



# PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## FACILITIES and ASSET MANAGEMENT

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An open message to the Northeast Portland community:

Portland Public Schools would like to provide information on the changes to Fernwood Field to date as the conversation continues about the project. Note that there are several players here:

- Portland Public Schools (PPS) "owns" the property
- Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) is given a permit by PPS to schedule sports leagues use of the property after school and on weekends, and in turn issues use permits to those leagues
- Hollywood Little League (HLL) is one of the sports leagues that have a permit from PP&R to use Fernwood field.
- Bureau of Development Services (BDS) is the city agency that issues building permits for projects, and also reviews projects for compliance with Portland's Planning and Zoning Code when the nature of those projects warrants review.

### Steps that have occurred to date:

1. Portland Public Schools (PPS) gave consent to Hollywood Little League (HLL) to make improvements to Fernwood Field when funding became available. PPS welcomed the expenditure for improvements to the playing surface of the field, both for little league and soccer use, and also for its own students.
2. Field plans were submitted to the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) for plan review. Since the project was similar to installations by Portland Parks and Recreation, it was reviewed under the same standards. Given that the project was primarily a maintenance project (upgrading the field and backstops) and was designed to PP&R specifications, BDS indicated that a permit was not necessary for construction.
3. Neighbors and the Grant Park Neighborhood Association raised concerns with the Bureau of Development Services. These concerns include: proximity of the field to neighbors' property, greater use of the field by HLL that would bring potential expansion in number of games, resulting in more parking and traffic, and game-related noise. (The City's Planning and Zoning Code was written to address these impacts through Conditional Use Review.) According to BDS, the project was not subject to conditional use review when it was first reviewed by BDS.
4. Because these use issues were raised with BDS, the PPS project manager returned to BDS to assure that the installation was correct (emphasis on the back stops), and as a result the plans were formally approved by BDS.
5. BDS decided to investigate the conditional use issue. So pending the outcome of the conditional use complaint, PPS issued a stop work order to suspend continued installation of elements of the project by HLL (bleachers, storage box, additional fencing, and netting to capture foul balls). All improvements were put on hold to not violate the conditional use review process. In addition, Grant Park Neighborhood Association had issued a newsletter article that indicated that PPS was subject to fines; a ruling that would affect continued play, and the potential removal of the field improvements.

6. Foul balls continued to threaten neighbors' homes and property as games continued. PPS, PP&R and HLL agreed that there was a potential safety hazard, and rescheduled the games to only include girl's softball at the field.
7. PPS initiated a redesign of the backstop, to include netting to capture foul balls.
8. Neighbors indicated that HLL scheduling changes were insufficient since other non-Little League players use the field. Safety concerns remained.
9. Neighbors wrote letters to elected officials protesting the operation of the field. PPS, PP&R with HLL closed the field due to the safety issues with the existing field arrangement.

What happens next? See tentative project schedule below

PPS is committed to complying with all permit and zoning code provisions in the City code.

- A Conditional Use Review is in process. The case is still open.
- Backstop changes to protect neighbors from foul balls are being developed.
- Field options are being pursued to address the conditional use issue.
- All options under investigation to improve the safety of the field are being completed in consultation with BDS, PP&R and HLL.
- PPS expects the field plan review to be carried out in the next three or six months. It is not likely that the City review will be completed prior to the end of the Little League season.

PPS will consult with the community before any plans are finalized. PPS will notify the adjacent neighborhood, and will work with neighbors and the larger community in an open process.

PPS is committed to improving the safety of the field. PPS appreciates Hollywood Little League's efforts to improve the Fernwood Field, to the benefit of neighborhood families, Hollywood-Fernwood students and the many soccer and baseball players who have used the field for years.

PPS is committed to finding a mutually satisfactory resolution of these issues and will continue to provide facilities for children in the community to play. Questions or concerns can be addressed by calling the Fernwood Field Project number at 503-916-3168.



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Community and Government Relations

**Tentative project schedule – could be affected by City of Portland schedule and other delays**

May 7, 2008	Field Closed
Week of June 2	Complete Analysis of Options/Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Identify options</li> <li>❖ Identify costs (and funding sources)</li> <li>❖ Acquire structural engineering feedback</li> </ul>
Week of June 9	Bureau of Development Services review of options
Week of June 23	Ask community for feedback on options (tentative open house) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Communicate with surrounding neighbors, Grant and Fernwood PTAs, Little League, Grant Park Neighborhood Association</li> </ul>
Week of July 14	Identify preferred option based on feedback from BDS and community
Week of July 21	Inform community of decision
Late Summer/Fall	Implementation/Construction – based on existing field use permits (Grant High athletics, soccer teams)