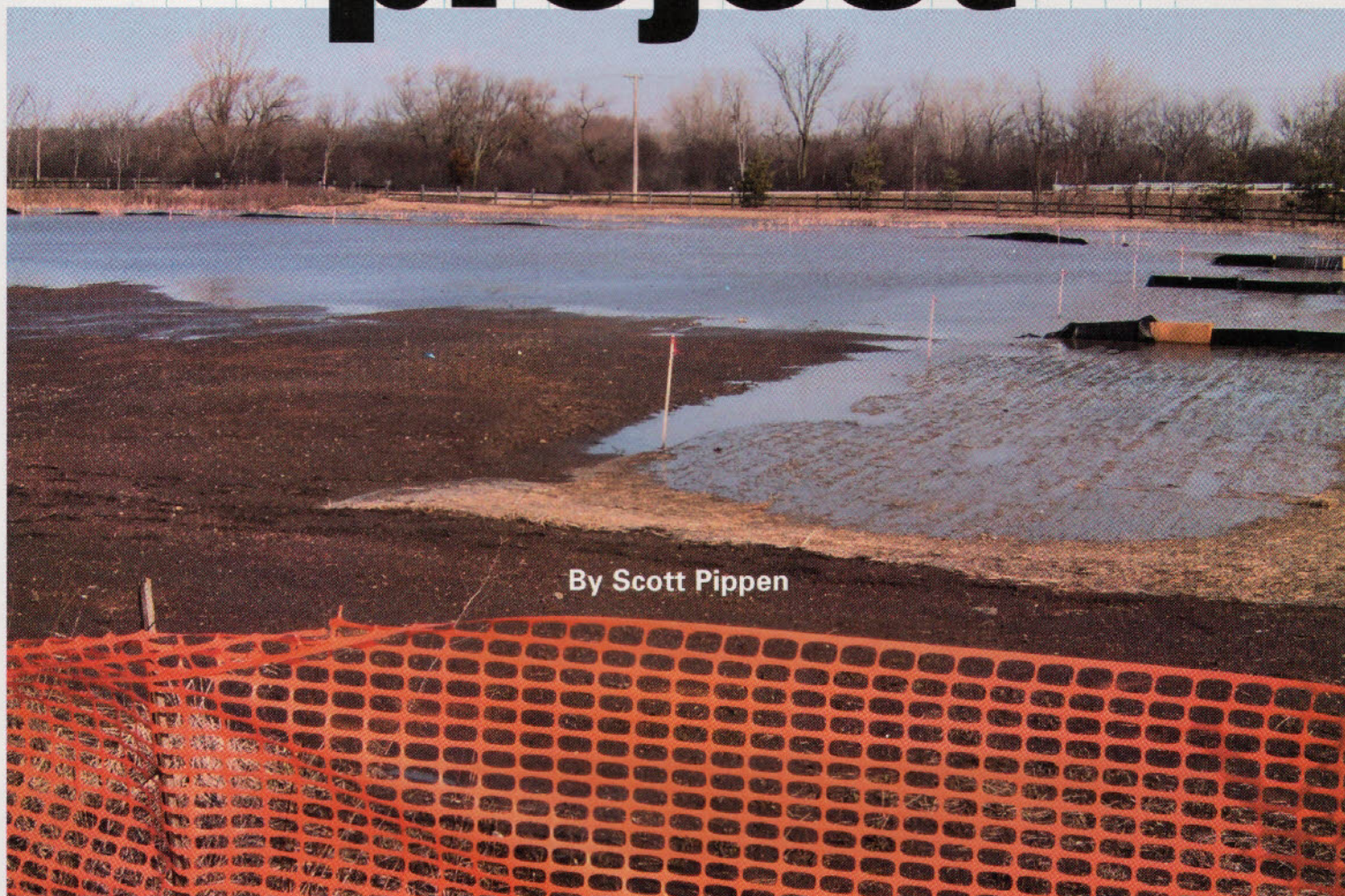


Planning a construction/renovation project



By Scott Pippen

The first step is to become educated about the basics of athletic field and park construction.

North Park is a 63.5-acre site that was purchased by the Village of Lincolnshire (IL) in the fall of 1999. The site was acquired to maintain open space in the rapidly growing Village, and to provide playing

fields for the residents of the area. Before the development of this project, the Village's parks contained only two small playing fields. The schools in the area were expanding their buildings to meet the rise in their student populations, and constructing these expansions over many of the existing fields on their campuses.

The local volunteer youth sports organization was having a very difficult time meeting the community's recreational sports needs with the limited facilities available to them. Thus, the \$14 million North Park Project was born.

The North Park site contains 28 acres for active use, and 35 acres for passive use. The 28-

FACILITY & OPERATIONS

acre active area includes six soccer fields, two baseball fields, three softball fields, outdoor ice skating rinks, tennis courts, a basketball court, a playground, a 280-car parking lot, a concessions building, and a maintenance facility. The passive use area is divided into a parcel that is a dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve, and a transitional area from the Nature Preserve to the active use area. The Nature Preserve is an extension of one the Village had already dedicated to the State several years ago, which borders the southern edge of the property. The transitional area has trails for cross-country skiing and hiking, and a picnic shelter. The park opened in the spring of 2001 and hosts on average 2,500 events per season. North Park has won several local awards as an outstanding facility and STMA's 2006 Complex Field of the Year for Schools and Parks.

The first step in planning a project like North Park is to become educated about the basics of athletic field and park construction. Attend every seminar and read every article you can that has information

about facility construction. Join professional associations like the STMA, which provides an excellent opportunity to develop contacts with other professionals who have done similar projects. This was perhaps the most important thing that I did that led to the successful development of North Park.

Through contacts I made with the STMA, I was able to discuss several key issues before and during the construction process with my peers in the sports turf industry. My membership in the STMA led to the development of a professional relationship with Ken Mrock, Head Groundskeeper of the Chicago Bears, who was brought in as a consultant on the project. I cannot overstate how valuable Ken's knowledge and experience was to the project's overall success.

When considering completing a project, planning is the key. We formed a committee that included government officials who would control the funding, representatives of the sports league that would be



Membership in the STMA led to a professional relationship with Ken Mrock of the Chicago Bears, who was extremely valuable to the project's success.

FACILITY & OPERATIONS



The 28-acre active area includes six soccer fields, two baseball fields, three softball fields, outdoor ice skating rinks, tennis courts, basketball court, and a playground.

the primary user's group, interested environmentalists who were concerned with the use of the natural area of the park, and the staff who would oversee the construction and be responsible for maintenance. This group worked with the architect to complete the design process.

Having a diverse membership on the planning committee was absolutely critical in determining the final product. Each faction was able to present the concerns and ideas that were important to them so that all of the important issues were incorporated into the design process. Also, the communication that took place up front between all of the interested parties led to everyone being on the same page when it came to the expectations for the final product and the level of maintenance and associated costs involved for the future of the facility. This process was absolutely crucial to the success of the construction and long-term maintenance of North Park.

During planning it is important to discuss:

- Expected type and level of use for the fields
- Available budget

- When the fields are available for play
- Required maintenance level to meet user expectations

By getting a consensus on these important issues, it allows for the design of a facility that will meet the users needs, and that can be maintained at the level necessary to allow for the best possible experience of the athletes using the field.

After the design process is completed, the next step is creating the specifications that you want the contractor to work with to complete the project. This is an extremely critical component of the development process. The specifications are a legal document, and should contain the exact methods and materials that you will be requiring for developing the final product as designed. The "tighter" the specifications, the less likely that there will be disputes with the contractor, and making it much more difficult for the contractor to cut corners and deliver an inferior product.

As the specifications are being developed, you will want to check with any government agencies that have jurisdiction in your area for

FACILITY & OPERATIONS



The "tighter" the specifications, the less likely there will be disputes with the contractor.

AerWay®

AerWay® can aerate the typical playing field in less than 30 minutes, without taking it out of play. More frequent aeration treatments reduce compaction, speeds drying of the field when it rains, and makes more efficient use of water when it's dry.

AerWay® delivers Speed



for more information call

1-800-457-8310

Advanced Aeration Systems

www.aerway.com email: aerway@aerway.com

Fill in 167 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13971-167>

permitting requirements. Some agencies have a very long process that must be completed before a permit for work can be issued. Timing for an athletic field project can be critical, especially if turf establishment is involved.

It can be very frustrating to have everything in place and ready to go to start your project and then be delayed for weeks or even months waiting for the Army Corps of Engineers or your local county or state agency to issue a permit. Once the construction process has started, be sure that all of the requirements set forth in any permits are followed to avoid stop work orders that can significantly delay the completion of your project.

Keep talking

Before beginning construction, hold a pre-construction meeting to establish communication between all of the parties involved in the project, and answer any questions that the contractor may have regarding the construction process. Once the project is begun, consider holding weekly, or as often as is necessary, construction update meetings to address any issues that may come up.

Having a good line of communication with all of the people involved in the development of a project is a big advantage and assists in keeping a project on pace and running smoothly. It allows you to keep the owners or managers of your facility informed on the project's status with timely information when necessary.

Keep on top of the project by making daily site visits. Observe the methods being used to construct the facility and watch to make sure the materials specified are correct and are being handled properly.

Point out problems to the contractor as soon as they are observed so that they can be addressed promptly. As components of the facility are completed, make sure that a thorough final inspection is accomplished and that all deficiencies found are corrected before signing off on an item and authorizing payment. This simple step can save you tremendous headaches down the road, and will help to insure that you deliver the final product that was envisioned in the planning process.

The number one key to planning and constructing an award-winning field is communication. It starts with communicating with

peers in your industry to educate yourself on the proper methods and means to construct a facility. It involves communicating with the potential users of your field, the financiers of the project, and other interested parties to reach a consensus on the facility's use.

Communication with regulating entities assures compliance with legal requirements and can ensure that the project development starts on time. Communicating with the contractor performing the work and keeping the people involved in the planning on the project's status keeps everyone on the same page and avoids unrealistic expectations. By maintaining excellent communication between all parties during the entire development process, a successful plan will be created leading to a facility that meets the needs of the primary users, and can be maintained to the expected level. ■

Scott Pippen is Superintendent of Streets and Parks, Village of Lincolnshire (IL).



The number one key to planning and constructing an award-winning field is communication.

EVERGREEN™ Turf Blankets... ...trusted around the world!

**"Results Outstanding...,
Could Not Believe..."**

wrote **Dann Daly**, Park Maintenance Supervisor,
Parks & Recr. Dept., North Smithfield, RI

- Earlier spring green-up
- Faster seed germination
- Deeper root development
- Delays dormancy in fall
- Ideal winter blanket
- 3 & 7 yr. warranty covers
- Best for quick turf repairs
- Available in any size

Want to know more?
CALL TOLL FREE
1-800-387-5808

COVERMASTER™
COVERMASTER
COVERMASTER

MASTERS IN THE ART OF SPORTS SURFACE COVERS

COVERMASTER INC., 100 WESTMORE DR. 11-D, REXDALE, ON, M9V 5C3 TEL 416-745-1811 FAX 416-742-6837



Covers for football and soccer fields are also readily available.



Covered... Uncovered...



It works on the greenhouse principle, every time!

covermaster.com

E-MAIL: info@covermaster.com



Fill in 122 on reader service form or visit <http://oners.hotims.com/13971-122>