

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 27, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of Highland Park was conducted remotely due to the Governor’s Declaration of Emergency as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Members of the public were able to view a live stream of the Regular Board Meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, Vice President Kaplan, President Ruttenberg

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Executive Director Romes; Director Smith, Director Voss, Director Dunn, Director Peters, Director Gogola, Director Carr; Assistant Director Maliszewski; General Manager/Superintendent of Golf Operations Ochs; Manger Schwartz; Executive Coordinator Hejnowski

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA** – None

**PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA** – None

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Vice President Kaplan and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg to approve the Minutes from the September 22, 2020 Regular Board Meeting; the 2020 River’s Edge Golf Learning Center ADA Restroom Improvements Project; and the Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$1,320,048.69

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**Treasures Report and Financial Forecast**

Director Peters provided an update of the District’s financial forecasts and presented a report from the October 22, 2020, Finance Committee. She reported that the Park District’s General Corporate Fund is tracking according to the original budget due to reduced payroll expenses and a timing difference in health

insurance. As for the Special Recreation Fund, she reported that budgeted tax receipts are trending favorably due to timing difference. Staff anticipates that the variance should diminish. The Park District's contribution to the development of a new facility for the North Suburban Special Recreation Association (NSSRA) was budgeted for June. However, the contribution will not be made until January of 2021. Director Peters reported that there is an unfavorable variance in the Recreation Fund due to the reduction of activities due of the Pandemic. The Debt Services Fund is trending favorably, and scheduled payments will be made in December. Lastly, she reported that the Park District's Capital Fund is significantly under budget due to several projects being eliminated or differed because of the pandemic.

### **Financial Forecast**

#### ***Special Disclaimer from Public Financial Management (PFM)***

Director Peters shared the District's special disclaimer, reporting that the research and any forecasts are based on current information as of September 30, 2020, as is considered to be reliable, but the District does not represent it is accurate or complete, and it should not be relied on as such. The information, opinions, estimates, and forecasts contained herein are also as of the date hereof and are subject to change without prior notification.

#### ***Projected Cash Flow/Operations (Operations General and Recreation Fund)***

Director Peters presented the District's chart of operations which examines the General and Recreation Funds comparing the budgeted cash on hand vs. the projected cash on hand at the end of each month. She reported that the District budgeted to have \$11.9 million in cash on hand on December 31, 2020. As of today, staff are projecting to have \$10.9 million in cash on hand on December 31, 2020, despite the impacts of COVID-19. Additionally, the District will remain in compliance with our board policy, maintaining a 25% reserve in the general and recreation funds.

#### ***Budget vs. Actual vs. Projected (Operations General and Recreation Fund)***

The next item reviewed was the 2020 Budget Comparison report of the General and Recreation Funds. This report provided a comparison of the 2020 budget approved in December of 2019 vs. the actual figures as of today, plus the projections for the end of the year. Director Peters reported that the District budgeted \$27.7 million in revenue and projected to spend \$18.6 million, which provides a \$3 million surplus for the end of the year. Due to the pandemic and its financial impacts, staff are projecting \$15.5 million for the year-end revenue and to spend \$13.7 million, which provides a \$1.8 million surplus for the end of the year based on the actual revenue and expenses generated as of September 30, 2020. She reported that the overall reduction between our original budget vs. the projections is a \$1.2 million deficit. As of September 30, the Park District has generated a little over \$13.3 million in actual revenue vs. the \$12.39 million projected, which provides a \$1 million surplus. As for expenses, the Park District has spent \$9.5 million as of September 30 vs. the \$10 million projected, which is a \$500,000 negative variance. The year-to-date net difference, which compares the actual vs. projections is a \$1.5 million surplus.

#### ***Budget vs. Actual vs. Projected No Taxes/Transfers (Recreation Fund)***

The next item reviewed was the 2020 Budget Comparison report of the Recreation Fund. This report provided a comparison of the 2020 budget approved in December of 2019 vs. the actual figures as of today, plus the projections for the end of the year without the support from property taxes and transfers from the

general fund. Director Peters reported that the District budgeted \$10.5 million in revenue and projected to spend \$12.9 million, which is a \$2.5 million operating deficit for the end of the year. Due to the pandemic, staff are projecting \$5 million for the year-end revenue and to spend \$8.5 million, which projects a \$3.7 million deficit. She reported that there is a \$1.3 million difference between the budgeted deficit vs. the projected deficit. As of September 30, 2020, the District has generated \$4.9 million in actual revenue vs. our projections of \$4.1 million, which is an \$818,000 surplus in revenue. As for expenses, the Park District has spent \$6.5 million vs. the \$6.5 million projected, so she is pleased to report those projections were spot on. The year has a \$777,000 positive variance thus far.

***Monthly Payroll Budget vs. Actual vs. Projection***

Director Peters reported that the District budgeted around \$10 million in payroll expenses. However, by furloughing staff, reducing employee hours, and implementing a hiring/merit freeze, staff projected the expenses as of December 31 to be around \$7.5 million which reduces the overall projected net difference of the budgeted vs. projected to \$2.5 million. The District's actual payroll expenses as of September 30 are higher than staff projected by \$132,000. Director Peters reminded the Finance Committee liaisons that there is a \$777,000 surplus in the recreation fund and the District has a \$1.5 million surplus in the operations fund. Additionally, the Park District would not have been able to provide all our summer programs and services without having to increase staff and payroll expenses. Director Peters reported that when the pandemic began in March, the District's payroll expenses decreased each month until June. As of June, the governor, and the Department of Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced that the state would enter Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan, which lifted several programming restrictions come July. The District quickly transitioned, hired, and trained staff in preparation of those programs and services.

***Summary***

Director Peters reported that staff revenue projections were on target with the original budget and expenses were trending less. When the Park District closed in March, revenue significantly decreased and was no longer trending with the original budget. However, when summer programming resumed revenues increased, and the expenses came in less than the projected worst-case scenarios. Staff are projecting flat revenue for November and December, and if the Park District pivots backward to Phase 3 of the governor's Restore Illinois Plan, the Park District's 2020 budget will remain strong.

The Park Board of Commissioners thanked staff for their thorough and easy to understand presentation and congratulated staff for their hard work.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Rosewood Beach Interpretive Cove Protection Project Updates**

Director Smith reported that the goal of tonight's discussion is to receive approval from the Park Board of Commissioners for one of the proposed solutions for the Rosewood Beach Interpretive Cove so staff can move forward with construction documents. Director Smith reported that Ms. Boshek of SmithGroup reviewed several protection options at the October 13 Workshop Meeting for the Interpretive Cove, which included short, mid, and long-term options to provide beach erosion. During the meeting, the Park Board of Commissioners and staff agreed that the short-term option was neither necessary nor feasible. Additionally, the Park Board of Commissioners requested a third option, asking

staff to gather quotes for the removal of the chaise lounge and the boardwalk overhang, in the case that the Park Board of Commissioners decides to differ the proposed solutions.

Director Smith shared a map of the site so the Park Board of Commissioners could better understand where the proposed solutions would be installed and what the site would look like if the chaise lounge and boardwalk overhang were removed. Director Smith reported that even if the chaise lounge and overhang are removed there is a separate area of the boardwalk which allows visitors to travel along the boardwalk from the parking lot to the Interpretive Center. Director Smith reviewed the updated proposed solutions.

***Option 1: Removal of Chaise Lounge and Overhang Area***

Director Smith reported that this option does not provide any protection to the parking lot and the estimated cost for the removal of the chaise lounge and the overhang area is \$60,000.

***Option 2: Removal of Chaise Lounge/Overhang Area plus Construction of Mid-Term Protection (Trap Bag Solution)***

Director Smith reported that this option utilizes trap bag technology to provide a mid-term solution. In this solution, the chaise lounge and overhang area will be removed and excavation will occur in front of the Interpretive Center, and the boardwalk along the parking lot so the trap bags can be placed and buried in front of these structures. This option is estimated at \$300,000 with a 15-year lifespan, however since this is a new technology the lifespan could be much longer.

***Option 3: Removal of Chaise Lounge/Overhang Area plus Construction of Long-Term Protection (Sheetpile Wall and Armor Stone)***

Director Smith reported that this option includes the removal of the chaise lounge and the overhang area plus SmithGroup will extend the current sheetpile wall in front of the Interpretive Center along the boardwalk to the ravine and place armor stone in front of the sheetpile. Both the sheetpile and armor stone will be buried so the long-term solutions will not be visible. Director Smith reported that this approach is estimated at \$600,000 with a 50-year lifespan.

Director Smith reviewed a potential project timeline, reporting that staff are seeking approval for a proposed solution in October, staff would gather permits and construction documents in November through January of 2021, the bid invitation will be released in February of 2021, staff will need the Park Board of Commissioners to approve a construction document in March of 2021, construction will occur in April of 2021 with an estimated completion date occurring before Memorial Day.

Director Smith reported that staff recommends approval from the Park Board of Commissioners to proceed with construction documents for Option 2 which includes removal of Chaise Lounge/Overhang Area & Construction of Mid-Term Protection using Trap Bags.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the area surrounding the chaise lounge and overhang are in danger of failing.

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Director Smith reported that staff does not feel this area is in danger and advised against removing the chaise lounge and overhang if the Park Board of Commissioners does not approve the construction for added protection as it will incur unnecessary mobilization costs.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know why the trap bags would be placed in front of the Interpretive Center.

Director Smith reported that staff feels it makes sense to extend the protection if excavation is going to occur.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know if this is needed and would like to know if there is an additional cost.

Director Smith reported that he will gather quotes from SmithGroup as there will be an additional cost to extend the protection since the original quote of \$300,000 only provided protection along the boardwalk in front of the parking lot.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know if these solutions would be necessary if the lake levels were not as high.

Director Smith reported that these solutions were recommended by engineers due to the high lake levels and significant erosion.

Executive Director Romes reported that even though the lake levels are receding scientists are suggesting we will adapt to the new normal which is a much higher lake level, so additional protection has been recommended.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know if Ms. Boshek is suggesting there is going to be a new normal due to the high-water levels, has she changed her mind, and should staff and the Park Board of Commissioners reexamine the offshore solutions.

Director Smith reported that even with the new normal, the lake levels will remain cyclical, so as those waters recede those offshore solutions could drain and dry up the cove, which poses a greater challenge.

Executive Director Romes reported that staff and the Park Board of Commissioners decided against the offshore solutions as these options were much more costly and would need to be removed if the lake levels recede.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf would like to know if the chaise lounge and overhang pose a threat if the structures were not removed.

Director Smith reported that there are railings currently around those structures preventing visitors from accessing the lounge. Additionally, staff might be able to regrade and place sand in front of the lounge to open it for use this summer, however, if there is not enough sand then staff will block off the area.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf would like to know if there is enough sand in the Interpretive Cove to fill the trap bags.

Director Smith reported that staff recommends purchasing additional sand to fill the trap bags and those costs are included in the estimate for Option 2.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know what else can go wrong if the Park Board of Commissioners selects Option 2, reporting that the Park District has two other beachfront properties in need of repair. He would like to know if Option 2 will resolve all our problems for the foreseeable future, so staff and the Park Board of Commissioners can focus on other properties.

Director Smith reported that staff are hoping Option 2 would end the need for additional protections at Rosewood Beach. Additionally, he reported that the emergency nourishment was successful and after that SmithGroup explored possible offshore solutions and the revetments along the beach to further protect the infrastructures. He reported that staff are confident Option 2 will protect those areas and the worst-case scenario is the trap bags could become exposed so an additional nourishment may be needed.

Vice President Kaplan reported that at some point, staff needs to stop spending money on this property.

Director Smith reported that the goal is to put protection in, so the Park District no longer needs to invest in this property.

Executive Director Romes reported that all lakefront communities are suffering however he understands the frustrations of the Park Board of Commissioners.

President Ruttenberg reported that he thinks the focus of this exercise is to protect the Interpretive Center and the parking lot, however, Option 2 will not solve having to possibly renourish sand in the future.

Vice President Kaplan and Commissioner Grossberg are very concerned with the amount the Park District has and continues to spend at Rosewood Beach.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf would like to know why staff are not recommending Option 3, Removal of Chaise Lounge/Overhang Area plus Construction of Long-Term Protection (Sheetpile Wall and Armor Stone).

Director Smith reported that cost is a significant factor, and upon further conversations with SmithGroup staff feels the trap bag solution will provide the protection needed and could be a long-

term solution. Additionally, he reported that the Park District is currently under contract with SmithGroup for this work, so if Option 2 or 3 are approved staff will work with SmithGroup under the current contract to develop construction and bid documents. Staff will seek approval from the Park Board of Commissioners for those construction documents in March of 2021.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know the cost of construction documents.

Director Smith reported that he would have to examine the contract to see how much is paid out, however, there is no additional cost for bidding and permitting. He reported that the Park Board of Commissioners approved the current contract with SmithGroup several months ago, so staff needs to know which direction to go so construction can be completed by Memorial Day.

A motion was made by Commissioner Flores Weisskopf to approve proceeding with construction documents for Option 2 which includes removal of the Chaise Lounge/Overlook Area and Construction of Mid-Term Protection using Trap Bags.

**Roll Call:**

**Aye:** Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Ruttenberg

**Nay:** Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Kaplan

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Declined.**

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the chaise lounge and overhang should be removed.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf and Vice President Kaplan advised against the removal of the chaise lounge and overhang.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that based on Ms. Boshek's testimony, the parking lot is not in imminent danger, and the chaise lounge provides additional protection to the parking lot, so he advised against removing the chaise lounge and the overhang to conserve resources.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf reported that she understands the points being made however she hopes that this decision does not have negative impacts.

**A. Solar Panel Project Update**

Director Smith reported that over the past year, staff have researched various opportunities for installing solar panels on Park District facilities. In March 2020, the Park District signed a Letter of Intent with Realgy Energy Service to further investigate installing solar panels on the Deer Creek Racquet Club building as this facility was determined to be the most ideal due to its location, the size of the facility, and it recently received a new roof. Director Smith report that staff signed a letter of intent with Realgy and is working with them to develop a lease agreement. If approved, the Park District would purchase

the power through the solar panels and excess energy from Realgy. Director Smith reported that the fee the Park District would pay for power produced by the solar panels does not include COMED's standard delivery fee, however, the Park District would still receive an estimated annual savings of \$4,000. Staff are working with Ancel Glink, the Park District legal counsel, and Realgy to finalize the lease agreement so staff will present the finalized agreement to the Finance Committee at the November 5 meeting, and will present the finalized agreement to the Park Board of Commissioners at the November 17 Board Meeting. He reported that solar panels will be installed in the Spring of 2021 if the Park Board of Commissioners approves the finalized agreement.

The Park Board of Commissioners thanked Director Smith for the update.

**B. Lakefront Master Plan Update**

Manager Schwartz reported that in 2007, the Park District, in collaboration with community-wide stakeholders, completed and began implementing the Lakefront Master Plan which provided a roadmap for improvements at all lakefront parks, beaches, and ravine ecosystems. Since 2007, Managers Schwartz reported that much has been accomplished along the lakefront including significant development at Rosewood Beach, a Moraine Park Sculpture Garden, expansion of lakefront programming, and natural areas restoration at Millard, Moraine, and Rosewood.

Manger Schwartz reported that the Park District's approved Master Plan, GreenPrint 2024, identified the need to prepare a Lakefront Master Plan Update. The intention of this update was to build upon recent accomplishments and ensure the Lakefront Master Plan reflected current community priorities, as well as the changing landscape of the lakefront. In 2018, staff conducted community engagement efforts to collect feedback and determine priorities, which included a lakefront survey, discussions held throughout numerous parks, and listening sessions at all four lakefront properties. Manager Schwartz reported that 650 residents participated in the lakefront survey and hundreds of residents attended the discussions and listening sessions. Since that time, staff have evaluated community feedback and considered operational and physical improvements to reflect the community's current attitudes, interests, and priorities all while navigating and understanding the immediate complexities including feasibility and constraints at each site to develop strategies to meet the objectives of the District's dynamic lakefront.

Manager Schwartz reported that the 2007 Lakefront Master Plan was rooted in six principals, which entails:

1. A unique lakefront experience
2. Connectivity
3. Varied and appealing lakefront parks with increasing opportunities for recreation, education, and interpretation
4. Improved environmental and public health conditions
5. A sustainable lakefront model
6. A long-term strategy for maintenance, management, and enhancement.

Based on those principal's staff identified four priorities:

1. The preservation of walking trails and views
2. Access improvements to and around lakefront properties
3. Provide accurate information about the lakefront properties
4. To maintain infrastructure and recreational amenities.

Manager Schwartz reported that the Districtwide objectives for the Updated Lakefront Master Plan are to improve communication about lakefront properties, including location access, and activities, to maintain existing lakefront infrastructure, to enhance lake views and bluff parks, and to encourage and facilitate access to lakefront properties. Additionally, the Park District was awarded a grant from the Illinois Coastal Management Program to develop ongoing implementable strategic recommendations for beach maintenance and management in a dynamic and variable environment affected by climate change.

***I. Moraine Park and Beach***

Manager Schwartz reported that the two objectives identified for this property are to maintain and improve access and support amenities for people and dogs as well as restore the natural character of the ravine outlet at the lake. The scheduled capital improvements are repairs to the ravine beach access path and the ravine restoration. The Park District will obtain planning documents in 2021, and construction for the ravine beach access path will occur in 2022, and construction for the ravine restoration will occur in 2023.

***II. Millard Park & Beach***

Manager Schwartz reported that the objectives are to improve the breakwater, restore the ravine outlet, restore the historic garden, and access improvements to the upper park. At this time, the Park District does not have scheduled improvements for Millard Park and Beach.

***III. Rosewood Park and Beach***

Manager Schwartz reported the objectives are to improve the ravine walkway, to renovate the playground at the upper park, and to create pathways and a designated overlook area from the upper park. The scheduled capital improvements are for the ravine walkway which will occur in 2021 and the playground renovation at the upper park in 2024.

***IV. Park Avenue Boating Facility***

Manager Schwartz reported that the 2007 Master Plan recommended a number of improvements including a marina, a harbor, and a swimming beach so the Park District issued a referendum, which was voted against, so staff went back to the community to identify broader and more feasible improvements which included an enhanced pedestrian experience and improved access to the site. Manager Schwartz reported that staff will develop a working group,

which has already been established, and a site plan to explore and determine site priorities and direction.

Manager Schwartz reported that once approved, the Lakefront Master Plan Update will be posted to the Park District website and shared with relevant Park District staff to plan for the implementation of stated objectives as it is a living document that will be reviewed and adjusted annually to meet community needs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg and seconded by Vice President Kaplan to approve the Updated Lakefront Master Plan.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

**NEW BUSINESS**

***A. Parks Foundation Update***

Commissioner Grossberg reported that the Parks Foundation is partnering with aquatics as FYI funds will be used to support 8 swimmers registered for Fall and Winter learn to swim classes. In other news, Commissioner Grossberg reported that the “Bike the Parks” event was enjoyed by 300 participants and raised \$2,600 from sponsors and \$400 from participant donors. Aside from programming and events, Commissioner Grossberg reported that the Parks Foundation is in the middle of their annual appeal and members are working diligently to find creative ways to make up for lost revenue due to the cancelation of the Champions Banquet since much of those proceeds fund the SMILE and FYI grants. Additionally, he is pleased to report that \$6,000 was used from the Michael Goldman Golf Scholarship by children in the community, and the Goldman family will replenish the scholarship funds for 2021. Lastly, Commissioner Grossberg reported that the Parks Foundation is discussing added benefits for the celebration of Martin Luther King Day, such a partnering with local shelters to provide food and clothing, and virtual options.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the Parks Foundation recognizes donors who have made significant contributions.

Commissioner Grossberg reported that he will follow up with the Parks Foundation President, Bob Bernstein to ensure those families are being recognized.

**B. Director's Report**

Executive Director Romes reported that despite that weather getting colder several people attended Golfer Appreciate Day and the Chili Open that occurred this past weekend at Sunset Valley Golf Club. So long as golfers continue to utilize the course, it will remain open throughout December. As for the outdoor driving range, this will remain open throughout November and transition into the dome as of December. Additionally, staff will continue to offer outdoor recreation so long as the weather permits or alternatives can be applied, such as heated tents. As for special events, Executive Director Romes reported that the Highland park Hauntings has been rescheduled to Thursday, October 29 due to severe storms which occurred on Friday, October 23. Other upcoming events include Reverse Trick or Treating which is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Halloween, where the beloved characters, Mike and Sully from Disney's Monster's Inc., will deliver treats to your home. In November, families can learn how to properly cook, butcher, and serve turkey like a pro as professional chef, Chez Mikey, will show you host to host the ultimate Thanksgiving dinner on Friday, November 13 at West Ridge Center. Lastly, Executive Director Romes reported that trails at the Preserve of Highland Park will be blocked off due to construction. Information can be found on the Park District website and around the site.

**C. Board Comments – None.**

**CLOSED SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg, seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)5 – the purchase or lease of real estate including discussion on whether a certain parcel of property should be acquired - for discussions between internal or external auditors and the Board.

**Roll Call:**

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

**Nay:** None

**Absent:** None

**Abstain:** None

**Motion Carried**

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:26 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:58 p.m.

**ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION IF ANY**

President Ruttenberg reported that the Park Board of Commissioners met in Closed Session under Section 2(c)5 – the purchase or lease of real estate including discussion on whether a certain parcel of property

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should be acquired - for discussions between internal or external auditors and the Board. Possible action by the Board on items discussed in closed session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Vice President Kaplan and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Romes, Secretary