

Town of Merton

Joint Public Hearing with Waukesha County

To Consider the Request of Scott Severson on Behalf of the Milwaukee Ultimate Club, N75W30311 County Road Vv to Amend their Existing Conditional Use Permit for a Private Recreational Facility to Adjust the Number of Playing Fields to Reduce the Offset for Parking from 50 ft to 30 ft and to Eliminate the Required Right Turn Ingress/Egress only During Tournaments

August 7th, 2024

Present: Chairman Klink, Commissioners Griffin, Jensen, Morris, Siepmann, Queoff and Good, Attorney Van Kleunen, Planner Haroldson, and Deputy Clerk Claas

Also Present: Michael Rimmel, Joe Lindmark, Steve Gramann, Andy Martens, E.J. Schweitzer, Jeff & Linda Bartlett, Annette Dopp, Victoria Rheccchio, Jason Tolleson, Matt & Liz Ritter, Morgan Wiesner, Matt Schneider, Marty Iverson, Scott Severson, and Donna Hann

Public Hearing was called to order by Chairman Klink at 5:33p.m.

Planner Haroldson read the public hearing notice.

Scott Severson stated they are in their 4th season running tournaments on the entire grid. When they obtained the conditional use permit, they did not fully understand exactly how much room there was. They were never able to run a full-scale event on the entire property before. They were always regulated to the lower southern end, and they were also limited to what the Polo Club would allow them to do and the spaces they allowed them to utilize. After three full seasons, they are able to do measurements, and the field grid is laid out better. The additional parking they would gain by this would be huge. Putting parking along the east side of the property line offered a couple of huge advantages. It offered a large amount of parking, about 200 cars worth if parked well. It also would eliminate any issue wanting to go and park in Christopherson Fields. The setback change was a concession to one of the neighbors and was put in the conditional use permit. The neighbor is satisfied and is fine with them moving the setback back to 30'. The neighbor has no objections to it, may donate a fence to put along the property to help it look nicer, and it would be on the Ultimate Club's property. Severson said the turn in/turn out is actually dangerous. He said he's almost been hit and his volunteer has almost been hit a couple of times. He said they haven't had a backup since the very first day of the very first tournament after that was imposed. It just put all the traffic at the roundabout. He said it's actually blocking the eastbound, the southbound, and the northbound with all the traffic in that roundabout. Going right turn out of their driveway makes everybody turn across the bugline trail. They have not had any issues with parking since that very first day. They have not had any kind of backups. Severson said they've never had 10 or 15 cars waiting to turn in. He thinks that if they can get this approved they will have more parking, and it will be more convenient to the fields that people play on which makes the players much more willing to go wherever they tell them by parking them by their field instead of them walking 250 yards. They can get people parked more efficiently and with less volunteers. They have 8 to 10 volunteers parking people at major tournaments and at the moment they have no plans to change that.

Chairman Klink questioned the right turn and stated in the past it was a problem. Severson stated lacrosse had parking all the way out to the street. Their interaction with the people is asking them what field they play on and direct them where to park. Chairman Klink also asked how many people show up for their events. Severson indicated there is about 25 to 30 people per team. The largest tournaments bring in the neighborhood of 1,600 people and the smaller events bring in about 400 people.

Commissioner Morris asked what the width was for the strip on the east side of the property line. Severson responded the parking stalls are 16' x 9', and a 24' driveway. The back end of cars are parked a good 35' from the property line, and there's a 10 yard gap from the cars to the playing field. They don't let anyone leave on the private driveway on the south end. He is only proposing one row of cars on the east side, and it would be straight parking. He takes a paint machine and puts a straight line where the nose of the car should be, and then they put cones down a car width apart. The dimensions of the fields are 40 yards wide and 110 yards long.

Attorney Van Kleunen asked what direction on the east side are the cars are parked. Severson responded facing the field. Commission Jensen asked when they leave on the lower east side, can they continue around on the bottom and go up and out. Otherwise, they would have two-way traffic there with some people going north and some people going south. Is there enough room for that? Severson indicated that 24' is more than enough space for two cars to pass each other. They have long term plans that they're looking into for some type of permeable surface that will allow water to go through it. Severson stated they used to park on the south end, but they were denied that in the conditional use meetings. He doesn't know if that came from the Town or the fire marshal. He wouldn't mind having it down there just because it would ease a little bit of the traffic on the rest of the grass paths. It has always been a trailer path for the polo club. They're looking to use it much the same as the polo club did.

Commissioner Good asked if they had a tournament and they're playing six games, and they're playing on a field and they keep on advancing through the tournament, do they end up playing all over the place. Severson responded saying no, they typically do pool play type of stuff, so they'll end up on the same little group of fields and they will play all day Saturday in the same group. On Sunday they tend to move pools around to even out the players' use of the good fields versus the bad fields. If they go to the quarter finals or semifinals then maybe they might start moving around a little bit, but they typically try to bring the championship level games closer and closer to where the headquarters is located. They try their best to keep them stationary. Commissioner Queoff asked how many events they have in a season. Severson responded there are approximately a couple of events a month. Planner Haroldson stated they are allowed to be there on a daily basis, and asked how often they are there every day for practicing. Severson said they don't have teams really practicing there, and he is out there a couple of times a week to cut grass and keep an eye on things. At some point they might have more practices there.

The meeting was opened for public comments and concerns.

Michael Rimmel – N73W30359 Polo Ct – stated that he believes a good neighbor is considerate, kind, generous, respectful, helpful, friendly, truthful, dependable, trustworthy, polite, accommodating, charitable, concerned, gracious, civil, loyal and supportive. This describes the Milwaukee Ultimate Club as well as a few other neighbors like the Iversons and the Lunaas'. He went on to say that all of these traits have been repeatedly displayed by the Ultimate Milwaukee Club in the 23 years he has known them, and they continue to be displayed. Additionally, everyone in the Town of Merton owes the club a great debt of gratitude and all of their support for the preservation of this open space this neighbor continues to operate and operate very responsibly. He stated that going back to 2008, he has found the Town of Merton Board to operate very wisely. He asks the Board to consider these traits and comments as they continue their discussions and decisions with all matters concerning the Milwaukee Ultimate Club.

Marty Iverson – N73W30491 Polo Ct S – stated he lives on the very south end of the 45 acres that the Polo Club sold to the Milwaukee Ultimate Club. He has been dealing with them for 23 years. They are an

outstanding group of individuals. They clean up their mess. They take care of the fields. The parking has never been an issue. They used to park on his south end for 20 plus years. The Lunaas' who live on the west side of the fields have no issues, and he believes the Town should have gotten an email from them. His neighbor, Kelley Balog, has no issues with this at all or with the changes. Iverson said again that they're a great group of individuals. They're friendly. They're fun. If you've never watched Milwaukee Ultimate, it's something you should try to come out and watch. It's a combination between football and basketball. It's interesting, and they work very hard at it. He thinks to not allow them to have this would be a displeasure because they are trying to make the best use of the land that they possibly can. They own that land, it is their land, and they should be able to make changes for that land as they see fit in the parameters that were given to them. He supports whatever they're doing. They've been good neighbors and good friends of his for 23 years.

Jason Tolleson – W298N7417 Christopherson Lane in the Christopherson Fields neighborhood – stated he had a couple of points to get to. One is there is Ultimate as an organization and there are their participants. While the things that have been said about the Ultimate as an organization and what they try to do, they also have a lot of strangers showing up that they cannot vouch for every person that comes to their games. For those who live up on the east side of the property line, that is the point of contention because they're not all responsible. They've had public urination, and people crossing over especially where the berms separate the properties. That seems to be a point of "no one sees me, so let me go over here". They have people coming in and littering. In one of their tournaments in June, they had someone walking along the path with binoculars looking into homes, looking into his home twice. On Saturday, they had someone who confronted that person, and the person came back on Sunday, and Tolleson had to walk them away. That's just inappropriate. It's unfortunate that their participants disregard and disrespect what they're saying because he's probably sure that they're telling them not to cross the property line. They keep doing so. Another example is at the June tournament there was already parking along the east side. At the June tournament there was an individual that was laying across the berm and he was out working on the yard, and he asked him to leave. First, he tried to hide behind the tree, and then he got extremely belligerent with Tolleson. He said he didn't see any signs as he backed up and walked over the sign that said don't cross over. It's the participants that are being disrespectful, regardless of what Ultimate puts into play. The interesting part is when that person starts to leave, he got into a car that was parked along the property line and left. In the time that he called Severson, he was gone. There is Ultimate as an organization and then there are the people who show up. Tolleson said in prior years at one tournament there was a snow fence. He's not sure why asking them to do that because their participants are not respecting what they're asking them to do becomes a continuous problem for them. There are several people here from the east side homes who have dealt with this. Another concern is prevailing winds blow west and they smell port-a-potties for weeks on end. Perhaps there could be something done with an agreement made with the Town on just how long the port-a-potties can stay because they smell them. An audience member stated they were concerned about how many port-a-potties there are and stated there probably should be more if there are that many people there. Tolleson said he gets what they're trying to do as an organization. With this proposed change and even the start of the season, Tolleson said they hadn't heard from them at all. Some level of communication or feedback would have been helpful before it got to this point because then they could have shared their concerns. There are some people who do hang around their cars between tournaments. They watch them, and they just walk across the property lines. Something needs to be done to better enforce that. Tolleson strongly opposes the parking change.

Morgan Wiesner – W298N7488 Christopherson Lane – stated her family and herself have been residents here for five years, and they hope to stay here for the next 20 or 30 plus years. She said she has to share

Tolleson's sentiments unfortunately, with the experiences that they've had with the Ultimate group since taking over ownership of the property. There's been a lack of communication. There's been foul language. She's a little surprised to hear that there's families coming because she wouldn't want her family going to these events with the language that they've heard. Her concern with the parking is still one of safety. Herself included and some of the other neighbors don't feel comfortable even letting their kids run along the path that's on Christopherson Fields neighborhood property when those events are happening without any type of supervision. Also, they've also taken on and invested in some additional security on their homes. There's been trespassing. There's been littering happening. There's been instances when they cleaned it up, and that's been appreciated, but not consistently. The other safety concern she has with the parking situation is that it reduces visibility to what's going on in that space, and that's also part of why she doesn't want her children in that area because she can't see what's going on. It really has been a little bit challenging for them to deal with that when the events come up. The neighbors kind of take two approaches. Before they got the email shared with them as far as when the events are, some of them subscribed to the newsletter so that they know when the events are happening because they don't always get that communication. Some neighbors make sure they are there for the events so they can understand what's happening, and some neighbors actively try to avoid their own homes when these events are happening. She's very glad to hear that the polo fields side neighbors have had this great relationship. Unfortunately, she doesn't think that's been extended to the Christopherson Fields side. She would suggest or urge the Plan Commission to not support the parking plan.

Severson said regarding the port-a-john's, those things don't sit full. They're clean. If they leave them for more than a week, they get cleaned. They are sitting there for the majority of the time empty, outside from the blue juice. If they're going to get picked up after the tournament, typically they come Tuesday, Wednesday or so. Regarding trespassing, Severson said right now keeping people from trespassing in the Christopherson Fields is 100% on them. There's not a single no trespassing sign on the Christopherson Fields property, and in fact there are several areas where it looks like the properties are conjoined. Somebody took the effort to cut a foot path from through the tall grass through the path into the Ultimate Club's property. They also have where the grass cutters for the HOA blend everything together by the drainage pond, so it looks like one yard when you get down passed where the trail comes back around again. That looks like one property. It's tough to put stuff there to make people think it's not one property.

Severson said he had a meeting with the HOA Board. Severson, Craig Lunnas, and one of the neighbors from the other side, came over and had a 45-minute conversation about many of the same concerns that were mentioned. Severson met with three HOA board members. They said the neighbor shouldn't be cutting trails from the property. That has now started to grow back in, so they must have spoken with that neighbor. They also talked about the blending of the yards down on the south end where it looks like it's one big yard, and Severson's suggestion would be to extend the tall grass all the way down to the property on the corner just on the other side of that drainage pond. That would create sort of a physical fence or barrier of some type, and not make the two properties look like one big yard. At the end of the day after they talked about everything, Severson said they really had no objection as the Board. Severson said the trespassing is tough, and he gets that. The Ultimate Club put's up all the signs right now, but the HOA Board said they will look into getting a few strategic signs and maybe put one up where its' very close to the bugline trail, put one up where's the a bench and a shade tree, and also one down by where the blended yards come in. Some of Ultimate's signs will fill those gaps. For the large-scale events, Severson said he's going to try to put in more tape. It will at least create a boundary. As far as the littering, he can't do anything about the stuff that blows in overnight, but that place is spotless on

Sunday afternoon. He goes on a golf cart, and if he can't go out on Sunday afternoon, he goes out Monday morning and picks up everything. Severson said to remember there are two construction sites to the west of them and stated it's not all their trash. Stuff blows across their fields too. He said he will not allow trash to sit on their fields. Regarding port-a-potties, Severson said it's 250 uses per. He figures four teams is about 120 people. Everybody gets to go twice a day, and they get serviced on Sunday morning. If they have 20 teams, he'll have five toilets. If it's questionable, he will get an extra one. They also have an additional one that they keep on site constantly.

Iverson stated in terms of participants going from the Ultimate field to the subdivision, there are also people that come from the subdivision and go to the Ultimate field. It happens both ways. Ultimate doesn't appear to care if neighboring subdivision wants to walk their dog, run their dogs, fly their planes, or do any of that stuff on the field. He lives on the south end, and he sees what happens. But it's not okay when there are no, no trespassing signs up anywhere along that property line that a participant may not wander to go look. He thinks that's pretty rude of us as individuals to stop people from crossing from the field to a walking path that is there. He's been working with the Ultimate Club for 23 years, and never had these issues. He's had people in his barn at times. They've had conversations and then they leave, and he talks to the Ultimate Club, and it's done. Iverson said there's never been a fence put up on that sideline. Tape, maybe. If you want people off of your property, he would suggest that you put up a no trespassing signs, or put up your own tape on your own property. He believes that it's a community spot between their property and Ultimate's property where the walking path is. If it's only for their subdivision, Iverson suggests that they post it, subdivision only. He has neighbors that walk those paths, and he doesn't see them getting kicked off or asking them not to walk their dogs. They can't have it both ways. Iverson said what Ultimate is doing is a great thing for the community, and it's good for them. He watches them nearly every Saturday and Sunday when they're there, and he doesn't hear swearing. He hears people having a lot of fun, but he never hears swearing or vulgarity.

Chairman Klink said that he doesn't want to get into the back and forth about what someone heard and what someone doesn't hear. The Plan Commission is here to hear concerns.

Tolleson said going back to the neighborhood element. Someone walks their dog in their neighborhood and that's being neighborly, and they haven't chased him out. The issue is the 900 plus strangers who are not neighbors. He said it's just ironic that the Town of Merton just sent something out about be mindful, lock your doors because there's stuff going on. No one can vouch for those individuals, and that's what the issue is. They should just tolerate public urination? They should just tolerate people staring into their homes with binoculars? He has a kid. There are signs at the front of the path because of the crossing of the bugline. The tape they put down was flapping in the wind when the guy came across and was extremely belligerent with him. Asking them to tolerate, but yet accommodate a neighbor. It's a different story when they're bringing in that many unknowns. You have Town residents here and then you have outsiders. The Plan Commissioners are hearing from the east side, and they are not happy with this to make some accommodations with people who are coming in from out of Town.

The public hearing closed at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly R Claas
Deputy Clerk