

**Public Comment after July 21, 2022 meeting.**

Craig,

Thanks for the response. To be clear, I am generally in favor of the investments being made to expand facilities at OPRFHS. I do, however, want to express specific support for the expanded lighting systems being proposed. I've heard rumblings that neighbors in the area are concerned about additional traffic, greater light pollution and other issues. My research on these issues has revealed the following:

- New lighting technology will minimize - not increase - light pollution to neighbors.
- The requested for extended usage (8-10 PM) is not an unusual request in Oak Park as there are eight parks that also have this usage time period (e.g. Taylor Park tennis courts) and there are, by my count, many more residences in the immediately vicinity of these parks than the field at Lake St/East Ave. Further, Keystone Park in River Forest has allowed lights until 10 pm for many years.
- This time frame (8-10p) is limited to four months in the spring and early summer, not the entire year.
- Programs on these fields at those times will be for adult leagues, not OPRF or youth teams, so there will likely be fewer people attending those events (i.e. no parents, fewer cars, less foot traffic and noise).
- Lastly, these improvements would be for the greater good (not just OPRF but the entire community).

Please consider these important facts as you and other officials finalize plans. Again, I'd be happy to discuss any time you'd like.

Thanks again,

J. Todd

**J. Todd Phillips**

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Talia Brookstein-Burke, and I am a proud member of the OPRF class of 2018. Around Oak Park, I am best known as "that red-headed runner," a title I owe entirely to my time with the OPRF Track and Field Team. I walked into the bustling field house one Monday in January 2015, and to this day, it feels like I never left. Every lesson, friendship, and competition has stuck with me, coloring my passions and leading me toward the life I was able to dream up while running with OPRF TF.

Running track at OPRF gave me a confidence I never imagined when I first walked through the daunting entrance on Scoville Ave. Instead of stumbling through my four years, I had lifelines in the form of friends and lessons derived from hard workouts that guided me, letting me discover all the facets of myself I hadn't been bold enough to discover on my own.

Because of my track experience at OPRF, I am entering my 9th year of competitive running, and I don't anticipate stopping any time soon. This incredible program inspired me to make running an integral part of my life: I ran at the University of Delaware, graduated with a degree

in Coaching Science, and spent my final semester as an assistant coach for a local HS running team. This year I will continue running and coaching with the Boston Athletic Association, taking the next step in my running career.

Perhaps most importantly, my time with the track team taught me the importance of community. Not a single one of us athletes would have accomplished the things we did (including, during my four years, 3xConference and Sectional Winners, multiple appearances on the State level, and several runners who went on to represent OPRF in the NCAA) without one another. However, no matter how large the team or how well bonded we were, it always felt like a part of our community was missing: our school.

For practice, we were sent over 2 miles away to the Concordia Track, practicing on a congested track where it was difficult to coordinate efforts. Home meets never happened at home, instead, we were bussed across town, inaccessible to our peers. We worked so hard to represent our school, yet we never received any space at the school itself.

Our community felt limited, cut off from the study body, the other teams, and any potential fans. Having a home track on the OPRF campus would have meant the world to me as an athlete back then. We could have showcased our Huskie Pride without the shadow of the Concordia Cougar, shared our accomplishments with our peers, and finally become part of the school we worked so hard to represent.

Thank you for your time and consideration in continuing the incredible legacy of OPRF TF through the construction of a home track.

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Dear Village of Oak Park staff,

I'm writing as a parent of an Oak Park track runner. Thank you for considering creating a track for use for OPRF students. If it were shared with Oak Park residents as well I'm certain a schedule could be worked out.

This program has meant a lot to my family as my son ran in it for 4 years. The Track team is very diverse and inclusive. It serves over 150 kids after school. It teaches discipline and teamwork and developing one's personal best in running.

With Concordia University being challenging in allowing track usage, Oak Park needs a running track for its high school students.

Having a track for our OPRF students is low hanging fruit for diversity, equity and inclusivity goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Khaledan

River Forest, IL

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Hello Planning Commission,

I am Oak Park resident and parent of two children, one an OPRF junior and the other a 6th grader at Brooks Middle School. I am submitting the comments below in strong support of the new light standards being proposed for the athletic fields at the SE corner of Lake St and East Ave. I realize with any adjustment or improvement to outdoor field lights comes concern from the surrounding neighbors who stand to be most impacted by these changes. Aside from the obvious need for these new fields, my support for these new light standards (and response to any negative feedback) can be summarized as follows:

1. New lighting technology will **minimize** - not increase - light pollution to neighbors.
2. The requested for extended usage (8-10 PM) is not an unusual request in Oak Park as **there are eight parks that also have this usage time period** (e.g. Taylor Park tennis courts) and there are, by my count, many more residences in the immediately vicinity of these parks than the field at Lake St/East Ave.
3. This time frame (8-10p) is **limited to four months** in the spring and early summer, not the entire year.
4. Programs on these fields at those times will be **for adult leagues, not OPRF or youth teams**, so there will likely be fewer people attending those events (i.e. no parents, fewer cars, less foot traffic and noise).
5. Lastly, these improvements would be **for the greater good** (not just OPRF but the entire community).

Thanks for your time and effort as it relates to this project.

Matt Kruse

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Good afternoon,

I am writing in support of the plans for the reworking of the track and softball/baseball fields at OPRF. T & F is the largest athletic team at the high school and also the most inclusive. Our son has been lucky to be part of this team for the last two years. It is so important that this team has a place to practice that is at or close to the high school. Busing them to Concordia every day is very time consuming. Also-the need to be able to hold our own meets would mean everything to these kids and coaches. I really hope the planning committee takes all of this into consideration-the track and field team deserves a home at the high school, Thank you, Trish McGovern

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Good Evening Planning Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of the field improvement rebuild and update project at OPRF. The improvements to the field will allow the student athletes to benefit from playing in an environment that is conducive to them preparing for collegiate sports. The update to the field is not only about

structural benefits but also improving the performance of student athletes. Our students deserve to be as competitive as other students at other schools. It is my understanding that there is opposition to the improvements; in particular, the lighting of the fields. There are hundreds of reasons to rebuild and update the fields, most of them are between the ages of 14-18, and want a good and safe place to play the sport they love.

Thanks,

Nathaniel A. Moore Resident Oak Park River Forest

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To whom it may concern,

I wanted to take a moment and express my gratitude to the Coaches and Staff that have poured their heart and soul into the Track & Field program at OPRF. My son, who will be a senior this coming year, when entering into high school had this fear of trying to find a place to "fit in". He was very apprehensive and nervous as to what his experience would be and that if he could find some type of solid ground to build a foundation with to move forward. He studies hard and has a great work ethic but there was always something that was missing. He eventually decided to try out for the Track & Field team.

The program has provided him not only a place where he can excel in a sport which he has grown to love, but a community of sort that is so diverse and excepting of all that enter through its doors. He has grown as an individual to be humbler, understanding, compassionate and matured in more ways that I could have ever imagined. This is all because of the type of environment that he is surrounded by that has been built by this staff which not only teaches but mentors these young men to become better people. It is truly a "family" environment of which I am so proud that he is a part of.

Programs such as this need to be a main stake at OPRF and need to have room thrive and grow and have a home on campus to call their own. I can only hope that an opportunity such as this will continue to exist for future Huskies.

Regards,

Peter Hasapis

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Greetings,

After stints in Philadelphia, Atlanta and Louisville, my family and I have lived in the OPRF neighborhood for the past ten years. Parker, now a rising junior at Wellesley College in Massachusetts attended Roosevelt Middle School in RF before selecting Trinity HS. Mason, now a rising junior at OPRFHS began as a first grader at Willard Elementary and then attended Roosevelt like his big sister. Both kids have been very active in sports, leadership and civic activities and as a family, we've been so very lucky to engage in this community.

Recently I learned of the major renovations project at OPRFHS that could include new sports facilities, lighted ballfields and other infrastructure to support our community. The purpose of this email is to express my full support for this multi-phase project. The benefits to our community stretch far beyond the

HS students that will use these facilities. Our entire community will reap the benefits, no matter what age, race, socio-economic status or level of athleticism.

I'd be happy to share my excitement and support for this project in person with the appropriate parties. Happy to sign any petition that supports this project. And for certain, I would be happy to donate time and resources to ensure this project is fully funded and executed.

Don't hesitate to reach out if I can help in any way.

Thank you.

J. Todd Phillips

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Hello,

I am writing in support of Oak Park River Forest High School's request for a special use permit to update and modify lighting at the Lake Street field between East and Scoville Avenues. Denying the school's request will adversely affect a significant number of students in our community.

Track and field athletes at OPRF are already at a disadvantage compared with their peers at other schools in the area, without adequate training facilities on site. Their current commute to train at Concordia is a burden, but manageable given its proximity and ability to accommodate training sessions immediately after school. Once Concordia stops allowing OPRF students to train on its track in a year, however, the burden of commuting to another track at a time when the home school is not using it will become insurmountable. It will effectively eliminate track and field as a sport at the school, because students will not be able to juggle remote evening practices with the demands of school work and family obligations. It will decimate the OPRF track program, depriving our students of one of the few activities that truly reaches across all demographics and brings students of all stripes together.

While I appreciate the concerns of neighboring home owners, please understand that denying this special use permit will affect hundreds of students at OPRF every year. The interests of the few affected homeowners should be taken into account, but they should not outweigh the interests of the many, many students who would be effectively denied the opportunity to participate in track and field after next year if the school is not permitted to improve its facilities.

I ask that you approve the requested special use permit without further delay.

Regards,

Meredith Schacht

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