

Wolter's Field Lights Advisory Committee Annual Report to City Council 2004-2005

The Wolter's Field Light Advisory Committee met three times during the 2004-2005 school year on the following dates; October 13, February 3, and May 25th. The committee members include:

Brigid Ohlwein – Community member
Kevin Fasset - Community member
Jeanne Carter - Community member
Jim Gaylord - Community member
Caroline Weisenthal - Community member
Jeff Annenberg – District 113 Board Member
Mary Anderson – City of Highland Park Director of Public Works
Larry Silberman – City of Highland Park Council Member
Barry Bolek – District 113 Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Paul Shafer – City of Highland Park Police Chief
Andy Butler – Highland Park High School Athletic Director

The following concerns were discussed at the three meetings; traffic, noise, parking, light spill, bus parking, and landscaping.

Traffic:

There were concerns with student drop off and pick up procedures on Park Ave West during football games. Alterations were made to the drop off area in which cars can pull into the east drive and safely let pedestrians in and out of cars. With the help of the police and school officials the new system helped alleviate many safety concerns.

There were some complaints about turn restrictions on Beverly and Sunset Avenues for 20 minutes following the conclusion of football games. For the safety of the police officers and to protect the neighborhood, the no turn policy will remain in effect.

Noise:

A new PA system was installed at Wolter's Field. In the spring there were some complaints that the system is too loud. Andy Butler stated that the system will be tested and the appropriate adjustments will be made for the 2005-2006 school year.

Parking:

The only nights that parking became an issue were for football games. Athletic Drive was kept locked during the school year and was only used for parking during football games. It was only necessary to use the shuttle to Highland Park High School for remote parking once. Parking was not allowed in the neighborhood west of the field in the Beverly neighborhood and appropriate signage was posted. The barricade system on the side streets along with adult supervisors and police help prevented parking in the neighborhood. Parking was not allowed at Highland Park Country Club due to poor

lighting and the danger of pedestrians crossing Park Ave West, this practice will continue.

Light Spill:

There were some complaints of light spill in the neighborhood. A representative from Musco will be contacted to make sure light readings are within the limits of the ordinance.

Bus Parking:

This year for home football games all the busses were moved from Wolters Field to Highland Park High School. This created more parking at Wolters Field for spectators. The problem with this system for bus parking is that the busses must be returned to Wolters late at night after the football game to be ready for Saturday morning routes. The neighbors complained because of the noise of the busses coming back at a late hour. Also, the school district had to spend a significant amount of money in overtime pay for the drivers to bring the busses back and forth. The advisory committee would like to propose that the busses be allowed to park on the gravel/grass area west of the District 113 Administration building and north of the football field. In this area there is ample space to park the busses and the neighbors would not be disturbed. If there is too much moisture in this area on a game day due to weather conditions the busses would have to be moved to Highland Park High School.

Number of Lighted Athletic Contests:

The high school would like to request increasing the number of lighted athletic contests from 25 to 35 events. For the 2004-2005 school year there were twenty-two lighted events. The rationale for the increase in the number of events would be to allow flexibility if afternoon games run late and it would be necessary to turn the lights on to finish games. For the 2005-2006 school year there are approximately 25 events scheduled leaving little room for flexibility.

Landscaping:

It was brought to the attention of the advisory group that the neighbors to Wolters field along Athletic Drive may want a wood fence instead of the proposed landscaping. The fence would be the same height and replace the existing chain link fence. A notice will be sent out to the neighborhood asking for feedback on the idea of the fence in lieu of the landscaping. Pending the response the advisory group would recommend an amendment to the Special Use Permit ordinance to erect a new wood fence on the east side of Athletic Drive instead of the proposed landscaping.

As a whole night time athletic events at Wolters Field were a success for the 2004-2005 school year. The events were well managed and the lights generated excitement in the City of Highland Park and at the High School. Most of the feedback reported to the advisory committee from community members was positive. With the few complaints we had this year the advisory group feels confident that most of these issues can be resolved.