

PARK BOARD
ST. JOHN, INDIANA
March 23, 1999

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The Park Board of the Town of St. John met on this date with the following members present:

Attendee 1, Eileen Butcher	Attendee 4,
Attendee 2, Joan Millis	Attendee 5,
Attendee 3, Paul Haller	Attendee 6,

The following members absent:

Absent 1, Mary Anne Koke	Absent 4
Absent 2, David Wickland, Attorney	Absent 5
Absent 3, Fred Kish, Council Liaison	Absent 6

CALL TO ORDER

The monthly meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Paul Haller, seconded by Joan Millis, to approve the minutes of the January 25 and February 23 meetings as distributed. Passed unanimously on voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS

[St. John Heartland Park](#)

No items were presented for discussion.

[Basketball Court \(Homestead Acres/Lancer Estate\)](#)

Resurfacing is waiting on a source of funding. Eileen Butcher feels that the Town of St. John may be able to contribute some funds.

Sun Meadows Easement Encroachment

Eileen Butcher indicated that David Wickland is reviewing the precedents of additional legal cases relevant to the encroachment situation in Sun Meadows. In addition, more residents have removed encroaching items. Eileen suggested that the Board do another survey in April to review the situation.

1999 Lawn Care

Four bids were received in February:

Touch of Grass	\$5,150 / month (up from \$4500.00 last year)
T & J Lawn Maintenance	\$5550 / month
Ed Czerwinski	\$8,700.00 / month
Ultimate Lawn Care	\$1,000.00 / week

Up until two years ago, Town employees were responsible for grass cutting. Since then, the use of outside services has saved money. Touch of Grass was last summer's contractor.

Eileen Butcher reported that the references supplied by Ultimate Lawn Care were all favorable. Paul Haller inquired whether the Park Board was required to accept the lowest bid if the second highest bid was within 10%; this is correct, but does not apply to this situation. He inquired whether Ultimate Lawn Care had sufficient equipment; they have already purchased new equipment for this summer. They have sufficient insurance and have lined up help for all the parks listed in the request for bids.

- Motion by Paul Haller, seconded by Joan Millis, to give serious consideration to Ultimate Lawn Care's proposal for grass cutting for the St. John Parks for six months (April – September), 1999 for \$1000/week. Passed unanimously on voice vote.

Paul Haller expressed concern for the low and wet areas of the parks; the representatives of Ultimate Lawn Care indicated they had already walked all the parks.

East Park Complex Wind Damage

Eileen Butcher reported that the insurance check has been mailed, but not received or credited.

White Oak Manor Park

The fertilizer for the project has come in (\$147.00); Herman Monix will fertilize and seed the park for a total cost under \$600.00 as previously approved by the Park Board.

Heron Lake Park

This item was dropped from the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Meyers Development

Mr. Dennis Meyers and his son, Mark, presented copies of drawings of their proposed development of 42 units on 21 lots on the east side of Highway 41 across from the high school. A former motel and two houses will be removed from the site. A strip mall will lie in front of duplex units, both part of the PUD.

The Impact Fee Ordinance states that a fee of \$723/living unit (in lieu of parkland) will be assessed as building permits are drawn. Mr. Meyers inquired whether the fee is assessed per building or per unit; Park Board members felt that the fee applied to each living unit. The funds will go directly to the Park Board for the parks. Joan explained that this will be the first project to be accepted under the new Impact Fee ordinance. Copies of the drawings were retained for Public Works.

- Motion by Joan Millis, seconded by Paul Haller, to accept the impact fee for Meyers Development in lieu of park land donation for the 42 units, at \$723.00 per unit, to be paid as building permits are drawn. Passed unanimously on voice vote.

St. John Garden Club

Debbie Anderson and Becky Wadell offered the services of the Garden Club to work on landscaping and flowers for the parks. They suggested that the Town hire a professional landscaper, such as Allen Landscaping, to prepare a plan for Prairie West (about 15 acres) for them to implement; they estimated the cost at \$35/hr, or a total of \$350-500 for a complete plan. Club members will donate plants and time for planting and maintenance. They want to plant long-blooming perennials around the Prairie West sign, but expressed some concern about the geese and the problems they might cause for the plantings. Joan Millis offered to contact Greg from Crystal Palace, since he has also done some work for the Town and may be interested in helping. The local Scout and 4-H groups may be interested in working on a local project such as a fence for the plantings; Joan offered to provide phone numbers.

The Club members inquired about access to water. Joan offered to find out whether they could access the fountain system, and whether the treated water would harm the plants. The Town can provide mulch but not dirt.

Paul Haller noted that the Park Board has placed a priority on using any available funding for playground equipment, so help with funds would be limited. He suggested that they contact John Taylor and the Town Council for assistance with funding.

Porta-potties

Three bids had been received for two handicapped and three regular porta-potties:

- Service Sanitation - \$125.00/month (handicapped) and \$65.00/month (regular) plus a disposal fee

- Superior Sanitation - \$100/month (handicapped) and \$65.00/month (regular) plus \$25.00 per trip for cleaning
- Bruce's Septic - \$110.00/month (handicapped) and \$65.00/month (regular); the bid includes responsibility for damage and repair

Bruce's was the contractor used last summer. A resident inquired whether one unit could be placed at the south field at East Park. The unit can be placed anywhere, depending on access for cleaning and the wetness of the parks; it could be moved when the ground dries up. Joan will check with the contractor.

- Motion by Paul Haller, seconded by Joan Millis, to accept the bid from Bruce's Septic for porta-potties for the summer of 1999 at \$110.00/handicapped unit and \$65.00/regular unit per month. Passed unanimously on voice vote.

Parks Pond Treatment

It is time to request bids for treatment for three ponds to reduce algae growth. Joan will contact McNamara in Valparaiso to determine his ongoing interest. The applicator must have a license and a boat to apply the chemicals. Joan will also review the bids submitted last year. She also distributed copies of articles regarding the effects of geese on local ponds; Paul reiterated his support for the geese.

PROGRAMS

Joan provided information on Pam Zych's programs at the Fitness Center. To date, 400 people have joined, for an income of \$12,000 since December. Easter tots' and children's' programs are planned, with additional dance classes added to meet the demand. About 1300 flyers were distributed to the schools regarding spring break activities.

Paul Haller inquired whether the Fitness Center or the Ice Arena was available for private parties. They are; however, the funds accrue to the respective provider, not to the Park Board.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

626	Girls Softball	\$225.00
625	Youth Baseball	\$225.00
624	Bruce's Septic	\$260.00
623	Lake Central School	\$107.05
622	Nipsco	\$25.08
621	K-Mart	\$15.97
620	Norma Yaeger	\$60.00

Paul Haller inquired whether there were records on the costs associated with the rental of the house near the Ice Arena. Joan indicated these are readily available.

- Motion by Joan Millis, seconded by Paul Haller, to approve the bills as read. Passed unanimously on voice vote.

ANY AND ALL

Mr. Tom Busch of 10178 Walsh inquired about the bulk rate postage frank on the flyers being distributed by the Fitness Center. He asked who controlled the use of the bulk rate number (#228); it may be the Town's number, but has no relationship to the Park Board. There is a statement on the flyer that the Fitness Center is owned and operated by the St. John Park Department; this is inaccurate.

Pat Philben, representing the Edgewood Community, inquired when playground equipment would be installed in the park. Joan Millis noted that the grading and seeding of the park had improved its appearance, and more people are using the walking path; 50' of the sidewalk was donated.

Eileen Butcher explained that the Park Board had \$56,000.00 to run 22 parks, about 80 acres of land. Grass cutting takes about \$30,000.00 of that amount. The Town Council has allocated, beginning in July, an additional \$40,000.00. The expense to install the first phase of playground equipment in one park last year was \$60,000.00. Prairie West Park is one of the older parks that currently has no equipment and is designated a high priority. Joan reiterated that the new developments like the Meyers Addition will generate funds for equipment. Eileen explained that the Board will seek out grants to use recycled materials, perhaps with assistance from the Town Council.

Paul Haller inquired whether equipment in other parks is being well used, and whether equipment that is being abused (i.e., Schillton Hills) should be left there; he asked whether some could be relocated to parks that now have many small children in the neighborhood. Eileen Butcher explained that not only would this upset the residents of these parks, but also the equipment deteriorates and is not movable. Joan Millis explained that the tenth unit of Schillton Hills is under development and will eventually abut Sun Meadows. Joan noted that when Mr. Schilling started the development, he paid for the pavilions in Prairie West and Schillton Hills, and purchased the playground equipment. She also explained that the Park Board used to have to take whatever land the developers offered; the Park Board was not allowed to request cash instead of land.

Residents expressed considerable frustration over the unfulfilled promises made by the developers. Joan Millis noted that there is no ordinance that requires the developers to finish the parks early in the development; this is under review by the Plan Commission.

Residents inquired why the tax dollars coming into the Town can't be allocated to the parks; Joan explained that the State of Indiana sets the rate at 3% of levied tax, so it takes a long time to build up funds. Eileen further explained that developments that were still underway when the Impact Fee was adopted were grandfathered in under the existing plan; they are not required to pay the fee for each building permit.

Residents inquired what discretion the Town Council has over the Park Board budget; they can move funds from the general fund, which is how the Park Board budget was increased this year. Residents inquired how the Park Board came to have so many parks; Eileen noted that the Park Board had no discretion over accepting them, but that

few offers of land have been accepted in the last few years. Residents inquired whether the Park Board could sell parks that are undevelopable and use the funds for equipment; this is not an option.

The homeowners inquired how the new subdivisions that have the most small children could get priority consideration instead of the older parks that now have mostly older children. Eileen recommended that the Edgewood residents talk to their Town Council representatives; this is how Prairie West rose to priority for equipment this summer. The Park Board will also seek out additional sources of funding grants.

Residents inquired why Schererville developments had such nice parks; Schererville has a much larger commercial tax base. Their Park Board has a budget in excess of \$500,000. The residents inquired whether they could form a volunteer group to help assemble the park equipment; Joan explained that it is better to leave the liability with the company who makes and installs it. Eileen thanked the neighborhood residents for attending and sharing their concerns.

ANY AND ALL

The Park Board received a copy of the girls' softball practice and tournament schedule (first and last weekends in June). John Homolka inquired when the girls' fields would be ready at Heartland Park; Eileen Butcher thought that two are scheduled for this summer, with two additional fields later on. The fields still need to be balanced. ANR Pipeline has given the right to use their property as an outfield as long as no permanent structures are installed there. There was some disagreement over the number, design and construction schedule of the fields. Mr. Homolka noted that current girls' fields are difficult to play on because of the rocks. The gentlemen inquired about the concession stands; they would like to construct and operate them, as the concessions at the Ice Arena would be too far away.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Paul Haller, seconded by Joan Millis, to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Norma R. Yaeger
Recording Secretary