



DIAMOND SPORTS FACILITIES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**TAC MEETING 4 | NOTES**

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*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.*

**8.10.2023 Diamond Sports TAC#4 Meeting Notes**

Siciid Ali (Park Planner) kicked off the meeting, which focused on goals (usage, access, reservation, maintenance, scheduling, etc.) and how MPRB and other organizations/clubs might collaborate to achieve those goals.

Introductions/Agenda Setting:

- Halfway through TAC process, 4 meetings to go.
- Should MPRB be overseeing the TACs goals, or should other stakeholders be involved?
  - o Goals: Use, access, reservations, field readiness and maintenance
  - o What's the benefit to MPRB? Other stakeholders? Community?

Break out into small groups to discuss MPRB's role in diamond sports, as well as other stakeholders

Large group share-out/discussion:

Group 1:

- Use, access, reservations: MPRB shall
  - o Make more data available to orgs (field conditions, maintenance)
  - o Provide good field inventory
  - o More 75-foot fields
  - o More batting cages
  - o Make existing fields more flexible
  - o Maintenance issue dashboard
    - Issues are raised, but unable to see if issue is addressed unless you physically go to field
  - o Centralized scheduling
    - Scarcity of fields
  - o Lots of last-minute switches, changes, returns- make it easier to return fields to make fields available more quickly
    - Helps reduce scarcity

- Use, access, reservations: Clubs and teams shall
  - o Have orgs better staffed to organize scheduling
    - Need bodies and time
  - o Have internal processes to raise issues to park board
  - o Return unused fields more quickly
- Maintenance, MPRB shall
  - o Get fields groomed and usable quicker
  - o Safety
    - Better home plates, pitching rubbers, bench protection
  - o Provide toolbox so people can help with maintenance
  - o Red tape
    - Individuals want to donate to park board to build fence or fix an issue but park board cant always accept money- minimize red tape
  - o Allow clubs and teams to do maintenance on their own
  - o Change shift times up so staff can do maintenance when orgs need it

#### Group 2:

- Allow other organizations to fix things, use things, set up equipment boxes
- None of the issues are new or different, what can community partners do to help move forward on actionable items?
- What if park board and school board worked together to schedule things, create a structure of accountability, set it up so clubs can help raking, taking care of fields- set up accountability system so park doesn't have to take care of things/throw away things
- Volunteer maintenance program
  - o Like an "adopt a park" program
  - o From a park board perspective, we need management, we need someone to provide tools for these programs
- Do a field inventory so the park board knows what facilities they have
- What constitutes practice field? Game field? Set up standards/ base-line expectations for what these fields look like
  - o What amenities are needed? What do these fields look like for club games, high school, middle school? What grooming is expected?
  - o Not meeting these expectations makes players feel unvalued
  - o Have a universal definition for what these fields look like
  - o Maybe some practice fields need to become game fields- need for improvement on these fields
  - o Know which fields we should be scheduling for practice, for games
  - o Partnership: entities with a high volume of field rentals, in exchange for high usage, they provide some maintenance
    - Todd field: kids picking weeds 20 min before practice/game, but still paying for field use, however, can't use the field if they don't do it
  - o Baseline should be determined by TAC, not just parks

#### Group 3:

- Database of the fields
  - o Not just what fields, but field lengths, what amenities
  - o What parks have what
- Visibility of the fields: increase ease of access to seeing what fields available and not
- Artificial scarcity because hard to return fields
- No defined or written document between parks, schools, residents, leagues etc. as to the structure of what teams get priority
- Broader sliding scale of fees
  - o Cost isn't covered- why would a youth team from out of town get the same rate as an in-town team?
- What's the cost of the fields? Not just maintenance but personnel
- Having both baseball and softball field close to each HS
  - o Accessible to kids by bike or walking
  - o Schools don't provide busing to practice- kids must find own rides
- Centralized scheduling, schedules for a month out
  - o Allow parents and teams to plan their lives
- Allow orgs and teams to pick up fields- not set in stone
- Figure out appropriate times for high school baseball and softball times, is there a half hour in
- Access to full list of what diamonds have what amenities (base lengths, dugouts, fences, lights, and how are those diamonds and grass maintained).
- Visibility to what diamonds are available to use on short notice.
- Determine what is the pecking order for who has preference in reservations? Can someone kickoff a game that is running long?
- Provide equipment boxes.
- Perhaps a sliding scale for fees (more for non-Mpls groups).
- A scheduling system that users can see and functional to filter appropriate data.
- Need to locate (temporary and long-term) location of all seven High School softball and baseball fields.
- Have centralized scheduling and provide schedules for a month out like hockey, acknowledging that the schedule may need to change during a given month.
- Need to develop a schedule/chart on when games start for different softball/baseball teams and how long they get to use the field, is there a ½ hour – one hour gap for maintenance or extra innings before the next game starts? How many games can a “game” field handle any given night?
- Work with central MPRB staff for use of diamonds instead of individual park directors.
  
- Allow organizations to prep fields if they haven't been prepped (rake, chalk lines).
- Have the same weed control for all High School baseball and softball fields as Neiman and Parade.
- Determine when fields will be used for games and which will be used for practices.
- Drag fields more often – establish a goal for each game and practice field.
- Charge a rate that actually covers all costs.
- Allow organizations to pay overtime fees if applicable.
- If we actually had a softball/baseball facility (pinwheel) with storage for maintenance equipment, associations can have parents maintain fields if MPRB is short staffed.

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- between just incase it runs over, for maintenance, so nobody is kicked off the field, has a reservation but isn't allowed to use it
- Allow orgs to pay for overtime for those who want to maintain fields
- Goal: HS baseball and softball has no weeds in the field
- Accountability: how often are practice fields being dragged? Game fields?
  - o Set up expectations.