

Antioch pool plan moves forward

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By C.L. Waller

Antioch village board members reviewing plans for a new, larger aquatic center in Williams Park, are raising some concerns, including about losing a Little League baseball field to the project.

During a meeting Wednesday, some officials also stressed the need to build a facility that can be sustained financially amid other competing aquatic centers in the area.

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The board is trying to move forward with a concept plan in order to submit a \$2 million state grant application due Nov. 29. Village officials see an opportunity to couple the grant with \$2 million in federal recovery act bonds to replace a deteriorated municipal pool built by the Lions Club 50 years ago.

Doug Holzrichter of Aurora-based PHN Architects provided an overview of plans for a main pool for 750 people, up from the current pool capacity of 250. It would include six lanes for competitive swimming and an attached leisure pool with zero-depth on one end.

A new bath house and concession area and two 25- to 30-foot-tall water slides are part of the plan. It also sets aside space for a future diving area and splash pads where water sprays up on users.

"We feel this facility will encourage people to swim and stay the day there," Holzrichter said.

Parking would grow from 68 spaces now to 156 to 160, and there would be a new picnic pavilion, sled hill and walking trail. The pool and baseball field are the only existing park amenities affected with the project.

The proposal calls for construction in fall/winter 2012-13, with the pool opening in 2013.

"This represents a comprehensive good use of Williams Park moving forward," Village Administrator Jim Keim said.

However, Trustee Mike Wolczyk cited neighboring aquatic centers in Grayslake and Gurnee's Key Lime Cove and Hurricane Harbor, and said the village needs to be cautious about building something it cannot sustain financially. He said the village of Libertyville is subsidizing its sports complex because of lack of use.

Keim said Antioch is losing \$20,000 to \$50,000 a year with the existing pool operations. The goal is \$250,000 in sales for the new facility and \$210,000 in operating costs, he added.

Trustees Scott Pierce and Jay Jozwiak said the village must commit to replacing the Little League field that will be eliminated. Keim said a field is planned for the Tim Osmond Sports Park.

Mike Sheren, president of the AYLL-Antioch baseball and softball organization said the park has been the group's main field and a new field should be built before a new pool. Another organization member, Kevin Lind, said the new field should have lights.

Antioch Lions Club member Robert McCarty said the club built the existing pool and members want to be part of the planning for the new facility if the grant is approved.

A phone survey of more than 200 residents was conducted about the needs for a new aquatic center. An online survey is available through Nov. 17 on the village web site, <http://www.antioch.il.gov/>.

The village board will vote Monday on a resolution to apply for the state grant.

