

Executive Summary

Brecksville Citizens Committee for the Development of Blossom Hill Executive Summary *

Task:

The committee appointed by Major Hruby was commissioned to first study the needs of the community for existing and future programs. The study was to include existing facilities and their current use. The committee was empowered to offer an opinion concerning how to best develop the entire Blossom Hill property. Also, it was empowered to offer suggestions on how to finance the site development and structures that would become part of the property as a result of its development. It was also to initially establish the potential phasing elements for the development if the complete project could not be done all at one time. In addition to receiving input from constituents, the members engaged in dialog at the Recreation Commission monthly meetings.

Program Needs Assessment:

The needs determined by the committee related to the following sports and activities, listed alphabetically as follows: baseball, basketball, football, lacrosse, soccer, swimming, tennis, and volleyball. Each committee member discussed with their constituents in the community in order to gather opinions. The organizations of travel baseball and travel soccer have expressed their projected future needs at Recreation Commission meetings and those minutes of those meetings are enclosed. Their evaluations included the more global combined needs of recreation, adult and travel sports. An extensive study conducted by Mike Harwood representing the city in conjunction with our school representatives to determine the amount and availability of outdoor facilities and indoor facilities is included. While this study helped produce additional gym time availability for sports and athletic programs, the benefits obtained continue to fall far short of community desires. There is great interest in an outdoor recreational swimming facility that can also serve as a training and competition facility. Other needs discovered by the committee included a demand for gardening plots, a dog park area, and walking areas (indoor and outdoor).

One of the guidelines from the Administration was to set aside an area of approximately 10 to 15 acres for the development of a cemetery. The area was to include a private entrance, one not connected to the recreation component of the development. It is the committee's opinion that a separate entrance is important so those entering the cemetery are not impacted by those attending or participating in activities on the rest of the property.

Overall site design:

The committee has arrived at two basic concepts. Both concepts have elements that are identical in regard to location, area, and function. The recommended field house and swimming facility will be located just west of the water tower. This location would have the least infringement on property wetlands. It will be the closest to the water source, and it is located on the flattest piece of the land on western side of the property. Therefore, this location will reduce the amount of site preparation. Furthermore, there is significant room in that area to offer additional setback, far in excess of setback requirements. This additional setback will make the structures the least visible to the surrounding residential neighbors. Great detail and a suggested drawing of the field house are included.

A concise summary of the items that should be included for the pool facility, are named in that subsection. A drawing was not included in that the final design will have to better consider the amount of space and topography of the surrounding open spaces desired. These factors will determine the ultimate design. However, three (3) community pool complexes were named as suggested models to follow for this facility.

The first concept is a "wagon wheel" design concept. .

The "wagon wheel" design has the major advantage of minimizing overall maintenance cost. However, the wagon wheel design will most likely infringe on existing wetlands. More mitigation will be necessary which is generally costly. The wagon wheel design will also affect existing structures, I.E. the relay tower and the associated easement. Therefore, it becomes rather expensive to initiate this design.

The second concept is the "park like" design concept.

The "park like" will permit large trees to be preserved as much as possible as each baseball field location can be slightly adjusted as necessary to accommodate preservation of most of the largest trees. This design will have the least infringement on wetlands. In fact, this design permits wetlands to become part of positive experience on the property as paths can be built through them (Boarded walkways). The "park like" atmosphere has the advantage of permitting the most amount of walking space from one area of the property to the other. The committee suggests the "park like" option.

In both concepts, the property should be developed with consideration for walking paths that connect various portions of the activity areas. Each path could provide exercise areas in this "park like" atmosphere for those who simply want to walk the property. Each path should not be specifically named or maintained as an activity area, however each would serve the dual purpose of allowing someone to walk the property as well serve as the means to comfortably move from one activity area to another. It is suggested that maps be developed in half mile increments for up to two miles of walking areas.

Property Amenities

A dog park location has been identified just north of the water tower. This would be in the wooded area that exists now. This would be partially obscured from the road, but still have plenty of room for a fenced in area with running water.

A vegetable garden area should be considered in an area which receives adequate sun. It is suggested that it will need to be protected from animals by way of fence with gate access. it will also need a water supply. Once a year, the area can be plowed and users can then maintain their individual plots.

Properly located rest rooms, play grounds, and pavilion areas for general use must be provided and strategically placed from an event viewing perspective. This will allow a mother or father with younger children to be able to enjoy the play area while still being able to catch glimpses of an activity of the older sibling participant.

Ample parking near each of these activity areas is necessary. Because there will be peak times when high demand on the property will require even more parking, all the roads that go throughout the property should be extra wide, thus permitting angular parking on both sides in order to be used for overflow. Parking counts and ADA requirements per City Building Code will be incorporated in site design.

Conceptual Program Budget (and Phasing Criteria, if Necessary):

Based on the previous funding of the community center and the current lower interest rate environment, a seven (7) million budget can be supported for approximately cash flow that was used to support the community center project. Based on construction cost efficiency and minimizing site disruption, the Committee recommends that the entire project be done at one time. However, once the scope and magnitude of the project is determined, and if it is discovered that there are not sufficient funds to complete it all the committee recommends the following order of phasing. This order listed saves money by virtue of its sequence:

1. Infrastructure and Complete Site Work Phase:

By doing the entire site for current and future plans, the Governmental Agencies (I. E. EPA, Army Corp.) that need to approve any building before it begins will have been satisfied for the entire project. Satisfying their requirements in total will save time in the long run since their approval should only be needed once. The first phase would include the 2 new lighted baseball fields of the 4 scheduled to be completed as these fields are not a huge cost and the majority of the expense will be borne by the site work budget. The committee tried to estimate the cost of site work. However, until an engineering firm can create construction documents and specifications for a firm bid price, only an estimate can be made at this time. The identified scope of work will encompass the required earthwork, utilities, roads, paving, and landscaping.

Conceptual Cost Range: \$2,375,000.00 to \$2,675,000.00

Infrastructure and Complete Site Work Phase Acreage (Approximate): 100 acres

Baseball Fields (2 of 4) Phase Acreage (Approximate): 23 acres

Potential Revenue Generation: Yes

2. The Field House/Shared Locker Room Facility Phase:

Since the Locker room and concession stand will be shared by the pool facility, it is most logical that this be the second phase of construction. Building the pool and the locker rooms first would not be appropriate since the field house would need to be built right afterwards. This would create a disruption of pool use during ongoing construction due to dust and debris being a factor for the pool. However, the pool construction after the field house will not have the same impact since the field house is a closed facility. The identified scope of work will encompass a full facility with proper amenities. Refer to provided concept drawing.

Conceptual Cost Range: \$4,750,000.00 to \$5,350,000.00

Phase Acreage (Approximate): 37 acres (Pool Facility Combined acreage)

Potential Revenue Generation: Yes

3. The Pool Facility Phase:

Once the shared locker room and concession area are in place and enough time has passed creating additional room in the budget, the pool should be considered (assuming this entire project can't be budgeted at once). Several facilities in competing suburbs were examined in order to use their costs as a guideline.

Conceptual Cost Range: \$3,500,000.00 (the three pool examples range from \$2,500,000.00 to \$4,000,000.00)

Phase Acreage (Approximate): 37 acres (Field House/Shared Locker Room Facility Combined acreage)

Potential Revenue Generation: Yes

4. Amenity additions:

These amenities include the strategically placed pavilions and playground areas previously mentioned. These items are not major expenses and should be added annually out of the general budget. Many of them can be done concurrently with the project assuming they are not major cost items. For example, the biggest costs of creating gardens or a dog park will involve the fencing and possibly an access road and parking.

Conceptual Cost Range: \$712,500.00 to \$802,500.00

Phase Acreage (Approximate): To be determined at time of final locations

Potential Revenue Generation: No (dog park and garden areas can be revenue neutral if permit fees are charged)

5. Field movement and consolidation:

The conversion of field D into a soccer field, the addition of a grass soccer field along Barr south of the existing field, and the installation of two lighted base ball fields of the four in the "park like" design, (one replaces field D and the other is one new field). (These are the final pieces that now make the entire site consistent so the major outdoor areas are sport specific by location). Also, Moving Field D to the southwest sector of the property permits it to be lighted. Lighting nearly triples its availability for weekday play since most scheduled times occur during the week after the workday and fields remain actively used well into the evening.

Conceptual Cost Range: \$950,000.00 to \$1,070,000.00

Phase Acreage (Approximate): 13 acres

Potential Revenue Generation: Yes

It may be possible to increase the budget without impacting city cash flow. If the addition to the Community Center, which has been in place since 2006, could possibly be refinanced, its term could stretch outward, matching the long term debt on this project. This may create enough room in the budget to move the pool facility forward in time. Further, the committee recommends that fees for residents to use these new facilities should be set at levels that would attempt to generate sufficient dollars to cover the majority of the costs of operations of the facilities. A facility may be used for a tournament hosting as a way to generate additional revenue. If this is done for a fraction of the overall available time, lucrative tournament hosting could help greatly offset expenses and drive down fees for residents.

* More detail and thoughtful considerations are offered in each subsection later in this booklet. In the interest of brevity, not all items included in each separate report authored by a committee member appear here. All items mentioned in each committee member report should receive as much consideration as those dually mentioned here.