in their reports on time; therefore they were not in compliance. Mr. Lawrence said they take this matter very seriously, and they know that the decisions the committee makes are difficult.

Chair Day asked Mr. Charleston if the ticket reduction was based solely on the Council's reduction in funding. Mr. Charleston answered in the affirmative.

Councillor McQuillen asked Mr. Charleston if the Arts staff of 19 is a typical size for a city of this size. Councillor McQuillen said it appears that 8 or 9% of the Arts budget is for administration. Mr. Charleston said that it is a little less than that, and some of the staff are part-time employees. He said they have about 11 full-time staff members. Councillor McQuillen asked how does the Arts administrative costs compare to Detroit. Mr. Charleston said Indianapolis's administrative costs are much lower because of the efficiencies in granting; he said they combine processes and they have a lot less money to disburse. Mr. Charleston said the Arts Council has a grant staff of one person. He said in comparison to a city the size of Charlotte, there would be a grants staff of at least five to six people.

{Clerk's Note: Councillor McQuillen left the meeting at 5:25 p.m.}

Councillor Speedy asked if changes for the 2009 grant process have already taken place. Mr. Charleston answered in the affirmative. Councillor Speedy asked what the cost for out-of-state adjudication is. Mr. Charleston said it costs approximately \$10,000 for each person. Councillor Speedy thanked Mr. Charleston for doing more with fewer resources.

Councillor Gray asked Mr. Charleston who the Councillors are that he has been working with on finding more funding. Mr. Charleston said he has been working with Councillors Ginny Cain and Jackie Nytes. He said the committee also includes representatives from the Mayor's Office and Arts Council. Mr. Charleston said in addition to that, he has had meetings with other Councillors. Councillor Gray asked if anyone can attend those meetings. Mr. Charleston told Councillor Gray he is welcomed to come to any of the meetings.

Councillor Brown said it is good that the Arts Council was able to cut their staff by only 11%. He said that people need to understand someone is impacted every time a dollar is cut from the Arts.

Councillor Oliver asked if the \$250,000 stimulus money is for administration only. Mr. Charleston answered in the affirmative. He said they are very restricted as to how they can use those funds. Mr. Charleston said the stimulus money will impact the Art Center, because otherwise they would have to lay off contracted, part-time employees that oversee the summer programs. He said saving those jobs will save the programs.

Councillor Oliver asked if the Arts was continuously applying for stimulus money. Mr. Lawrence said this is the first time that funds have been directed for the Arts.

He said the Arts Council is a regional partner for the Indiana Arts Commission, and that agency is in direct contact with the National Arts

Endowment Commission; which is how the Arts Council stays informed. Mr. Charleston said \$50,000,000 was allotted exclusively for the arts, but there are other opportunities to apply for stimulus money that could be for education and outreach programs.

Update – Pools

Stuart Lowry, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), said he appreciated the committee taking a moment of silence at the last meeting honoring the life of Mr. Charles Guion, Indy Parks After-School Program Site Coordinator, Charles Dye Elementary School.

Mr. Lowry said the pools are losing 31,000,000 gallons of water per season. He said they have identified 11 pools that have leaks, and they repaired two of them. He said there are still nine pools that have major leaks, but they are detailing a plan to fix those pools. He said some of the pools need a lot more work and attention than others do. Mr. Lowry said the toilets and showers cannot be used at the same time at Gustafson Park pool, and Bethel Park pool is losing about 100,000 gallons of water per day. Bethel Park pool holds 193,000 gallons of water. He said the five pools they plan to repair this year include, LaShonna Bates, Gustafson, West Montgomery, and Bethel Pools. Mr. Lowry said they may be able to re-open Gustafson Park pool this year, and they are determining ways to increase amenities at some of the pools this year. Mr. Lowry said they have been in discussions with Scott Newman, Director, Department of Public Safety, about the possibility of using water plugs. He said they will also be using Indy Parks vans as free shuttles to accompany patrons to nearby pools.

Elaine Dillahunt, Senior Manager, Aquatics, DPR, said DPR takes the needs of their customers very seriously, and they are doing everything they can to accommodate them. She said they are working to expand their summer programming and include some fun water features.

Mr. Lowry said they will be starting the summer play program earlier this year, so that they can offer some options to the children in the areas where pools will be closed due to repair.

Councillor Speedy asked Mr. Lowry how DPR will utilize buses. Mr. Lowry said he has been in discussions with Mike Terry, Chief Executive Officer, IndyGo, and they will be determining how to use the buses to accommodate riders going to the pools. Ms. Dillahunt said all of the pools are on a bus line, so riders would not necessarily have to go to the nearest pools. She said they will be meeting with representatives from IndyGo next week to discuss their options.

Chair Day asked what the age limit is for children that can go to the pools without a parent. Ms. Dillahunt said the children have to be over nine years old. Chair Day asked if the children's ages are verified. Ms. Dillahunt said many of the staff members are familiar with the children because they have been attending the pools for years.

Councillor Brown asked Ms. Dillahunt is there an age limit to ride the bus. Ms. Dillahunt answered in the negative. Councillor Brown asked Mr. Lowry if DPR would require a parental waiver to transport children in the vans. Mr. Lowry answered in the affirmative. Councillor Brown asked Mr. Lowry why the cost of renovations increased from \$7,000,000 to \$9,000,000. Mr. Lowry said this cost is a floating number because they are not sure of all of the repairs that need to be made until studies are complete. He said he will be consulting with designers to determine if the costs will change, but some pools may have to be rebuilt, such as the case with Bethel Park. Councillor Brown asked how long it takes to rebuild a pool. Don Colvin, Deputy Director, DPR, said it will take approximately six to nine months. Councillor Brown asked Mr. Lowry why some of DPR's projects are two years long. Mr. Lowry said the length of the time that it takes to do complete repairs depends on what needs to be done.

Councillor Brown asked Mr. Lowry where the \$8,000,000 dollars will come from to make these repairs since DPR's budget has been cut. Mr. Lowry said they have been in discussions with the Office of Finance and Management (OFM) to determine if they can leverage some tax dollars because they do not have a total of \$9,000,000 in a fund to make repairs. He said they have some maintenance funds available. Mr. Lowry said he has also met with the Lilly Foundation and other outside sources for support. Mr. Lowry said it is DPR's goal to repair all pools by 2010.

Councillor Oliver asked Mr. Lowry if the pools were closed because of projected budget shortfalls. Mr. Lowry answered in the negative. Mr. Lowry said the pools were not only closed because they had problems with their pipes, but they were closed because of safety concerns. He said they are staying in compliance with the Virginia Graham Baker Act by replacing the grate systems. Mr. Lowry said the pools are closed for the safety of the users, age of the pool, and the amount of water that the pools are losing. Councillor Oliver said there was never an announcement made about closing the pools on a particular date, and citizens were never given a projected date of when the pools will re-open.

Mr. Lowry said there are pools that have nine major leaks, and he was trying to determine which pools should be closed, and which pools should stay open, while providing shuttle service to those. Mr. Lowry said they would like to open Gustafson Park pool this season if possible. Wes Montgomery Park and Bethel Park pools are projected for next season. He said the opening of Bethel Park's pool will be based on whether it needs to be totally rebuilt. Thatcher Park and

LaShonna Bates Park's pools need painting and minor work, and are projected to be opened by next season. Ms. Dillahunt said they will try to make repairs to Perry Park's pool this spring. If that is not possible, they will open it, and do repair work on it this this fall.

Councillor Oliver asked if the pools that will remain open but are in need of repairs will have their problems addressed this fall. Mr. Lowry answered in the affirmative.

Councillor McHenry asked if both pools will be closed at Krannert Park at the same time, or can they close the indoor pool during the summer, and keep the outdoor open, and vice-versa. Ms. Dillahunt said because both pools run on the same filtration systems, it will probably be more cost effective if they can close the pools at the same time, but Thatcher Park's pool will remain open, and it is in close proximity to Krannert Park. Councillor McHenry asked Ms. Dillahunt if shuttle transportation will run to Eagle Creek Beach. Ms. Dillahunt answered in the negative. Councillor McHenry asked Ms. Dillahunt if it is hard to maintain chemical levels in the pools since they are constantly losing water. Ms. Dillahunt answered in the affirmative. She said they test the chemicals hourly, and they would never keep a pool open if the chemical levels became unsafe. Ms. Dillahunt also said the temperatures are always cool in the pools that leak, and that some of them will not warm up at all. Councillor McHenry asked Mr. Lowry if work has begun on some pools since the weather has been nice. Mr. Lowry answered in the affirmative.

Update – Pennsy Trail

Mr. Colvin said the Pennsy Trail is under construction. He said that trail will stretch from Shortridge Road to Arlington Avenue, and it is a two-mile stretch of paved area. Mr. Colvin said Governor Daniels awarded \$19,000,000 to the state, and DPR received \$900,000 for this project. He said the bid for Pennsy Trail was under that amount; therefore no local dollars were used for this project. He said the trail should be ready for use by the fall. Mr. Colvin said the overall project is about six miles long, and costs over \$11,000,000. He said the Pennsy Trail is about a block south of Washington Street, and it starts in Irvington and runs east to Cumberland Township.

Councillor Brown asked if an outside contractor or internal staff will be responsible for the construction of the Pennsy Trail. Mr. Colvin said the construction will be done by a private contractor. Councillor Brown asked if there will be any summer jobs offered for youth. Mr. Colvin answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Lowry said they have established a partnership with the Rupert Foundation to oversee 22 mini-parks, plus seven additional parks throughout the city. He said the Rupert Foundation works with high school children that are having trouble,

and it gives them something to do during the summer. He said this partnership will also be a cost savings for DPR, because the Rupert Foundation will mow the grass, remove trash, and maintain the shelters in those 29 parks.

Mr. Lowry said they are also establishing a mobile project on the east side of Indianapolis whose communities do not have parks. He said they will be doing projects in the parking lot areas. Mr. Lowry said the comprehensive plan indicates that there is not enough green space. He said they will be reviewing projects, and how they will capitalize them, as well as reviewing green space needs.

Update – Indy Parks Foundation Mayor’s Luncheon

Lori Hazlett, Development Assistant, IPF, said the Mayor’s luncheon was a big success. She said they have currently raised \$137,000; their goal is \$140,000, and they still have funds coming in. Ms. Hazlett said 49 tables were sponsored, and 12 of those have supported IPF for seven years. She said they have 11 new supporters, and five of those were table sponsors. She thanked the Councillors that attended the luncheon. Mr. Lowry said that IPF has raised \$11,000,000 for DPR since 1991, and they are now launching two \$10,000,000 campaigns over the course of three years. He said much of their focus will be on the projects that were on the agenda today.

There being no further business, and upon motion duly made, the meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Day, Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee

SD/cj