



October 22, 2015

Butterfield Park Neighbor,

As most of you are aware, the Elmhurst Park District is planning renovations to Butterfield Park in 2016. Public meeting invitations were sent to approximately 270 homes neighboring the park to two public meetings held in 2014 and 2015 to garner feedback for developing the proposed plans. In recent weeks, a number of residents have asked questions and raised concerns about certain aspects of the planned renovations.

Please know that the Elmhurst Park District values resident input and acknowledges the concerns that have been raised. It is the mission of the District to provide experiences for the lifetime enjoyment of people who live and play in Elmhurst and we take that responsibility very seriously.

At the October 14, 2015 Park Board meeting, a number of residents posed specific questions about the project. In order to be responsive to those inquiries, enclosed with this letter, please find each question asked with the District's corresponding response.

Also at that same meeting, I stated that, if issues arose in Butterfield Park following the renovations, the District would manage and address them accordingly. The Park District currently manages over 460 acres of parkland and dozens of recreational facilities at 28 park sites throughout the community as well as full court basketball facilities at seven other locations, including a comparable court with lighting immediately adjacent to the tennis courts at East End Park. The District has a number of measures/safeguards currently in place or available as needed to manage park usage throughout Elmhurst.

First, the District has a Park Ambassador program with paid staff, who monitor all Elmhurst parks for safety and enforcement of permits, rules and ordinances, while also providing on-site customer service. Park Ambassador staff work in parks seven days a week from April through October, with a full-time Park Ambassador on staff year round.

Secondly, attached is the District's outdoor basketball rules and regulations in effect which are prominently posted at all outdoor District basketball courts/areas. The Park Ambassador Supervisor's cell phone number is listed on the sign. Park patrons may call this number and the Supervisor will address the situation and/or dispatch a Park Ambassador to the location if necessary.

Thirdly, District staff are trained in the enforcement of rules and ordinances in the parks with a focus on prevention by taking a proactive approach to managing/avoiding problems at parks by:

- Having an active, visible presence in the park
- Engaging basketball players/park users in open dialog to communicate rules
- Being consistent in enforcing the basketball court rules

Should behavioral problems or disorderly conduct occur, staff will engage park users appropriately to communicate the District's rules and expectations. The District also works closely with the Elmhurst Police Department which has jurisdiction for the enforcement of laws and ordinances in all Elmhurst parks and who will be contacted if any park user becomes threatening, non-compliant, or if a situation warrants police enforcement.

In addition to existing safeguards, further measures could include:

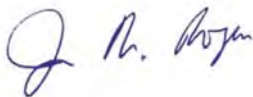
- If necessary, the District has the ability to regulate use by restricting the hours the basketball court is open for play or the hours it is lit.
- A second safeguard the Park District may consider is the installation of security cameras to monitor activity.

Outdoor basketball courts are enjoyed by the community in a number of other sites including Eldridge, Washington, Crestview and East End parks without safety or crime issues, excessive noise or inappropriate behavior. The District believes that an outdoor basketball court expands the opportunities available for the community at Butterfield Park and aligns with the District's commitment to ensuring residents benefit from this new recreational amenity, while, at the same time, addressing the concerns of neighbors.

This letter is being distributed to all those who attended either of the two public meetings and the past two Park Board meetings. Please feel free to share it with other residents.

Thank you for expressing your interest in the redevelopment of Butterfield Park, on behalf of the Park District I appreciate your involvement.

Sincerely,



James W. Rogers  
Executive Director

cc: Board of Park Commissioners  
Angela Ferrentino, Director of Parks and Facilities  
Miranda Lovato, Landscape Architect

Attached: October 14, 2015 Board Meeting Visitor Questions  
Elmhurst Park District Basketball Court Rules

**Elmhurst Park District**  
**October 14, 2015 Board Meeting**  
**Visitor Questions**

**Speaker #1**

1. *What is the objective/goal for the detention areas?*  
To positively detain stormwater in appropriate planned areas.
2. *What issues will it resolve?*  
Butterfield Park already holds water in numerous spots for a number of days after a normal rain event. The purpose of the renovation is to positively detain the water for a short period of time and keep the water out of active areas such as paths, outfields of ball fields, and open playable green space. The renovation will improve the current situation without losing open playable space. The approach is to mitigate the water to appropriate places within the park.
3. *The District mentioned flooding prevention, where?*  
Detaining rainwater in a positive manner will prevent it from potentially flowing onto neighbors' properties.
4. *Is the detention going to completely prevent it or is it like taking a cup of water out of a swimming pool. Is it going to be flood prevention or a negative impact on park visitors and neighbors*  
It depends on the rain event; it will detain water for a typical rain event.
5. *Regarding the water retention areas, have soil samples been taken?*  
Not yet. Now that the Park Board has approved the plans, existing conditions will be examined including soil quality.
6. *Based on the amount of soil taken to create the expressway and the current lack of water absorption into the soil throughout the park, if these detention areas are built onto clay, there will always be some residual water left in the lowest levels until it evaporates. I doubt that the vegetation in the plans will grow very well in clay. Has this been investigated?*  
Appropriate soils will be added to ensure vegetation will grow.
7. *According to the U.S. EPA, detention ponds are havens for mosquitos, much more likely to breed mosquitos than a retention pond. Do we really want this around the entire baseball playing fields with mosquitos?*  
A dry detention basin is designed to hold water only temporarily, retention would hold it permanently; we are proposing dry detention, not retention basins.
8. *What about the livelihood of small animals taking residence in these areas. Skunks are already frequent visitors to the park with spraying one to two times per week, then there are the mice, snakes, etc. Many will look for refuge in the neighboring homes.*  
Butterfield Park already experiences standing water issues, the project proposes dry detention basins, and there should be less possibility of mosquitos and small animals drawn to the standing water.

9. *What happens when the detention areas flood or when winter comes?*  
There will not be any standing water therefore it will not be an issue in the winter.
10. *Why is it that we are converting so much of the land to areas that cannot be actively used by the patrons?*  
The proposed plan does not reduce the amount of active space, it is reorganizing the usage of land and space to result in positive drainage and increased park usability, another major component of the project is to regrade the park to direct the water to the dry detention basins.
11. *The Elmhurst College field already took away approximately 15% of the land and I would expect these detention areas to take another 20%. Almost 1/3 of the park will be inaccessible to the patron. Where are the players supposed to play?*  
The park will retain all four baseball fields, two soccer fields, two tennis courts, one relocated basketball court, and a path that connects the entire park. Butterfield Park is not losing any play area, and the existing areas will be more playable and accessible via dry paths and the reduction of random standing water that currently remains in the park for weeks after a rain (i.e. south east corner of the park).
12. *Where are the players supposed to warm up while the game is underway? The detention area takes away all of the areas adjacent to the field.*  
There will still be ample room for players to warmup even with the addition of low native grasses and dry detention areas.
13. *There are a lot of negatives to the detention areas. Can you tell me some positives? Will this make some significant positive difference somewhere?*  
Butterfield Park holds water in numerous spots for a number of days after a normal rain event making several spots/areas unusable for patrons. The renovation will improve the current situation by migrating water from spots prone to hold water to the detention area to positively detain water for a short period of time. This will keep the water out of active areas such as paths, outfields of ball fields, and open playable green space.

## **Speaker #2**

14. *In regards to the fencing around the ball field allowing no admittance. What is the end game with Elmhurst College?*  
Butterfield Park ball field #1 is not open for general recreational use (i.e., pick up ball, playing catch, etc.). However, it receives its predominant use by residents when used by Elmhurst Baseball, including American Legion, and Cougars baseball. In the past year, Elmhurst College had the field permitted on 73 dates while Elmhurst Baseball/Legion/Cougars had permitted use for nearly double that amount - 141 dates.

This question was asked during both of the Butterfield Park public meetings and explained each time that the Park District no longer enters into agreements that don't allow for recreational use. The Butterfield Park agreement was reached in the 1990's, subsequent field agreements with Elmhurst College have stipulated, public recreational use.

The license agreement with Elmhurst College will expire in 2057 with an automatic renewal “for an additional fifty (50) years unless one of the parties notifies the other of its intention not to renew on or before September 10, 2055.”

**Speaker #3**

*15. Why are we putting in a basketball court?*

Butterfield Park serves the southeast portion of Elmhurst and is the District’s third largest community park (after Berens and Eldridge parks). The District’s 2007 Comprehensive Plan defines community parks, in part, as follows:

“Community Parks are diverse in nature, serving a broader purpose than the neighborhood or school parks. While some may include neighborhood amenities, the focus of a community park is on meeting community-based recreation, athletics and open space needs, and may contain significant athletic complexes, aquatic amenities, walking paths, picnicking areas and various other active and passive amenities depending upon community needs and site suitability. Community Parks usually serve two or more neighborhoods, and with special amenities may serve the residents of the entire Park District. With neighborhood park amenities, the Community Park typically is designated to serve an area within a ½ mile to over 3 mile radius.”

While Butterfield Park functions as a neighborhood park for those living in close proximity to it, the park is intended to provide recreational amenities that serve a broad and diversified range of interests. Therefore, staff recommended basketball, specifically a full court, be included among the features of the Butterfield Park master plan. The inclusion of a basketball court at Butterfield Park provides the opportunity to both improve and make the current amenity safer.

Outdoor basketball courts have been successfully provided to the community in a number of park sites including Eldridge, Washington, Crestview and East End Park without safety or crime problems, excessive noise or inappropriate behavior issues. The District believes that an outdoor basketball court can be successful at Butterfield and is committed to ensuring that happens while, at the same time, addressing the concerns of neighbors.

**Speaker #4**

16. *I want to understand the methodology as to how we arrived to the decision for the basketball court. We actually took it a step further and took a survey over the past weekend of 80 residents. From those 80 individuals, 78 disapproved of the basketball court, 97% disapproval rate. So, it's an astounding number. So is this being addressed?*

Information from the Districts Comprehensive Plan states basketball continues to be a staple amenity in most park districts as it can be utilized by individuals as well as groups; as a pick-up game as well as organized team competition. Ten of the nineteen comparison districts provide a greater ratio of basketball courts than does the Elmhurst Park District. Two districts, Itasca and Oak Brook, provide more than one court for every 1000 residents. The quantity of Elmhurst Park District basketball offerings are below the average of the nineteen districts in comparison, offering one basketball court for every 3,107 residents of the District, while the average is one court for every 2,615 residents (District Comprehensive Plan).

Furthermore, results from the Elmhurst Park District's 2011 Attitude and Interest Survey indicated that 26% of surveyed households had an interest in outdoor basketball courts including approximately 40% of households with children in the homes.

17. *Are we gathering intelligence from neighboring communities that have put in basketball courts and then have had to remove the basketball court? It is our understanding that three neighboring communities have had basketball courts and then they have had to remove them.*

No, the District did not confer with neighboring communities. Should behavioral problems or disorderly conduct occur, staff will engage park users appropriately to communicate the District's rules and expectations. The Elmhurst Police Department has jurisdiction for the enforcement of laws and ordinances in all Elmhurst parks and will be contacted if a park user becomes threatening, non-compliant, or if a situation warrants police enforcement.

**Speaker #5**

18. *Has the board taken a survey to ask the residents, just as we walked the streets. Do they really want this to happen or did you just make this up? Did you take a survey to find out how many areas have removed basketball courts for various reasons?*

No, the District did not confer with neighboring communities.

The District held two public meetings (2014 and 2015) with invitations sent to approximately 270 homes neighboring the park to garner feedback for developing the proposed plans.

## **Speaker #6**

19. *Are these full court basketball courts going to be open to anyone who drives by ... or is it something that we are going to have to charge a permit fee for just like we do for some of the pavilion rentals at different parks throughout the neighborhood? Or is this something that anyone can drive up and play?*

As with other park amenities, i.e., playgrounds, walking paths, tennis courts, etc., the basketball court will be open for use by the public on a first-come first-served basis and would not be permitted to organized groups. In addition, Elmhurst Park District rules state residents have exclusive use for one-hour periods during even hours.

## **Speaker #7**

20. *Is everyone here an elected official?*

There are seven elected Park Commissioners on the Park Board.

21. *Does commissioner imply being elected?*

The seven Park Commissioners are elected officials.

22. *Elected by Elmhurst residents? Can I clarify that?*

Eligible voters of the Elmhurst Park District vote for Park Board candidates.

23. *Is there going to be a public forum to address this where we will get our answers addressed in present time and not this closed veil of secrecy that we had to deal with so far?*

Two public meeting forums were held to discuss the Butterfield Park project. One was held in 2014, the other was held in 2015. Two-hundred seventy notices were mailed to homes surrounding Butterfield Park. Additionally, large signs were posted within Butterfield Park notifying park users of the public meetings. The concept plans and ideas, and rationale behind them came from the two public forums. The Park Board vetted the plans in board meetings held on June 11, 2014, May 13, 2015, and September 23, 2015.

24. *What kind of newer security is going to be available, assuming that our concerns are not heard and it certainly feels that is the tone of this meeting tonight? What kind of security is going to be put into this park?*

Should behavioral problems or disorderly conduct occur, staff will engage park users appropriately to communicate the District's rules and expectations. Butterfield Park will be managed as are other park sites to the level required. The Elmhurst Police Department has jurisdiction for the enforcement of laws and ordinances in all Elmhurst parks and will be contacted if a park user becomes threatening, non-compliant, or if a situation warrants police enforcement.

25. *There is no security cameras being discussed? There is no increase patrolling of the police force in the area?*

Butterfield Park will be managed as are other park sites to the level required. If increased measures are called for, they will be put in place as described in the cover letter. The Elmhurst Police Department has jurisdiction for the enforcement of laws and ordinances in all Elmhurst parks and will be contacted if a park user becomes threatening, non-compliant, or if a situation warrants police enforcement.

**Speaker #8**

26. *Has the District checked with other communities who took out basketball courts?*

See answer #17

27. *Has anyone asked the Elmhurst Police Department to see if that was a bright idea to be a lighted basketball court in Butterfield Park?*

No, we did not ask the Elmhurst Police Department; however, we have a long standing relationship with the Elmhurst Police Department and work cooperatively to address issues that may be trending in parks.

*Explain the motivation/rational to putting a basketball court in Butterfield Park.*

See answer #15.



**ELMHURST PARK DISTRICT  
BUTTERFIELD PARK  
BASKETBALL COURT RULES**

1. *Basketball court hours are 8:00a.m. to 9:00p.m. daily*
2. *Residents have exclusive use for one-hour periods during even hours*
3. *The playing of radios, personal sound systems and other musical devices is prohibited*
4. *When players are waiting to use the court:*
  - a. *All games are to be played to 11 baskets*
  - b. *Winning teams may stay on the court for a maximum of 2 games. After leaving, winning teams may take their place in the rotation*
  - c. *When more than 15 players are present, all games are to be played half-court*
5. *The use of profanity, verbal threats or any act of violence will NOT be tolerated on park district property*
6. *Please use the trash and recycling containers provided*
7. *No vehicles allowed on the court surface except for maintenance or emergency*
8. *Anyone abusing the rules will be asked to leave the park*
9. *Courts may be closed at any time due to safety related concerns*
10. *If there is a dispute regarding rule enforcement please call (630) 675-4491*

*Remember – this is a neighborhood park, please be respectful!*