

10/21/71

MULTI-CENTER

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHAMPAIGN DISTRICT FOR THE NORTH
EAST CHAMPAIGN COMMUNITY

by John Lee Johnson

Presented by the

Community Advocacy Depot

Neighborhood Youth Design Depot

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CPD
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Champaign has already materialized into a vast urban society in that it faces the complexities of social development as well as crisis that are attributed to the inequities of any political system. In recent years, the Black Community, has called upon the Champaign Park District to assume a greater responsibility in solving problems which have not traditionally been seen as a Park recreational function. Yet the expression of the Black Community is valid in that the social problems which the Black Community now faces, necessitates a new concept and goal, if Parks and Recreation are to be seen as a social conclusion to the leisurely expressions of Black values. This concept not only suggests, but demands an end to the stereotype of a football and basketball being the ideal answer but must reflect the values of those it seeks to serve and where need be it must make available its resources to assist its users in developing and implementing its values. The Black Community of NorthEast Champaign has since its conception been forced to accept a concept of recreation that has not presented its values not constructive utilization of leisure time. It has been this conflict as well as no avenue of programmatic political expression into park and recreational facilities which has served to compound the problem. The increased taxation upon the limited and inadequate facilities as well as the growing problems of a egolitarian society has served to make the facilities of NorthEast Champaign a battlefield and a possible death trap for its users. The correction of these invaluable shall only occur by the Champaign Park District developing a long range and short range goal for NorthEast Champaign.

*IMPROVED
VALUES
POINT TO
RECREATION*

new concepts new methods to fight problems of poverty, drug abuse, housing

SHORT RANGE GOALS

The Park District must be prepared to meet the immediate recreational needs of the Black Community.

1. Land Acquisition

It is clear that Douglass Center shall continue to serve as the main collector Park area for the NorthEast Champaign Community. Any future expansion of that Park facility shall be contingent upon the Champaign School District and their intent for Washington Elementary School. This by no means suggests that immediate corrective measures can not be taken to make the Douglass Center area a reflection of its users values but the steps must be constructive if they are to have any value to the community.

*Mini-Park system on vacant lots
to which housing is sub-standard & demolition*

Land Acquisition (con't).

You have disillusioned the Black Community by the installment of the proposed multi-purpose landscaping area when in fact the Park needed more creative facilities for toddlers and Youth. You have overlooked a constructive design for the Park that would have given it a residential purpose compatible with the surrounding community. Instead bigger slabs of concrete were developed for basketball use where in fact the complete renovation of the baseball diamond area could have occurred lending it to a multi-recreational area. It is the only facility of its size in the community and used far more than any other facility, yet plans were not made immediately to make the facility a full on-going facility for outdoor use. This means that the short range obligation of the Champaign Park District is that of bringing the Douglass Center Park area to an immediate capability of handling its capacity. Because land acquisition is not foreseeable in the Douglass Center area this shall require the immediate development of many parks which will lend themselves more towards a personalized use as a means of meeting the recreational facilities of NorthEast Champaign.

2. Multi-purpose Center Funds from H.C.W.?

The Champaign Park District completely failed the community of NorthEast Champaign by failing to execute an application for a multi-recreational facility to be constructed in the Urban Renewal area. The failure is even more obvious by the existence of Spalding Swimming Pool and the relationship of the Champaign Park District and the Champaign County Housing Authority in the development of that facility. It is now clear that a vast recreational facility is not needed in the Douglass Center area. This does not suggest nor imply that a new multi-recreational facility is not required but it does mean that a multi-recreational facility capable of handling the varying needs of its users must be developed. While this course of action is taking place, the Douglass Center structure must be brought to a standard that shall lend itself to the changing interests of and methodology of the Champaign Park District. Locker facilities must be immediately modernized to accommodate the already over-used facilities. (DOUGLASS)

Mrs. D...
Funds

Rec Spalding
N.E. Park District
Funds from H.C.W.

Spalding
Urban Renewal
Funds from H.C.W.

Spalding
Funds from H.C.W.
The...
H.C.W.

Lack Program
in Douglas Center

In its present form, it is unsanitary to all potential users. New indoor lighting is needed to provide warmth and safety for its users. The facility needs to be completely refurnished and a hardwood floor laid in the gym area. The exterior frontage of the facility needs to be well lit.

LONG RANGE GOALS

1. The Champaign Park District must immediately develop park facilities neighborhood committees. Such a committee would serve as a liason between the directorate of the facility, user and The Park Board. This body would have the responsibility of canvassing users and submitting recommendations to the Park District. It would be responsible for the observation as well as observation for the maintenance of its recreational facilities. It would serve as a neighborhood out reach service for user participation of the neighborhood programs. It would reflect the interests of its neighborhood for bond referendums and would serve as a park precinct during the time of the bond referendum elections.
2. The Park District will plan on a continuous basis for the long range upkeep and program changes to occur in its facilities.

SHORT RANGE AND LONG RANGE GOALS

Recreation can not be described only as a proscribed usage of leisure time. Yet it must include those social and environmental forces which affect leisure time. This shall require a short and long range goal by the Champaign Park District in which it allows and assists in the development of programs which will combat the destructive forces upon leisure time. We can not turn our backs upon drug addiction by handing a kid a basketball. This means that recreation must combat the problems of drug usage and abuse. This applies to illiterary and social discipline. School children at all levels who are unable to read problems again will not be solved by a bigger gymnasium. This means that leisure must be constructed that it maximizes participation and bebest all of the users potentials towards a resolution of his social ills. Slow readers must be countered with leisurely Rec room programs that will improve their reading. Gang violence reflects a leisurely as well as a social economic problem. Recreation must be employed in such a fashion that it counteracts and anticipates this form of social decadency.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed a new role for urban recreation. It is a role that must occur if recreation is to reflect and to produce a change in values among its users. If not, those who have been forced to live and who shall continue to live in deprived areas of our community and society will use the antiquated approach of recreation for self destruction and if it is in fact a desire of the Champaign Park District to meet the needs of changing users, then it itself must change or recreation in Black Communities shall cease to exist due to the predominance of other social forces.

SKR... GROUP...
RECREATION IS PART OF THE COMPLETE...
... ..