

**LAKE BLUFF PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
JANUARY 10, 2009**

The Village of Lake Bluff Board of Trustees and Lake Bluff Park District Board of Commissioners met as a Special Committee-of-the-Whole (COW) in the Village Public Safety Conference Room, 45 E. Center Avenue, on Saturday, January 10, 2009. Village President Letchinger called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., and Village Clerk Michael Klawitter called the roll and announced that the following were present:

Village President: Christine Letchinger

Trustees: David Barkhausen
Rick Lesser
Kathleen O'Hara
Brian Rener (arrived at 9:15 a.m.)
Geoff Surkamer

Absent: Michael Peters

Also Present: Michael Klawitter, Village Clerk (left at 9:55 a.m.)
Drew Irvin, Village Administrator
Andrew Fiske, Village Attorney
Susan Griffin, Finance Director
George Russell, Village Engineer

Lake Bluff Park District Executive Director Ron Salski also called the roll.

Commissioners: Paul Engelhard
Susan Ehrhard
Kurt Gronau
Sandy Hart (arrived at 9:07)

Absent: Jack Meierhoff
Dave Ganfield

Present: Darryl Stackhouse, Golf Operations Manager & PGA Pro

Discussion Regarding “Tri-Board” Matters (Lake Bluff School District 65/Lake Bluff Park District/Village of Lake Bluff)

- Village President Letchinger expressed her appreciation of the other taxing bodies for taking the time to meet to discuss issues such as the Tunnel Project. President Letchinger stated that the focus of the meeting should be to (i) review the history and conceptual planning of the Greenbay Road/Route 176 Tunnel Project; (ii) gauge the School District’s, Park District’s, and Village’s desire to pursue this project; and (iii) possibly focus on the next steps for the Tunnel Project (design, schedule, etc.). President Letchinger then stated that Village Engineer George Russell has prepared a brief presentation regarding the Tunnel Project.

Village Engineer Russell reviewed the history of the Tunnel Project starting with how the Transportation Section of the Village’s 1997 Comprehensive Plan calls for a non-at-grade pedestrian crossing of 176 near the intersection of Greenbay Road. He noted that the plan calls for the Village to actively pursue the expansion, improvement, and accessibility of the bicycle and pedestrian walkway system within the Village and that the motivation for this was an attempt to further pedestrian safety, traffic management, and access to Blair Park.

Village Engineer Russell also noted that the on-going bike path improvements to the Skokie Valley Trail from the Laurel Avenue north end of the Deerpath Golf Course to Illinois Route 176 tunnel project by Lake County. This tunnel was designed by the same engineering firm the Village utilized to prepare preliminary engineering information regarding the proposed Lake Bluff tunnel. Mr. Russell noted that the project is estimated to cost \$80,000 to design which should be completed in 6 months – construction of the tunnel is estimated at \$1,075,000.

Village Engineer Russell reviewed an aerial graphic of the area surrounding the intersection of Greenbay Road and Route 176. He also reviewed the new Lake Bluff Elementary School site plan noting the new sidewalk along the west edge of exit driveway onto West Washington Avenue from Lake Bluff Elementary School. He explained that there is an unimproved green space between W. Hawthorne Court and W. Prospect Avenue which is actually a section of platted right-of-way (Sunset Terrace) which has been functioning as a path connecting to the bikepath along Route 176.

Village Engineer Russell discussed the preliminary plans, alternative layouts for the tunnel and connecting pathways, as well as presented a photograph and section drawing of an existing pedestrian tunnel under St. Mary’s Road at the Old School Forest Preserve. When discussing the alternative connecting pathway systems northward from the tunnel to the new school site, Mr. Russell noted that there has been a standing concern regarding how students and park users enter/leave the Blair Park property and from/to the school site.

Member Lesser asked if the preliminary engineering quote included any additional connecting paths from the West Terrace to the proposed tunnel location. Village Engineer noted the preliminary quote did not include any additional pathway work south of the tunnel but that it was possible to bridge the lower area of land and connect the West Terrace area more directly. Member Renner suggested that connecting pathway links be included with the project in order to further the immediate and long-term utility of the proposed tunnel.

In order to reduce the number of trips through the Greenbay Road/Route 176 Intersection, Member Barkhausen inquired as to whether or not a vehicle “turn-around” could be installed at Eva Terrace. Village Engineer Russell noted that this was discussed preliminarily by Village Staff and noted a turn-around in this location could create other traffic problems, but that the concept will continued to be evaluated in the future.

Village President Letchinger thanked Village Engineer Russell for his presentation and asked the members from the other agencies if they had questions or comments.

Park District Member Susan Erhard questioned the purpose of the tunnel. Village Engineer Russell stated that the purpose was to simply create a safe north/south crossing of the Route 176, as identified in the Village Comprehensive Plan and the School District's Safe Routes to School plan. School District Superintendent David Vick clarified the Safe Routes to School grant application and grant requirements.

Lake Bluff Park District Director Ron Salski and Park District Commissioner Gronau reviewed some of Park District concerns with a connecting path which would lead children along the west edge of the Blair Park parking lot directly adjacent to the east edge of the golf course. They thought there might be better alternative routes to connect the tunnel with the new elementary school site. They further advised that the Park District is going to be undertaking a comprehensive review of the Blair Park site within the next year, and wished to evaluate the tunnel connecting routes as part of that process.

Village President Letchinger thanked Village Engineer Russell for his presentation and asked the members from the other agencies if they had questions or comments. School District President Grenier commented that the School District supports the project and asked what is the proposed schedule of the project. Village Engineer Russell stated that, given the late timing, it is unlikely that the project could be designed, permitted and built this calendar year.

Member O'Hara commented that it was her preference to have the project be done in time for the new school opening. She stated the new school will have greater vehicle traffic and that the tunnel will offer a safer student passage to cross Route 176.

Following discussion, it was noted that the Tri-Board advisory group should devote this calendar year to finding a way to finance the tunnel project and narrowing down a design. Then the group can focus on a construction schedule. This was the agreed upon approach by those members present at the meeting.

President Letchinger thanked all members from the school Board and Park Board for attending the meeting, and thanked resident Jill Rosa for her work with the Safe Routes to School Grant.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Hart and seconded by Commissioner Gronau to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ron Salski, Secretary

John Meierhoff, President

Approved this 16 day of March 2009
Board of Commissioners
Lake Bluff Park District