

HURON JOINT RECREATION DISTRICT  
Regular Board Meeting  
August 11, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.

In the absence of Tim Golling, Co-Chair Steve Hohler chaired the meeting.

In attendance were: Andy White, David Dreffer, Steve Hohler, Terry Graham, Wayne Foster, and Tom Solberg.

Visitors to the meeting: Huron City School Board members, Mike Haberman, 39 Northview Point, and City Manager Mike Tann

Approval of minutes from June 9, 2005. All in favor.

Financial report. Andy White reported Parks Maintenance fund 208 doing well with revenues generated by Nickel Plate Park, and perhaps this will be a record year. To date, they have collected \$17,000 plus change, whereas last year the end of the season totaled \$12,000. Plus, the Labor Day holiday is expected to generate more funding.

With regard to the other two Departments, the community outreach programs are going well and recreation is doing well. We just finished the Dawg Days tournament, which was an excellent venue, despite the vandalism Friday night. Steps are being taken to offset the vandalism for next year's event. There was concern from spectators that they paid \$10.00 to park, and yet their vehicles were not secured. The Law Director was consulted for advice regarding liability, and in his opinion there is none on the part of the city at this point. No dollar amounts for how businesses fared from the event, the only drawback being some negative PR from the vandalism. Pete O'Brien and Chris Basting did a really nice job getting the park ready and maintaining the grounds during the event. It was suggested that a letter be sent to the visiting teams' contact people, in order to use it to send regrets for the incidents, outline plans for next year's security, and thank them for participating in this year's event.

The boat basin has been full all summer, the weather has been excellent, and Doug Steinwart has been doing an excellent job. Chris Basting is doing a great job with the maintenance. The Yacht club is pleased with our efforts.

Item A under the financial agenda is the Huron Joint Recreational District contract; The City has paid in \$40,000 and in the works are \$15,000 from the Township and \$15,000 from the Schools. This will help the Parks Department in a huge way. The only issue is the tax abatement agreement between Lear and the School. There is an issue about exactly how much money Lear owes the school system, and until this is resolved the contract payment is on hold. There was concern about the percent each entity would pay, however, the Township and school intend to deliver more than the original agreement. Fiscal year 2006 dollars are unclear at this point and the support of the community and board will be necessary.

Next item is the Huron Baseball contract. In 2004, Parks and Recreations instituted a \$3,000 fee for the use of Fabens Park. An audit of monies spent by Parks and Recreation in support of the Baseball Program totaled \$6,700. An agreement for \$5,500 between the city and the baseball program was created. To date, there have been three invoices from the city to the baseball program. Payments are forthcoming. The baseball program representation was under the impression that since they owned and maintained their equipment that the agreed upon rate should be lower. The contract signed by the program and the city does outline the fees agreed upon and the city looks at approximately \$5,300 for the season, saving the baseball program \$200 from the original contract. Mr. White provided that the Parks and Recreation Department must be self-sustaining, and that the Department is a not for profit organization. The highest bidder for park facilities/services does not justify the need to look at other programs to use Fabens facilities...it is a Huron park. The Parks and

Recreation Department says it costs \$5,500 to maintain the park for baseball season, and that is what the Department must make to be solvent. Mr. Hohler argued that other programs can come to Fabens Park and use the field without paying anything. Legal documentation is being created by Mr. White to define the fees for use of the Park and/or fields. Also, software to track field use is being explored to assist the Parks and Recreation Department to better manage the fields and Fabens Park maintenance needs. Mr. Hohler wanted to know if the Ordinance in question would grant rights to Huron exclusively. Mr. Tann told him that is against the law and granting exclusive rights violates several laws. Mr. Hohler said perhaps a levy should be put on the ballot to get funding for the Parks and Recreation Department, and then do away with fees for using Fabens Park.

Mr. Hohler expressed his concern that the City of Huron is charging the baseball program for services they cannot afford. He detailed the history that coaches used to get fields ready for play, whereas, the Parks and Recreation Department now does this for the program. Mr. White pointed out the Parks and Recreation Department does so much more than just prepare the fields. It includes emptying trash, maintaining the grounds and mowing the grass; these were not accomplished by the baseball program in the past. Mr. Hohler's concern is that the City will raise the rates if the baseball program raises the rates. The City Manager, Assistant City Manager and the City Council's representative denied they would increase rates based on the baseball program's intake. Mr. Hohler said this was the first year that many parents approached him and said they just could not afford to pay for their children to play ball. He said the baseball program would write off the debt or use a sliding scale to assist those cases. Another suggestion was community involvement by developing a "baseball scholarship" for children who want to play, but their families are not able to fund their participation. Mr. Dreffer asked Mr. Hohler to explain the cost breakdown of the \$35 for each child. Included were the costs for uniforms, insurance, umpires, maintenance fees and miscellaneous fees. Some organizations are providing additional funding for treats and perks for the team members. All the program provides to the children are tee-shirts and hats. Mr. Hohler cited the increase in insurance premiums as a large cost to the baseball program. When asked about the cost to sponsors, Mr. Hohler replied sponsors are charged \$250 for a team. Plus, the baseball program spends \$6,000 for replacement equipment, which Mr. Hohler refers to as bare bones spending. Mr. White asked about cutting back the services provided to the park, where Mr. Hohler acknowledged that the grass did not need as much cutting due to lack of rain. If next year the weather is rainier and the grass needs more cutting, then that will pose a situation. The insurance premium payment was addressed. Perhaps this baseball program could join with other programs and cut costs. The question was raised that since the City had insurance on all the parks and the baseball program would not need insurance; however, the minute the child pays to play the City is no longer required to cover the child's activities at the park.

The program plays about 500 games per year. The biggest concern of the baseball program is that the City of Huron will discontinue the program's use of Fabens Park. The concern was met with suggestions of a contract, even a multi-year contract if necessary, to ensure the program they will have a place to play ball. The program is also in fear that if they do not agree to a contract, then the city will go elsewhere to find park users. Fears were laid to rest that this park is located in Huron and the City is not interested in dismantling the baseball program or any other program that uses Fabens Park. The City needs to support the Parks and Recreation Department, which is the major function of this Board, and it needs to be a self supporting entity. The contracts are to secure funding for superior care and maintenance of the park...and all the other parks, too...to ensure Huron has the quality of life its citizens have come to expect.

The policy regarding attendance for meetings was agreed upon, and the recommendation was two excused and one unexcused and after three without extenuation circumstances members will be asked to leave the Board. Members discussed the duration of the absences, and the circumstances

prohibiting attendance. The biggest concern is the lack of a quorum. Perhaps changing the day of the meetings will reduce the gatherings missed by members. The issue was tabled for the time so members could think about an appropriate time and day to meet.

The next item on the agenda is the vandalism plaguing the park. The Fabens Park coke machine was destroyed, and is being investigated by the Huron Police Department. There was a spray painting incident at Nickel Plate Park. One individual was apprehended for the offense. The incident at the baseball tournament where several cars were broken into is also being investigated. An idea to help defeat this incident next year is to use the plastic fencing used at the Festivals as a deterrent. Couple this with signage and flyers to alert people about the dangers of valuables left in vehicles, then perhaps this vandalism will be eliminated. Also, the board talked about the loss of red flags at Nickel Plate Park. Chris Basting, from Parks and Recreation, purchased more flags and used funds from the Parks and Recreation budget to purchase more.

Next topic is the City Wide Garage Sale II. The earlier event was a huge success in the spring, and rolls out again at the end of summer. Spots are filling up at a cost of \$8.00. Parks is running concessions from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This could draw interest and help the Parks and Recreation fund. There are plenty of spots still available. Applications are available on the Parks and Recreation web site ([www.huronparks.org](http://www.huronparks.org)).

New Business:

Facility usage fees - Mr. White distributed a handout a couple of meetings ago for the proposed ordinance. He is working on the body of this legislation and hopes to get it in front of the City Council soon.

Fish Tournament - Mr. White said it was put in by Mr. Golling, but he does not have any information about it. This will be explored further in the upcoming meetings.

Nickel Plate Park Speed Bumps - Some low riding cars are speeding about the park. Additional speed bumps may deter the speeding. Mr. White said the costs cannot be justified at this time. Some board members requested that this be moved up on the priority list as the speeding vehicles in the park pose a danger to the young children using the park. Mr. White said he will review the budget and see if anything can be done.

Irish Festival - Pete O'Brien has the lead and has done a great job with setting up the event. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event should bring in a good crowd of people. Mr. White encouraged board members to visit the festival and enjoy the fruits of Pete's labor. It is Friday (August 12) afternoon and evening, and closes Saturday (August 13) evening.

Chairman's comments:

No comments.

Assistant City Manager's comments:

Mr. White talked about program updates. He drafted a couple of policies since their last meeting. The first is about construction in city parks. The schools put up a concrete slab to move the shed from

the baseball field area to the tennis court area. They did not inform the Board of their decision. No entities can build structures of any type with permission. The second policy discusses the refundable deposit for the use of facilities. This gives the City some funding to fix any damages done during any event on City owned property. It was suggested that perhaps add in a rental fee and cleanup fee; however, this will be visited later. The Parks and Recreation Department is looking at assigning the appropriate costs of rental fees, cleanup fees, and deposits. The fall league is at a maximum already. There was an inquiry about the Santa House; however the City has not heard any new information since July. The Lions, who own the Santa House, do not have issue if the dwelling was sold. We are still looking for the conveyances for Fabens Park. Conveyances cover the restrictions on the park use. Mr. White is still reviewing the spoil site issues. He contacted Metropark associates to see if they can help us. He spoke with Jim Murray, who owns the property north of "Spreaders" on Main Street. Mr. Murray does not have interest to sell the property; however, he would entertain a contract or agreement to allow the City to maintain it or beautify it with no dollar amount for use. We could clean it up and make it look nicer, and we are not interested in losing money on this. It was suggested a long term lease would be the only way to go. The Parks and Recreation Department is doing really well with their programs. The "Community Beacon" advertised the Department's offerings and they are receiving calls for citizens to sign up for these outstanding programs. The boat basin is doing well. Doug Steinwart has good numbers for seasonal users and transient boaters. Mr. Tyge Majoy called about donating top soil. The Lions Club is working on donating 12 new picnic tables by September. They also provided \$2,000 in donations for the Irish Festival. The Board truly appreciates the Lions Club for doing such fine work for the City.

Mr. Dreffer mentioned the Rotary Rib Burn off and Blue Grass Festival, and the Wood Boat Show, plus the Arts Festival coming up.

Mr. Graham appreciates all the efforts of Mr. White. Mr. Graham is well aware of all the activities and responsibilities of Mr. White, and he is really impressed with his accomplishments. Furthermore, Mr. Graham said that during this "belt tightening" that he does not want the Parks and Recreation Department to suffer to most, and encouraged the board members to be vocal about the quality of life issues for Huron. Again, it was asked about placing a levy on the ballot to support the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Graham suggested a good campaign program with a good message is a must if they want a levy to pass.

The meeting was adjourned and the next meeting will be September 8, 2005.

*As a reminder, there is a softball tournament at Fabens Park over the Labor Day Weekend. Volunteers are needed to run the concession stand. Please contact Pat King at the Parks and Recreation Department if you can donate your time.*

Respectfully submitted by,

David Lisa  
Administrative Assistant