

**3/13/2013**  
**Fulton Neighborhood Association**  
**Turn on the Lights Project Update**

Representatives of Southwest High School (SWHS) attended the FNA meeting to further present the proposed addition of permanent lighting to the Southwest Stadium and to answer questions and respond to resident concerns.

Fulton resident, SWHS alumnus, Southwest Foundation member, Turn on the Lights Committee member, parent and Women's Basketball Coach Dan Froelich supported the addition of lights to the stadium as a way to enhance the overall experience to students and the community. SWHS is the top rated academic high school in the state, but can't compete with the facilities in the suburbs. By adding lights, the stadium becomes a broader outreach opportunity to the student body and is a way to engage the students by way of being an athlete, band member, student manager, dance line member, etc.

SWHS Principal Dr. Bill Smith wants to build community in the neighborhood by being a responsible and responsive partner. This will bring people together. The athletic program and facilities are a key component to the school, along with its established academics programs, music department, etc. SWHS has a history of working with the neighborhood and being responsive to concerns (parking issues, etc.)

Athletic Director Ryan Lamberty noted that SWHS has 72 programs and 32 sports teams. There are 1200-1500 students per year participating in athletics. By adding lights to the stadium and allowing for night games, the opportunity for parents and other students to attend sporting events will be increased. The school plans to be responsible with how they use the stadium. The field cannot be overused so it is in good shape for actual games and meets. The SWHS Green Team and students are working on a clean-up plan for garbage. There are parent volunteers at each event to help with clean-up. The school does not have plans to add additional events at the stadium. It is anticipated that there would be no more than 20 events in the evening. The latest starting time for an evening event would be 7 p.m.; it is anticipated that the lights would be turned off by 10 p.m. or 10:30 at the latest (30 minutes after the end of an event). The City of Minneapolis may require the lights to be off by 10 p.m.—this needs to be clarified.

Clyde Kane, Minneapolis Public Schools Facilities Director, and Jay Pomeroy, project consultant with Anderson Johnson, presented specific plan and design details. They have been focusing on investigative work over the past couple of months. A survey crew confirmed utilities, elevation, property lines, etc. A drilling crew took soil samples and found a layer of peat about 7 feet below ground level. The current plan calls for two 80 ft. poles on the home side of the stadium and two 70 ft. poles on the visitor side. The poles will have between 10-14 lamps each. The lamps will be efficient and focused to avoid light "spill".

SWHS met with Councilmember Betsy Hodges in January and have been assigned a City Planner. The next step is to finalize the design and submit the plan to the City Planning Department. A Conditional Use Permit will be required and will trigger another public hearing. Homes within 350 feet of the project will be notified. They plan to submit their final designs to the City within the next week and anticipate being put on the hearing agenda within another one to two weeks.

Residents asked numerous questions:

Q: What is the wind tolerance of the poles?

A: 90 mph

Q: How is the light “cut-off” measured and confirmed?

A: The lights come already attached to the hood and “aimed” by the manufacturer. The poles will have special notchings for correct placement of the hood. Once the poles and lights are installed, a manufacturer’s rep will come out and take readings. These results will be submitted to the City.

Q: Will a second entrance to the stadium be opened up?

A: SWHS is more interested in making the existing entrance more efficient. The school will consider a second entrance if necessary, but really is not interested in this option if they don’t have to. A second entrance would require additional staff, security, etc. As a comparison, Washburn High School has two entrances, but only uses the second entrance when they play SWHS (due to increased attendance).

Q: What are the security plans?

A: SWHS is responsible for crowd control. They hire 2-4 police officers for each event at the stadium. These officers work inside the stadium and will be on foot or bike. There are no plans to hire additional police staff for events. However, the school will notify the Minneapolis Police Department 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct when there is a big event, and they will assign extra patrols if officers are available.

Q: What is the plan for crowd control outside the stadium? There will be lots of teens, at night, coming from all parts of the City.

A: The areas outside the stadium are not officially patrolled by SWHS staff or hired officers. However, most of the time, extra squad cars will show up at the end of the game (see previous question) to assist with crowd control. The extra SWHS hired officers will typically go out with the crowd and help with disbursement.

Q: Will the lights really be focused of the field as promised?

A: The lamps are designed to be directed downward. Someone will be able to see the light from a distance (like a street light), but they won’t be shining outward. The lights will be used 15-20 times per year and can be shut off remotely.

Q: The nearby neighbors would like to ensure hard stop times, security outside the facility and no rentals to outside groups in the evening.

A: It is anticipated that the lights will be turned off by 10 or 10:30 p.m. at the latest. Currently, there are no plans to rent the stadium to outside groups – this would put too much pressure on the field. Although other community groups such as SWAC, SWAFA and Pershing Park will occasionally use the stadium, it is highly unlikely that they would be using it at night.

Q: What about bike racks as previously requested?

A: Bike racks are not part of the lights proposal. SWHS is talking with the City and Park Board about adding these.

Foundation representatives will come back to the FNA meeting on April 10 to address any further questions or concerns. Specifically, neighbors would like to hear more about plans for security outside the facility, parking, graffiti and vandalism. In the meantime, a Foundation Representative will post updates as they are available on Nextdoor Fulton.