

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
JUNE 11, 2019**

The Workshop Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of Highland Park was held in the Board Room at the West Ridge Center, 636 Ridge Road, Highland Park, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by President Kaplan.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Kaplan

Absent: Vice President Ruttenberg

Staff Present: Interim Executive Director Donahue; Director Romes; Assistant Director Carr; Director Dunn; Director Voss; Assistant Director Smith; Director Gogola; Senior Planner Schwartz; Manager Grill; Manager DiTomasso

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – None

PART TIME PERSONNEL MANUAL

Director Dunn reported that earlier in the year, the Park District of Highland Park reviewed and updated the Full-Time Personnel Manual as part of the Distinguished Accreditation process. Using that Manual as a model, the Part-Time Personnel Manual has now also been updated. Director Dunn explained that the only change that differs from the Full Time Manual is the addition of Personal Time of 16 hours from Class I Part Time personnel. (personnel who work 30-39 hours).

The applicable changes to the Full-Time Manual, which have been approved by the Board, were added to the Part-Time Manual, and include all required Federal, State, and local laws. As with the Full-Time Personnel Manual, the Appendices referenced within the Manual have not changed, and are therefore not included in your packet.

- I. Identity Protection Act Policy
- II. Ethics Ordinance
- III. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy
- IV. Fleet Safety Policy
- V. Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act Policy
- VI. Bloodborne Pathogens and Infectious Diseases
- VII. Workplace Violence Policy

VIII. Harassment in the Workplace

IX. Military Leave Reinstatement Policy

Commissioner Bernstein thanked Commissioners Weisskopf and Grossberg for their work on the Personnel Manual.

RECREATION CENTER UPDATE

Manager DiTomasso presented a membership update for the Recreation Center of Highland Park. Manager DiTomasso reviewed the numbers which included Memberships, Programs and Financials. She stated that memberships and group exercise classes are down and explained that local boutique competition is the reason for the decline. Manager DiTomasso shared that the Recreation Center of Highland Park is looking to the future with new programs, equipment and special events like Goat Yoga and Stages Flight which will be offered to the community.

President Kaplan shared that there are 500 homes for sale in Highland Park and asked if that was contributing to the downward trend in membership. Manager Di Tomasso said yes, it was most likely a contributing factor. Manager DiTomasso said it would be helpful to work with a local Real Estate Broker to promote the Recreation Center of Highland Park. Commissioner Flores Weisskopf asked if the Park District has reached out to the High School to obtain student memberships. Manager Pierce stated that the High School has its own work out area and shared that the Recreation Center has been in contact with the athletic personnel at the High School.

COMMUNITY PARK UPDATE

Manager Grill reported that Staff and Hey and Associates have been working with Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, Illinois Department of Nature Resources and City of Highland Park to achieve preliminary permitting approvals based on these plans. Park District staff and Board liaison met with City of Highland Park (CHP) and Lake County Forest Preserve (LCFPD) staff and officials to achieve a resolution on connections to Route 22 as required by the 2002 Skokie River Woods Intergovernmental Agreement. Staff is working with LCFPD and CHP on necessary amendments to the Skokie River Woods Intergovernmental Agreement and Highland Park Country Club Easement.

Manager Grill stated that Hey and Associates is in the final stages of construction documents for the pathways and elements included in the project. The Army Corps of Engineers North Branch study team recently announced preliminary findings. The Corps analysis showed that a structural solution (e.g. detention basin) did not meet their cost benefit standards. The Park District will continue to work with Lake County Stormwater Management Commission to seek grant funding for our proposed stormwater/habitat solution.

Regarding planting, Manager Grill explained that V3 Companies is completing spring seeding around ongoing rains. Meantime, staff has completed trial plantings in high visibility areas around the Country Club and Legacy Club, involving around 30 members of the public and residents of Lake County. Manager Grill shared that beginning Fall 2019 path construction will start. In the Spring of 2020 Shoreline Renovation and Work on Elements will occur. River Day,

a planting community event, will take place in 2020 and the Opening Event is slated for late summer 2020.

Commissioner Bernstein suggested that Manager Grill's presentation made to the Board this evening be presented to the City Council at one of their meetings.

Commissioner Grossberg asked if all the hazardous dead trees have been identified. Manager Grill stated that they have, but have not yet been removed. Commissioner Grossberg asked if apple trees would be planted and Manager Gill said that Hey and Associates is looking into planting heirloom varieties. Commissioner Flores Weisskopf inquired about her previous suggestion that the High School Environmental classes participate in the Community Park planning. Manager Grill stated that she has been in communication with the High School and that plans are in the works. Commissioner Flores Weisskopf suggested that a joint Legacy Club Park District of Highland Park planting/gathering occur. Manager Grill shared that Peggy Luce had already planned and held a joint event.

SPORTS FIELD MASTER PLAN

Senior Planner Schwartz presented an overview of the Sports Field Master Plan. She explained that the Plan analyzes current program needs and existing field conditions to offer strategic operation, capital, and maintenance recommendations. The recommendations follow three scenarios:

- Focus on current infrastructure
- Secure funding for artificial turf field
- Secure funding and land for sports complex

Senior Planner Schwartz shared that the intent of the plan is to offer field improvement recommendations to calibrate fields to the natural ebb and flow of sport demand and meet the needs of the community. She stated that the District has 15 sport fields and that programmable fields with good drainage are limited. She went on to explain that programmed fields have poor turf conditions and are over used. Senior Planner Schwartz discussed the goals and objectives of the plan, the key findings, what the need is, the objectives, scenario planning, grants and partnerships and the timeline for the plan.

Commissioner Grossberg asked about improving the drainage and inquired about upsetting the current drainage already in place. Senior Planner Schwartz stated that the areas with lights, West Ridge Center and Danny Cunniff Park, are the only fields that would be considered for turf and would need drainage. Commissioner Bernstein explained that the current turf materials used today are much better than they were five or ten years ago. He stated that the newer products have a greater life expectancy. Commissioner Grossberg shared his concerns about overflow parking at the fields that will be updated, as people will stay longer after games. Commissioner Bernstein shared that tournament parking will be difficult, not regular games.

ROSEWOOD BEACH BOARDWALK RAILING

Assistant Director Smith reviewed the challenges with the overlook boardwalk area near the Interpretive Center at Rosewood Beach. President Kaplan asked about re-nourishing the area and Assistant Director Smith stated that there are permits out to complete this work. Assistant Director Smith explained that sand will be trucked in to fill the area. Assistant Director Smith shared the drawings of the railings for the boardwalk and explained that the District is looking for a long-term fix. He explained that if, in the future, the District decided to remove the railing it could be an option. Commissioner Bernstein wanted to know what would occur if the water kept rising. Assistant Director Smith explained that rocks could be added for revetment.

Commissioner Bernstein asked if this work was in the budget. Assistant Director Smith stated it was not, but that there are some funds in the Capital Budget that were not used this year that could be applied to this work. Assistant Director Smith stated that he would get back to the Board with a cost for this project.

PRESENTATION OF UTILITY CONTRACTS

Interim Director Becker stated that the Park District's Natural Gas Contracts are nearing expiration, and the Park District must choose its direction moving forward. Commodities such as natural gas can be purchased using a fixed or variable rate. The variable rate is generally tied to an index. For instance, the District's larger accounts are currently tied to the NYMEX (New York Mercantile Exchange) rate plus \$.0081 per therm. The other option is a fixed rate that is based on the length of the agreement and the anticipated conditions.

Interim Finance Director Becker explained that should temperatures be moderate in the winter, the period when the most gas is used, the District would generally be better off using the variable rate which it is currently doing. If it was a cold winter, just the opposite would be true. Given the conditions of the past few years, the District's choice of the variable rate has not worked to its advantage.

Currently, the District works with a consultant that charges a fee of \$2,000 ANNUALLY to prepare an RFP for gas vendors. That fee should also be included in the cost of the utility. As a result, the District reached out to, Alternative Utility Service (AUS) to do an analysis for the District. The District provided AUS with gas bills for each meter and from that, they were able to obtain usage amounts from the utility.

While working at Wheeling and Palatine Park Districts, a conversion was made to AUS with great success. Some of the other agencies they serve include Arlington Heights Park District, Northbrook Park District, and the Villages of Wheeling and Rosemont (including the Allstate Arena). AUS also serves many commercial clients as well.

Results of the analysis indicate that in addition to not being responsible for an RFP fee of \$2,000 the Park District, all things being equal (temperature and usage), the District would have saved over \$2,000 with its three largest facilities and over \$14,000 for the smaller meters for a total

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savings of \$22,000 (when the RFP fee is included) over the three-year period. Further, AUS gets paid by the winning vendor so the District is not responsible for any commissions.

A careful review and comparison of the options recommend that the District continue to use Centerpoint for its large usage meters (fixed rate of 29.26 cents per therm and switch its smaller meters to a fixed rate contract with Interstate Gas Supply at a fixed rate of 32.7 cents per therm. The recommended term is 3 years.

However, to get this done in a timely fashion, the contracts with the winning vendors must be signed by June 13 and June 25 respectively.

REVIEW OF VOUCHERS

Interim Director Becker presented the vouchers for checks written May 23, 2019 through June 6, 2019 for an amount totaling \$694,212.19. There were not questions from the Board.

OPEN TO PUBLIC TO ADDRESS BOARD

Mr. Tom Luce of the Legacy Club shared that he was at the Boardwalk earlier this morning and how much he enjoys his time there.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Donahue, Secretary