



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER



September 15, 2015

Joe Hranka
Peoria Boat Club
100 Spring Street
Peoria, IL 61603

Dear Mr. Hranka and Members of the Peoria Boat Club:

First, allow me to thank you for the professional manner in which you have handled, on behalf of the Peoria Boat Club, a very difficult situation. As the City pursued purchase of property from the Detweiller Playground Trust, it did not take lightly the impact it would have on your membership. I have asked Assistant City Manager Christopher Setti to be as available, creative and flexible as he can be in charting a path for both the near- and long-term future of Club.

We are writing to outline for you how the City would like to proceed with use of Trust property upon acquisition. We are hopeful that partnering with you, your board and your members will result in an agreement that meets our mutual needs, reduces some of the understandable confusion and fear, and solidify the future of your club. We are presenting you with the staff proposal for your operations. While such a proposal would need to be approved by the City Council, through informal conversations with a number of Council members, we are confident that this approach can work.

The Peoria Boat Club offers essentially three services to its members:

1. Excellent boat slips, complete with utilities, for members to use during the boating season.
2. On-site fenced and secure boat storage for the non-boating season.
3. A clubhouse for social gatherings.

As you know, the City is purchasing this property in order to transform it into a public park, providing additional access to the Illinois River for citizens and visitors. Furthermore, this purchase and future characteristics of the property are subject to the rules established by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Those rules dictate that the property be (1) publicly owned and (2) open and accessible to the public. The presence of a private, fenced boat club runs counter to those rules. While the purchase of this property (and the overall River Trail project) is not yet official, we are confident that the property will be acquired by the City at some point in the near future. We expect this to occur before the end of 2015. As we understand it, the Trust will not be renewing the Club's lease, leaving the future of the Club in serious doubt.

With the situation and rules in mind, however, the City staff would like to offer the Peoria Boat Club the following arrangement:

January 1, 2016 – April 30, 2016

The City will allow the Club to continue its operation through April 30, 2016. This would mean that member boats would be allowed to be stored on the property and behind the fence. Furthermore,

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members could continue to access the site and use the clubhouse as they normally would. The City has received clearance from IDNR for a “non-conforming use” that would allow such operation from the date the City receives conversion approval through April 30, 2016. The City and Club would need to craft and sign a short-term lease, similar in terms to the lease between the Trust and Club, to define the relationship. It is our hope that such a short-term arrangement would provide your members with some clarity regarding immediate boat storage decisions.

May 1, 2016 and on

The City will allow the Club to keep its boat slips in place and connected to the shore. The City will removed the fence, (likely) demolish the clubhouse and other structures, and transform the Trust property into a public park. Club members would continue to be able to access the boat slips via the public park. The City and Club will need to create a legal document that defines our relationship. Such a document would outline items including, but not limited to: ensuring adequate access to the slips; create easements across City property for utilities; and address liability and security issues. It will be the Club’s responsibility to adequately secure the boat slips, but such security measures will need to be wholly contained outside of the City property (i.e. gates erected on the docks themselves). The City will not charge any rent for such an arrangement, but is not willing to incur any additional cost. As the improvements take shape to turn the property into a park, the City and Club will work together to determine what, if any, changes will need to occur regarding utilities. Please note that no winter boat storage or clubhouse use¹ will be allowed beyond April 30, 2016.

Should you find this potential arrangement acceptable, please contact Mr. Setti. With your general concurrence, we will share this plan with the Council. This will allow us to gather their thoughts in a more comprehensive manner so that we are all assured of a path forward if and when the property is acquired.

We realize that this is a time of high stress and uncertainty. We are hopeful that our proposed arrangement allows you to focus on the future of the Club. While the City is excited by the opportunity to greatly expand Riverfront Park with this acquisition, we also value the presence of the Club and its members.

Sincerely,



Patrick Urich
City Manager

cc: Christopher Setti, Assistant City Manager

¹ It is unlikely that the clubhouse structure will remain. If it does and is open to the public for use, the Club would be free to use it.