



DIAMOND SPORTS FACILITIES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TAC MEETING 3 | NOTES

TAC members may offer modifications to these notes by submitted comments to MPRB staff. Requests for modifications must be received within one week of the TAC meeting to allow for public posting within three weeks of the TAC meeting.

Michael Schroeder (MPRB Assistant Superintendent for Planning Services) introduced the meeting focus as operations and maintenance of fields and then turned the discussion to representatives from the MPRB's Asset Management department, the function group of the MPRB responsible for operations and maintenance. Jeff Evenson (Director of Asset Management) and Dave Bergstrom (Park Operation Manager) introduced themselves. Bergstrom noted he is directly in charge of maintenance on several fields.

Bergstrom noted the maintenance tier system and shared a chart demonstrating maintenance at each tier. Tier 1 fields were described as those receiving the most attention—mowed up to four times weekly to ensure clippings are short and “haystacks” don't result. In contrast, Tier 3 fields receive far less attention and are essentially being mowed at the same time (which might be a frequency of up to 14 days). He also explained that at times where there are multiple games in a single day, there may be a need for a reset, which puts the field into the highest playable state after any disturbance caused by the first game. Not all teams ask for such a reset. Limiting conditions for a reset are largely the result of not having a second shift; most first shift staff are gone by the time a reset needs to occur.

TAC members were interested in the potential for volunteer maintenance of fields, perhaps particularly between games or prior to practice (activities like dragging the infield, raking batter's box, repacking the pitcher's mound). MPRB staff noted potential issues with union labor agreements (this would be taking work away from union members). TAC members noted the issue of unions vs. poor play quality is a topic this group might offer direction for resolution. TAC members also noted that parents take on some of those tasks today because they are not getting done. MPRB staff also noted that, at times, they arrive for regular maintenance to find raking and repacking have been accomplished (presumably by volunteers after a previous day's practice or games) and that it's a big help for them, allowing for more time to be directed to other necessary tasks.

TAC members were also interested to know what it would take to train volunteers for some of the regular and basic tasks needed for field preparation, noting that booster clubs might pay for training if that's necessary.

Bergstrom noted the need for fields to rest and issues with fields that are not ready for play because of precipitation. In this case, field scarcity can be a concern as some fields are taken out of service. TAC members asked staff to look at this in view of master plans that include diamond sports facilities.



Bergstrom noted the need for certain kinds of maintenance on fields, and that the MPRB's Integrated Pest Management policy can create issues for field conditions (the IMP limits the use of pesticides and herbicides in certain situations). He noted that the MPRB doesn't want to be in the position of mowing weeds to get "green grass."

Discussion moved to address communications, which Evenson and Bergstrom noted is improving but is not perfect. It's important for internal purposes as fields are taken out of service (for rain) or when fields are used multiple times during a day (to know where resets are desired). Some of the methods discussed in the last meeting (where technology is applied to gain an understanding of both conditions and use needs) could become a core recommendation from the TAC.

A TAC member noted that, relative to field condition, infields without weeds is key.

A TAC member noted that some agreement with Minneapolis Public Schools is necessary to recognize the needs of the schools for field time and use. MPRB staff noted that there is policy about the schools' use of fields, but it is not an agreement. TAC members asked for the policy to be shared. This could become a significant issue.

Schroeder noted that several parts of this discussion might be reviewed or directions created in future meetings.

There being no further discussion, the meeting ended at approximately 6:30 pm.