

Maple Grove Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary (No Quorum)

June 10, 2015

Call to Order	No quorum was present. Interim CAC Chair Don Skoglund started the meeting at 7:02 p.m., but noted no official action would take place.
Members	Leslie Bender Lorraine Gresser Joan Masberg Joe Piket Kevin Rebman Don Skoglund
Members Absent	John Beacham, Stephen Gill, Bob Joiner, Harry Kennedy, Tim Klevar, Steven Maas
Others Present	Mike Opatz, CAC City Staff Liaison; Mark Saari, Recreation Superintendent of the Parks and Recreation Department; and Paul Sperl and Dave Ditty with the Osseo-Maple Grove Athletic Association.
Minutes	The minutes for the May 13, 2015 meeting were not discussed or approved since there was no quorum.
Area Reports	No reports presented.
Osseo-Maple Grove Athletic Association Presentation	<p>At the request of the CAC, representatives from the Osseo-Maple Grove Athletic Association (OMGAA) were in attendance to provide an update on their organization.</p> <p>Paul Sperl introduced himself, stating he was an 18-year resident of Maple Grove and had three boys who went through OMGAA. He said he has served on the board for 10 years and was elected president in September 2014.</p> <p>Dave Ditty introduced himself, said he lived in Maple Grove for 10 years, and had a boy and a girl. He has played various roles in OMGAA including traveling director and is currently vice president of OMGAA. He also stated that he was involved in the Sports Dome project.</p> <p>Mr. Sperl and Mr. Ditty provided a PowerPoint presentation. They stated that OMGAA started out as baseball, basketball and football, but now it is baseball and softball. There are 1,300 kids in their programs ranging from ages 8 to 19. The majority attend Osseo and Maple Grove schools with 90% of the kids living in Maple Grove.</p> <p>They provided an overview of their programs which include fast pitch softball, baseball and adapted softball. For the last ten years they have had an academic scholarship program, and in 2015 two girls were recipients with one living in Maple Grove and the other in Osseo.</p>

There are various aspects of their baseball program which includes Cal Ripken baseball league (national organization) for 8 to 12 year olds; Babe Ruth league (interleague play with Brooklyn Park) for 13 to 15 year olds; and high school recreation leagues for those 16-19 years old. They stated there are 11-12 teams in the high school program which has grown dramatically over the last few years. Players who are 9 to 15 years old also have all-star opportunities. Both the Ripken and Ruth leagues participants can play on all-star teams that can advance to the world series.

The fast pitch softball program is open to girls ages 8 to 18, grades 2nd through 12th. OMGAA is one of the few communities that has a house fast pitch program.

With regard to adapted softball, OMGAA has one of the oldest programs in the state and is affiliated with the Special Olympics. Bowling and floor hockey are also part of the adapted program, but their emphasis is on the softball. They stated there is a \$50 fee for players; however, OMGAA absorbs the cost for those who can't afford it.

There are traveling teams for 9-14 year olds for fast pitch softball and baseball. There is a league schedule with two tournaments in May and June with the possibility of state and national tournaments.

Mr. Sperl and Mr. Ditty reviewed the tryout process, stating there are independent evaluators made up of high school coaches, college coaches and players and officials from other communities. They stated that scoring is objective, and there are five different stations with scoring criteria. There are two sessions of tryouts in the dome for travelling baseball. They stated they revised their policy in 2015 for the tryout committee.

Mr. Sperl and Mr. Ditty walked through the process of selecting teams and stated they try to keep kids in the same school together.

They also reviewed 2015 events which include hosting a tournament of 18 teams from the upper Midwest that are part of the Babe Ruth league. The games will be played at Osseo Senior High as that is more conducive for hosting a tournament. There is also an all-star weekend at Osseo Junior High for 8-12 years in the Ripken league as well as in fast pitch softball.

The question was asked about set up for the Little League baseball world series. It was stated that Plymouth, Brooklyn Park and Coon Rapids have teams that would be eligible to participate. If OMGAA teams were in a world series game, it would be part of the Cal Ripken league. The representatives stated the Ripken league is a very easy organization to work with.

Recent improvements made by OMGAA include a new logo and uniforms. They chose the secondary colors for the two schools—gold for Maple Grove and black for Osseo.

They also signed a three-year agreement with the Positive Coaching Alliance which includes a mandate that parents have to be at a meeting. PCA tracks the parent's attendance. They stated the hockey association is signed up with PCA, and they think that basketball is too. If a parent attends one of the PCA meetings for a different sport that would still cover them for baseball or another sport as well.

When asked about parent conduct, they stated that problems are very infrequent and around 6-7 years ago they had to tell a parent they couldn't attend any more games. In addition, if a coach/player is ejected from a game, they cannot play the next game.

Mr. Sperl and Mr. Ditty stated the Babe Ruth and Cal Ripken programs sent six teams to the state tournament in 2014/15. They have added 8-year olds to a rookie league program which provides for pitching vs. cub ball.

OMGAA has added a dome training program that provides winter training for baseball and softball and open to all skills. They have had over 200 kids in winter training with high school coaches helping out.

They have a special program for 8-year olds with tryouts, but try to make it more like an evaluation to see what level they are at. They want to make it seem more like fun than being a tryout.

The gentlemen stated that participation in OMGAA has declined with 1,600 participants in 2011 to 1,300 in 2014. They felt that lacrosse has had an impact. They also stated that baseball is more popular when the Minnesota Twins are winning.

They stated there is pressure from club teams, and those teams recruit top notch players away from community ball. They said that one of the goals of a club team is more year round play, but the Sports Dome has helped keep players from going to club ball. When asked, they stated that Minnetonka, Vadnais Heights and Chanhassen have club teams.

The OMGAA reps stated that a survey was conducted last fall about the Maple Grove fields. They had 250 respondents with 70% saying Maple Grove facilities are worse than surrounding communities.

They talked about scholarships and the costs for club teams, stating that club teams are money generating for the organizers.

The gentlemen stated that Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center have really nice fields. Amenities that are desirable include a grass infield vs. dirt,

pitching mounds, and an atmosphere/park that fits the correction dimensions for a baseball field. In addition, Brooklyn Center has announcers and concessions close by. Eden Prairie has a complex; whereas, Maple Grove's fields are scattered.

OMGAA would like a complex with seating. They stated there are no lighted fields for youth baseball, yet there are for soccer.

Mark Saari stated that Maple Grove has multi-use fields for 9 to 13 year olds. The City is aware of OMGAA's preferences.

OMGAA reps stated the Sports Dome has been very beneficial, especially for tryouts. Batting cages are all set up, and there is good lighting. It is very baseball friendly. However, they stated when the dome is down the area is used for soccer and football. And while OMGAA is contributing monetarily, they do not have a field for baseball. OMGAA stated they would like a turf field.

Mr. Saari stated the Sports Dome is a \$5 million facility. The City contributed 80% of the cost with 10% coming from soccer and 10% from OMGAA. The two programs also received a \$325,000 grant, and they agree to rent 500 hours per year. In addition, a replacement fund has been established for turf and dome. OMGAA stated they are one year from paying off their portion.

OMGAA shared some of the future improvements they would like to see. They want more fun for the kids with more emphasis on development and skills for both players and coaches. When asked about training for coaches, it was stated the Ripken program requires coaches to have online training. They want kids to learn life lessons such as commitment and team work.

They would also like to see a more traditional baseball/softball experience including mounds, grass infield, scoreboards, dugouts, concessions, announcers, and an opening day celebration. They would like to have a tournament quality facility for all programs. They talked about some of the amenities they would like to see to create an atmosphere/experience. They stated that Eden Prairie, Plymouth, Minnetonka, and Chanhassen have hosted regional and state tournaments.

OMGAA stated they are open to grass or turf fields. They are looking for City support to make improvements happen.

They shared a photo of the Chanhassen facility which was built about five years ago at a cost of \$600,000 provided by the Chanhassen Park Board. They stated the complex is on school property, and the school had put in the field but didn't have funds for the facility.

OMGGA reps stated that VFW teams are for players 16 and under, and there is also an Osseo & Maple Grove Legion team.

The question was asked about background checks for coaches. OMGAA stated they are required by every league—Cal Ripken, Babe Ruth and traveling. They are done every year, which is a standard, and it is a national check.

The question was asked about Storm baseball being a traveling team, which it is.

The question was asked about how OMGAA and Parks and Recreation programs work together. It was stated there is overlap with 8 year olds. Parks and Recreation coordinates/schedules games and practice times. The coaches work individually and contact Parks and Recreation to schedule practice time. In addition a non-voting Parks and Recreation staff member (currently Katie Lallier) attends OMGAA meetings and sits on the board.

Mr. Sperl and Mr. Ditty left the meeting, and the CAC thanked them for attending and the information they provided.

Other Business and Updates

Mike Opatz stated the Osseo Maple Grove Hockey Association has a new president—Rob Borsch who wants to come to a future CAC meeting. Mike stated that June, July and August have other sports associations presenting; September is a tour of Central Park and offered the October CAC meeting date to the OMGHA.

Mark Saari stated the City is aware of OMGAA's desire for a complex. The City has the facilities, but they are not all in one central location/complex. The City partners extensively with the school district for facility provisions.

The statement was made that it seems like fields are more important than having a complex. Woodbury has a good sized complex. Things might depend on how often OMGAA wants to hosts tournaments. Right now they are participating in four tournaments each season.

CAC has not heard from Maple Grove Football. Mark Saari was asked to possibly help get a response. The July CAC meeting will include a presentation from lacrosse; August—basketball; September—tour of Central Park; and October—hockey.

The Committee discussed recruitment for new CAC members. The suggestion was made to time the recruitment with the publication of the fall City newsletter that has an article deadline date of July 13th with a distribution date of late August. The group could look at applications received in the past year but probably best to advertise.

The City usually reviews boards/commissions membership near the end of the year and then recruits if necessary. In the past it seemed that new

CAC members typically started with April being their first meeting. CAC would use their meeting time to review applications and conduct interviews.

Discussion took place on timing of new member recruitment with the suggestion of starting this summer as well as waiting a while and using the fall newsletter as a recruitment tool. Mike Opatz stated that he would run CAC's ideas by City Administrator Al Madsen.

Meeting End

The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Morris
Minute Secretary