Committee of the Whole

February 27, 2023

Council President King; Council Members Baltzell, Buxton, Clausen, Fleck, Lochtefeld, Scott, and Sovinski; Safety-Service Director Hitchcock; Bill Montgomery and John Dorner Celina High School Baseball Coach; Kevin Sandler, WCSM Radio; and Bill Kincaid, The Daily Standard.

Council President King called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm to speak about the Montgomery field.

Bill Montgomery spoke about the improvements to Montgomery Field that they would like to make that includes upgrades to the first base dugout, press box, creation of a locker room, construction of a new third base dugout, restrooms, storage, luxury suites, and installation of a digital message board at the park entrance and spoke about how the plans have been approved and all parties are ready to start the construction of the project and mentioned how Mayor Hazel spoke to him and is in full support. Bill spoke about all the teams that use this field and the benefits that come to the City of Celina with all the teams’ families coming to the games and spending money in Celina. Bill noted that there will be expenses for the City of Celina for maintenance but it will be outweighed by the benefits that comes with the updated field. Bill spoke about all of the employees and how much they paid into the City of Celina taxes last year and noted that they are hoping to get approval for this project so it can be ready for an upcoming season.

CM Scott asked for clarification on the locker room and who will use that facility and it was determined that everyone will use the lockers and no one will be allowed to leave their equipment while two teams are going through the season at the same time.

CM Scott also asked about the coach’s office and it was noted that the privacy will be beneficial for the players so they can receive advice and coaching in private without other players interrupting. CM Scott asked if that room would be locked up and it was confirmed it would be locked but the City of Celina and their staff will have keys to it. CM Scott mentioned how this baseball field is in the City of Celina’s Park and wanted to know if anyone can use this facility in the City and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that only people with a million dollars’ worth of insurance can use the field because of the turf and the indoor batting cages are only used by the four teams from what he is aware of. Safety Service Director Hitchcock mentioned that they would like some guidance on who is responsible for what when it comes to the updated field.

CM Sovinski asked about the overhead light controls and it was confirmed that it is behind the dugout and CM Sovinski mentioned that in the coach’s office it should also be an office for the field where all of the controls are in the room including the sound system and some files as well. Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that this is on the second floor.

CM Clausen asked about the fees that we charge for the field and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that the Wright State college is charged 230 dollars per day using the field and noted some of the teams have not been able to pay and they really have not looked at it since COVID and may have forgot to send the bill the last couple of years. It was mentioned that they are attempting to help with some of the costs by starting their games a half hour earlier so if the lights do need turned on it would be at least a half hour less and also mentioned that they were only going to put a heating and AC system in certain rooms and areas and not have it as much as the original plans because Safety Service Director Tom Hitchcock mentioned how expensive that would be.

CM Lochtefeld asked if there was another area in the City that had a similar arrangement where not everyone can use something that is meant for the public and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that the pool is somewhat similar where it would cost 100 dollars to rent it out for an hour because that is the cost to run the pool but it is not exactly the same situation.

John Dorner spoke about how they were willing to negotiate giving the city 500 dollars in total to help with some of the additional AC costs and CM Scott asked if that is in addition to the rental fees and John noted that they would not be able to afford paying 230 dollars a day to use the field and mentioned that thanks to the donations they are able to keep the program running but they just about break even every year and he cannot imagine them being able to pay the 4 or 5 thousand for rental fees. CM Sovinski asked if the ability to sell beer has been helping with money and John noted it has helped but not as much as they thought it would and that does not bring in enough revenue to pay for the rental fee.

CM Scott asked if the school is involved in this in any way and it was confirmed that they are all for the project and noted they will help in anyway possible but they do not have money to give outside of the 5 thousand dollars they put away each year to help pay for the field replacement and noted it helps them not have as many rain outs as other schools. Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that the original estimates to cover the cost of the field would be 120 thousand which is where the 230 dollar rental fee came from because they wanted to try to make 10 thousand a year over a 12 year period and that is when the school decided they would put 5 thousand away each year to cover their half and they have been paying for their share even though it does not cross our books and they were hoping to get about 25 hundred from the other teams which they usually do not reach each year but then the field replacement ended up costing 184 thousand so the 230 dollar rental fee was based on the 120 thousand projection.

Wright State mentioned they would like to contribute to this because they would like to use the field and everything that is being put in but they are waiting before they get an exact dollar amount to contribute.

CM Scott asked what the maintenance fees are for the field and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted that just our maintenance fees were 65 thousand dollars to maintain the field since 2017. CM Scott asked about the carpeting plan and it was noted that carpet would go in the locker room, coach’s office, and the press box but it will be a harder rubber material so it does not get destroyed but they are going to ask that people not wear spikes in those areas. CM Scott asked if we have any estimates on the additional costs and Safety Service Director Hitchcock noted we do not yet but also, they are worried about who would replace the carpet or locker rooms and John said they would cover the costs for the lockers or carpet for the replacement and he is willing to sign something saying that and CM Scott mentioned they might want to make sure they have the other users of the locker room sign something as well helping cover costs for damage they cause. Wes Harris mentioned that the public works teams have been getting told as things go bad so they can fix them instead of waiting until after it damages the building before needing to fix both the walls and doors that have been damaged during the wear and tear of the equipment that was happening in the past.

CM Clausen stated he thinks this project is going to be a great asset but also wanted it to be known that if the City of Celina is covering more of the costs for a field they cannot use versus the people using the fields then the public will not be happy about that and as long as the teams are making an effort to improve things and help pay for and cover costs then he anticipates it will be okay but he wants the teams to think about that when they are doing plans and how we will have to replace the field in another 5 years and if we have to cover a lot for the field again then the public might be upset.

Bill Montgomery noted that when this field was established, he recommended that the City establish a fund to try to get ahead of the field replacement and mentioned that he has helped cover much of this field over the years and he is going to help pay for all of these projects as well.

CM Buxton asked if they are looking for the councils’ blessing on the first phase or all three and Safety Service Director Hitchcock mentioned the administration has no problem with the project but they want a clearer agreement and the administration can help establish that with a meeting with Bill and John on whether they are metering the electric and they would like councils’ approval to have these discussions. Safety Service Director Hitchcock mentioned that usually after the project is complete council will get an Ordinance on the project accepting it but mentioned they would like to have upgraded agreements on some of these fields since they are all different.

CM Scott stated that once the agreement is made and available, they should go on with the project and Bill mentioned that contractors are ready to start these projects and they want the okay to let them know they can get started on the projects and they will meet with administration this week to come to terms on the agreements and they were told to start the construction of these projects.

President King adjourned the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Submitted by Michael F. Didonato, Clerk of Council