PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
NOVEMBER 5, 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, Vice President Ruttenberg, Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Kaplan

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Interim Director Becker; Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Voss; Manager Grill; Director Gogola; Assistant Director Maliszewski; Assistant Director Henriques; Director Smith; Coordinator Hejnowski

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

a) Platform Tennis

President Kaplan asked staff to consider Deer Creek Racquet Club as a possible location for platform tennis. Executive Director Romes shared that staff has been conducting some early research, and Fink Park is a possible option though there are some obstacles with this site. Executive Director Romes stated that the project cost would increase as it located in a floodplain and additional permitting would be required to build at this park.

President Kaplan asked if other locations were available. Executive Director Romes said that Danny Cunniff Park, Lincoln School, Sunset Valley Golf Club and West Ridge were possibilities. President Kaplan requested that three top sites be chosen, and a list of pros and cons be created for each. Commissioner Bernstein suggested touring the chosen sites and presenting feedback at a later meeting. Vice President Ruttenberg requested that estimates gathered, and construction timelines be created for the top three locations.

b) Affiliates

Executive Director Romes reviewed the five organizations which comprise the Affiliates of the Park District of Highland Park and that each Affiliate provides a service that the District could not provide on its own. The Affiliates are: Pops, Strings, Players, American Youth Soccer Organization and the North Shore Yacht Club.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf asked how stipends for these organizations are determined. Executive Director Romes stated that stipends are based on the organization’s needs. Commissioner Bernstein recommended instituting an Affiliate application and renewal process.
requiring all Affiliate to make an annual presentation to the Park District. Vice President Ruttenberg wanted to know the percentage of Highland Park residents who make up the memberships for these Affiliates and requested a report to show the actual numbers of people whose lives are touched by these organizations to better understand the impact they make on the community.

Commissioner Bernstein recused himself from the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**ALBION RESIDENTIAL**
Director Smith gave a brief update of the project and explained that a temporary construction easement will need to be approved by the Park Board of Commissioners since construction is occurring on District property. President Kaplan asked if Sunset Woods Park would be closed due to construction. Director Smith asserted that the active areas of the Park would not be impacted by construction. Vice President Ruttenberg asked who would be responsible for payment of the storm sewer and the construction easement. Director Smith stated that Albion Jacobs is responsible for the storm sewer, and the Park District will provide the easement in exchange for Albion Jacobs paying for the natural areas restoration.

Commissioner Grossberg asked about the firehouse teardown and what’s to become of the vacant site. Director Smith stated that this would become a natural areas portion of the park. Commissioner Grossberg asked if the neighbors are receiving construction communication updates. Director Smith stated that the City and Albion Jacobs are responsible for public communication, not the Park District.

Keith Jacobs, a representative from Albion Jacobs, asked if a temporary fence could be immediately erected along the property for safety purposes. President Kaplan asked if the fence would be on Park District property. Mr. Jacobs confirmed the fence would be installed on the District’s property and introduced Augie Meinzer, a representative from Clark Construction. Mr. Meinzer explained that the fence is six-foot tall with privacy screening on the face of it. If approved, work will start the following week with an 18-month schedule. During this time a construction trailer will be placed where the firehouse will be demolished.

President Kaplan stated that action approving the installation of the temporary fence could not be taken at this meeting. Executive Director Romes stated that if insurance could be given to the Park District by Albion Jacobs, with no opposition from the Park Board, then authorization to erect the fence could be granted in the coming days. President Kaplan stated there should be no problem moving forward as long as these provisions were met.

Commissioner Bernstein returned to the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

**ROSEWOOD BEACH UPDATE**
Margaret Boshek of Smith Group presented an overview of past, current and future water level predictions. She explained that next year’s water levels could be up to a foot higher than this year which will cause shoreline inundation.
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Purdue University placed a buoy in the lake near Rosewood Beach to record wave activity. A ten-foot offshore wave was recorded on October 27 and an 11.5-foot wave was recorded on Halloween. If the Spring of 2020 brings frequent storms and high precipitation levels, the damage could be catastrophic to the shoreline.

Ms. Boshek reported the sand nourishment project began on October 15. 5000 tons of birdseye sand was delivered and placed in the Interpretive Cove. 4500 tons of torpedo sand was delivered to the Swimming Cove. With storms in the forecast, some of the torpedo sand was spread near the lake, and the remaining was stockpiled along the shoreline in the Swimming Cove. Once the storm struck on October 27, the waves cut and flattened the birdseye sand and created potholes in the torpedo sand exposing vulnerable area in front of the boardwalk.

There is significant overtopping of the breakwater due to the high-water levels which are causing wash out on the backside of those breakwaters. The wash came up to the Boardwalk and washed through. The large escarpment is no longer there. This slope mimics the original which indicates that torpedo sand alone is not sustainable in this area. The sand is performing as it was designed to, however, there is not enough of it. Ms. Boshek reported, there was a bit of an under estimation on the material.

Ms. Boshek shared that her recommendations are to supplement the eroding torpedo sand with birdseye sand in the Swimming Cove. Ms. Boshek stated that by tomorrow the SmithGroup can determine how much material is missing. The additional birdseye should be placed in the Interpretive Cove in front of the Boardwalk to improve the slope, possibly a few more truckloads. A survey would let us know where the material is and let us know if it will come back in the spring. Doing a survey is not a requirement, but a recommendation.

Ms. Boshek reviewed future conceptual designs 1) Underwater weir involve closing the gap in the breakwater entrance with a set of rocks that go across the front, breaks down wave energy at the mouth of the cove and reduces its ability to pull sand offshore. It’s easy to remove should water levels go back down. We are designing for a 6-foot water level change. 2) Reducing the gap width between the breakwater is harder to remove but it reduces wave energy. 3) Sheet Pile changes the location of the toe of slope and increases the height. This causes further flattening of the beach but creates unsuspecting offshore drop off’s so someone could quickly find themselves in deep water. 4) Internal Breakwater which is emergent or submerged rock. She stated that those designs were shelved in lieu of placing sand quickly and if the Park District did not take preventative measures to replace sand at Rosewood Beach the boardwalk foundation would have been damaged, and the parking lots would have collapsed. Ms. Boshek reported that all buildings and parking lots are still intact.

Commissioner Bernstein wanted to know why Rosewood Beach is vulnerable even though there is a breakwater system in place. Ms. Boshek stated that high water levels even with small storm events cause damage. She stated that the replacement of sand is low in cost compared to having to replace breakwater systems. Commissioner Bernstein asked how long it will take to get a stable slope. Ms. Boshek stated that it depends on wave energy and SmithGroup did not anticipate the sand to flatten as quickly as it did after the large storm. Ms. Boshek explained that Rosewood has hit its stable slope. Commissioner Bernstein asked if Rosewood is at risk for
functional damage. Ms. Boshek shared that more sand is needed. Commissioner Bernstein asked that since Rosewood has reached its stable slope a year early it will require emergency action and if there is anything that could be done proactively. Vice President Ruttenberg answered that the alternative would be the weirs.

Commissioner Bernstein asked what would be involved in the permitting process for the four weirs. Ms. Boshek stated that obtaining permits is not an issue now and are being granted at a faster rate. Ms. Boshek stated that the best time to do construction work is December or January when there is ice, or April. Commissioner Grossberg asked if Lake Forest has a weir. Ms. Boshek explained that Rosewood is much more exposed than the Lake Forest Beach and therefore has a different set of issues.

Commissioner Bernstein asked about further revetments along the back of the beach. Ms. Boshek stated that this could be a 5th alternative, don’t fight the sand, protect the facilities. A rubble revetment was recommended. Ms. Boshek recommended doing a survey and perhaps flying a drone to check for rock separation.

**GREENPRINT 2024 REVIEW**

Executive Director Romes reported that in 2013 the Park District Board of Park Commissioners and staff initiated a district-wide master planning process. GreenPrint 2024, a comprehensive 10-year plan, was approved by the Park Board in 2015. This planning document provides guidance for current and future facility and program development decisions through 2024. GreenPrint 2024 was developed to address community input, needs and desires, and intends to support the Park District’s Mission of enriching community life and vision to provide extraordinary experiences to Highland Park residents. An important tool used in the development of GreenPrint 2024 was a community-wide attitude and interest survey, conducted in 2009 and 2013.

Executive Director Romes further stated that noted in GreenPrint 2024, “The master plan is a living document, and as civic, economic and demographic conditions change, the plan should be flexible to allow the Board the ability to adjust the course of its plan.” As a result, and in compliance with Park District Policy, the District conducted a community-wide attitude and interest survey in June 2019. The District received over 800 completed surveys providing a statistically valid representation of our community. After four years of GreenPrint 2024 implementation, the results of this survey are being used as an important tool for guiding staff and board liaisons as the District reviews GreenPrint 2024, assuring it continues to align with community needs. Along with an internal audit of program trends, the survey results will help provide a basis for future facility and program improvements.

Executive Director Romes shared an update on progress since the attitude and interest survey was completed this summer. In August, the most recent attitude and interest survey results were presented to the Park Board. In September, staff conducted numerous planning meetings where park district priorities were analyzed based on the attitude and interest survey. Program and facility assessment as well as participation trend data were discussed. In September, staff and the Park Board held a retreat at which the Park District’s mission, vision, and values were
reviewed to gain clarity and steer direction for review of the GreenPrint 2024 Master Plan, the five-year Capital Plan, and the Strategic Plan. Results from the attitude and interest survey for programs and facility assessments were also discussed. In October, there were two GreenPrint 2024 review meetings with staff and board liaisons. These meetings were conducted to draw conclusions from the Park Board and staff to discuss any recommended updates to the plan. Staff is currently preparing a summary of those review meetings and recommended changes to GreenPrint 2024 in effort to guide staff and the Park Board on future planning and capital projects as well as strategic initiatives for the remaining four to five years. Staff will have the summary and recommended changes completed in December. Staff will report to the Park Board upon completion.

**TRUTH IN TAXATION RESOLUTION**

Interim Director Becker shared that under Illinois law, if a District is considering extending an aggregate property tax levy more than 5% greater than the preceding year’s levy, it must publicly disclose its intention and hold a public hearing. Aggregate levy is defined as real estate taxes, exclusive of the election costs and debt service. Also, the District must prepare a Truth in Taxation Resolution at least 20 days prior to adopting the levy ordinance. The Resolution will be recommended for Park Board approval at the November Regular Board meeting. Adoption of the levy ordinance is scheduled for the December Regular Board meeting.

Interim Executive Director Becker stated that the 2019 Truth in Taxation resolution reflects a 4.58% increase over the prior year’s extension. This represents an increase of $526,418. This is essentially a cost of living increase based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) while trying to capture new growth. Therefore, no hearing is required.

As noted in item 3 of the resolution, the increase is split into two components; the increase in the Consumer Price Index and Anticipated Growth.

The Tax Cap limits the General and Recreation Funds extension to increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5% whichever is less, exclusive of the debt service levy and any increase relative to new growth in the district. For tax year, 2019, the CPI is 1.9%. Park Districts may levy .04% of the EAV for the Special Recreation Fund. Currently, the District is levying the full .04%.

Interim Director Becker concluded by explaining that the Levy request does not guarantee that these funds will be received. In the Spring when property values and tax cap limits are finalized, the Park District tax extension number is calculated. This is the total property tax amount that is billed to residents.

There were no questions from the board.
**REVIEW OF 2020 PROPOSED BUDGET**

Interim Director Becker presented the proposed 2020 Park District of Highland Park Budget for consideration by the Board of Park Commissioners. This budget represents the calendar year January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020. Following the budget process, the Finance Committee reviewed the budget in detail at the Finance Committee meeting held on October 25, 2019. The committee accepted the document subject to a few recommended changes that have been made.

Interim Director Becker reported that per park district code “The governing body of each park district shall, within or before, the first quarter of each fiscal year, adopt a combined annual budget an appropriation ordinance.” The purpose of this presentation was to gain consensus from board members to move forward and lay the budget down for a period of thirty days so that the public may inspect it.

After that period has expired, Interim Director Becker explained that a hearing will be held for the public on December 12. Later that evening, the Budget will be presented to the Board for approval of the Budget, and the Budget and Appropriations Ordinance. Upon approval, the budget will be certified by the county.

Commissioner Grossberg asked about the impact if interest rates rise. Interim Director Becker stated that the district’s timing is good and that a higher rate was built into the district’s model. Commissioner Bernstein inquired about the -816% deficit under administration. Executive Director Romes stated that several full-time positions have been filled, there have been salary changes in allocations and a significant rise in IMRF. Interim Director Becker stated that there are differences between the revenues which were projected and budgeted, and that expenses are low due to salaries. He further explained that comparisons are more accurately reflected of budget 2019 to budget 2020.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf asked if the marketing budget for each fund center had been moved into the marketing department. Executive Director Romes stated that each fund center continues to have its own marketing budget.

**REVIEW OF VOUCHERS**

Interim Director Becker presented the vouchers for checks written October 17, 2019 through October 30, 2019 for an amount totaling $592,840.45. There were no questions from the Board. Vice President Ruttenberg reviewed the vouchers and had no further questions.

**OPEN TO PUBLIC TO ADDRESS BOARD** - None

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion was made by Vice President Ruttenberg, seconded by Vice President Ruttenberg to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)11 – litigation against or on behalf of the District or where the District finds that an action is probable or imminent – for discussions between internal or external auditors and the Board.
Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Ruttenberg, Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, Commissioner Bernstein, President Kaplan

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

Meeting was adjourned into closed session at 8:29 p.m.

Meeting was reconvened into open session at 8:32 p.m.

ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION IF ANY
President Kaplan reported that the Board met in Closed Session under Section 2(c)5 – the purchase or lease of real estate including a discussion on whether a certain parcel of property should be acquired; Section 2(c)6 – the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business, a motion was made by Vice President Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Romes, Secretary