

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 22, 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 6:00 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Kaplan

Absent: Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Ruttenberg

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; Executive Coordinator Hejnowski

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – None

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Executive Director Romes read the following comments submitted by the public.

Amy Haggarty

990 Judson Avenue, Highland Park

I am writing to let you know how much of an impact having Park Ave beach open this summer has had. We began as 3 friends who paddle boarded together for the past few summers, and this year our group grew to 12+. We collected together at any chance we could get and came to depend on our sessions together for friendship, support, sharing of quarantining essentials, laughs, exercise and fresh air. We marveled at how chaotic the world has become, but how peaceful and idyllic everything became when out on the water and HOW LUCKY WE ARE to live in a town with access to the beachfront. Friends in other towns and other states were so envious of the escape, the exercise, and the social distanced this activity allowed us. THANK YOU for figuring out a way to make this happen this summer, and I really hope that as a city, we can continue to think creatively to fund all aspects of our waterfront - but particularly the beach and boating access points - in the future, as this truly is the best that the north shore has to offer.

Sandy Schmidt

100 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park

I am a long-term HP resident and have been using the boat launch for many years. It has been a wonderful addition to our community and personal recreational activities for our family. We have a boat and wave rider and us the facility often. During these unprecedented times with the pandemic, having the ability to use the boat launch and beach has been wonderful for our family. We feel the park district made an excellent decision by keeping it open during these difficult times. The boat launch truly separates our community

from the surrounding towns as a valuable park district asset. Thank you for keeping this open this past season.

Lizzy Cohen

606 Rice Street, Highland Park

I am writing you tonight to send my heartfelt appreciation to the PDHP for opening up the Park Ave beach and boat launch during this time of quarantine and COVID. This summer I purchased my own paddle board and rented a spot at Park Ave - this outlet was one of things that helped me greatly over the summer through such a challenging time. We as HP residents, have the gift of Lake Michigan as our close neighbor, and I cannot thank you enough for allowing myself and others to enjoy and appreciate it this summer.

Joanna Levine

2260 Sheridan Road, Highland Park

As a resident and first-time user of the PABF, I am grateful that the committee voted to open the Park Ave boat launch for power boaters and sailors. I cannot imagine my summer without access to the beach and a launch that is just blocks from where I live. One of the most refreshing experiences has been getting to know the recurring boaters and sailors that have been frequenting Park Avenue year after year. My family and I were welcomed and embraced by the community. They are warm, welcoming, helpful, and a wealth of knowledge to the many newcomers that appeared this summer. We all take pride in our lakefront. The majority of neighboring communities have parks, pools, and tennis, but few have lakefront access like Highland Park. I know I am not alone in saying how important Park Avenue is to the community. How can we help support and promote the restoration and development of the Park Avenue Boating Facility to keep it operating for the community to enjoy? Thank you for your consideration

Sue Keno

195 Green Bay Road, Highland Park

Wanted to send a note of gratitude to the park district for opening Park Avenue launch during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is always wonderful having such an amenity and especially during these times.

Seth and Kimmy Mindel

585 Hyacinth, Highland Park

Thank you for your agility in uncertain times, opening up Park Ave for us to enjoy. We understand the challenges involved - and appreciate your flexibility this season. As a 15-year resident, there is not much more enjoyable than our beautiful lakefront and the plethora of activities it provides us all.

Bleu, Noell, Mia & Sandy Vaughn

2691 Oak Street, Highland Park

I am reaching out to let you know my family and I have never appreciated living in Highland Park as much as we did this summer. Our ability to easily enjoy boating, jet skiing, paddling, and sailing is the reason we not only got through this unusual summer, but ended up making it one our family will remember as 'one of the best family summers.' While local pools were closed, and camps and vacations cancelled, having Park Ave beach open provided the setting to be 'safely on vacation' on the water in 10 minutes. Thank you so much for allowing this to be possible by opening Park Ave and ensuring the boat launch was functional.

The Park District literally ‘saved summer’ and we are forever grateful to live not only in this beautiful lakefront community, but also to have a Park District that values and supports it.

Tracy Jacobson

1834 Mc Craren Road, Highland Park

My name is Tracy Jacobson. I am an avid paddle boarder that moved to Highland Park 4 years ago from the East Coast. My husband grew up here. When we decided to move back to the area he grew up in, my sticking point was that I had to be close to the beach and have beach access. I joined the NSYC immediately, and the lake became my second home in the summers. When COVID hit, I was so worried that my outlet would not be there for me, the lake. When you all announced that you would open Park Avenue for us boaters, it honestly changed everything for me and my family during the pandemic. We call it lake therapy. It was truly what has gotten me through this difficult time. I appreciate all your hard work in making this happen. Park Avenue is and always will be my happy place!

Brigette Wolf

995 Marion Avenue, Highland Park

Thank you so much for managing all the complexity of this summer with COVID-19 and keeping Rosewood and Park Ave Beach open, as well as the others along our shore. Those 2 in particular are such gifts you gave the community in really such a miserable time in our world. The ability to safely enjoy the beach, share with family and have the additional unique recreation space and access to Lake Michigan of Park Ave is something I cannot express enough gratitude for. You kept many sane with keeping Park Ave open – being on the water is an experience like no other and only was possible with the PDHP supporting it. Thank you for providing a bright spot all summer long. (the thanks actually continue into the fall

Jodi and Peter Mordini

1853 Sheahen Court, Highland Park

Thank you for your commitment to getting Park Avenue beach and boating facility ready for the summer season. As boaters, North Shore Yacht Club members, and citizens of Highland Park, we appreciate our beautiful lake front and enjoy the many amenities it provides us. This is why it is so important to keep up with all of the restorations needed at Park Avenue, including repairing, and/or replacing the barge. Thankfully, we were able to manage through another season, thanks to the Park District of Highland Park. However, time is of the essence, and we must get to work on the repairs if our community is to enjoy boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, sailing, and other activities in the future. There were record numbers of people enjoying the lakefront this season and we want to continue this trend. On a side note, while we were boating up and down the shores of Lake Michigan this summer, we noticed many restoration projects in progress throughout different communities, including bringing in massive boulders and building break walls in order to protect the bluffs and boating ramps.

Mary Jo Kelly

1661 Midland Avenue, Highland Park

I wanted to thank for allowing Park Avenue Beach to be opened during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. PAB is my “go to” happy place to be in the summer. During this uncertain time when many freedoms are

out of reach, it was so nice to be out on our beautiful lake. Truly a gem for our city. Thanks again for allowing myself and friends to have a wonderful summer.

Sally Martin

232 Green Bay Road, Highland Park

I wanted to take a minute to thank you for opening Park Ave. beach during COVID-19. Having the ability to launch my PWC locally was amazing. I think it saved my life; I cannot tell you how depressed I was this spring. I had traveled to Waukegan to launch a few times; it was a huge inconvenience and exhausting because we drove our PWC's back to HP each time to spend time with family and friends. Having Park Ave open was amazing. My family made new friends enjoyed nature and got a great deal of exercise. Not to mention the vitamin D that helped us is all feel better. Having the ability to access and use Park Ave beach also increased our appreciation of Highland Park's Park District and city amenities. WOW! WOW! WOW! I am so proud to have such a great Park District and community in HP. I know how difficult it was to make the decision to open and I want you all to know that your efforts are greatly appreciated. Seriously best park district on the North Shore. If you need community volunteers please let me know I want to do whatever I can to help.

Danny Hanna

51 Sheridan Road, Highland Park

I am writing to laud the Park District for opening the Park Ave Boating Facility this Summer. This was an oasis during these Pandemic times. I was able to utilize the PABF 2-3 times a week and each time, it was an escape from the craziness of today's world. I will be sad when the season is over. Having a lakefront Boating Facility is a special treasure of our community and part of the reason we purchased a home in Highland Park over neighboring Deerfield or Northbrook. Again, thank you for making it possible to have a boating season during these difficult times.

Sam Kashy

184 Oak Knoll Terrace, Highland Park

Reaching out to thank you and the PD Commissioners for the support to open PAB this year. Our family are both powerboaters and members of the NSYC. Having access enabled us to have a "normal" summer in a summer that was far from normal. With kids home for the summer this was huge source of joy for us, our friends, and their children.

Powerboating

- a) Took our kids and their friends every week (sometimes more than once per week) tubing and swimming. This was between 6-10 kids, 90% HP residents each time.
- b) Hosted "camp" for my youngest daughter's friends on the water.

NSYC

- a) Stand Up Paddle Boarding – We taught our daughters how to paddle and my wife and I went for many evening paddles along the shoreline.
- b) Sailing – I raced nearly every Sunday with the NSYC; Also went out on many evenings for fun relaxation.

The lakefront is a unique asset to our community and truly enhances the value of HP. Please continue to invest to assure safe and open access.

Kurt Meier

948 Judson Avenue, Highland Park

This has been a challenging year for all of us. The boating, sailing, and kayaking at Park Ave has been a welcome outlet - and a great way to socially distance as well.

Jaime Plotkin

346 Park Avenue, Highland Park

I am reaching out to thank the Park District of Highland Park for their efforts in allowing the North Shore Yacht Club and the boating community, to access Park Ave beach this past COVID-19 season. It made a huge difference for me mentally, physically, and emotionally this past summer. The joy and laughter experienced this summer with my paddleboard was amazing! I also enjoyed watching others paddle boarding, kayaking, jet skiing, boating, and sailing. People enjoyed family time or alone time on the beach. This was the medicine I needed to get through these challenging times. Time in nature and enjoying the outdoors during the pandemic, proved to be, for many people in the community, their medicine. The number of bikers, walkers, park goers, and hikers was obvious to everyone. Our beaches are our greatest asset to this community, in my opinion. The time and effort put forth by the Park District is appreciated by many!

Kenny and Leslie Goldstein

1206 Cambridge Court, Highland Park

I just wanted to express my gratitude for opening Park Avenue boat launch this year during the pandemic. I bought a boat launch pass and joined the North Shore Yacht Club and have enjoyed every minute of my time paddle boarding on and just enjoying the lake. All thanks to the Highland Park District for making this happen. Your folks helped us open the gate and patrolled the area making us feel safe and monitored. Beach access has made my family feel whole and at peace during this crazy time and I know it was not easy to do this on your part. We moved to Highland Park because of the lake, and in the 15 years that we have lived here (moved from the city), we have never spent so many hours on the lake! Thank you thank you!

Dina Rollman

680 Kincaid Street, Highland Park

My name is Dina Rollman, and I am a Highland Park resident. I am writing to tell you what an incredible summer I had due to being able to use Park Avenue beach. At the beginning of this summer I bought a stand-up paddle board and stored it at Park Ave. I also bought a parking pass. That meant that multiple mornings a week all summer I could leave my house in the Ravinia neighborhood and 20 minutes later be standing on my SUP board on the lake. I have been living in HP for 10 years and this was the first summer that I took advantage of the lake itself (I have a deep love for Rosewood Beach already). My friends and I had many SUP outings in the early morning, around 6 am, and got to see the sun rise and enjoy a quiet, social, and COVID-safe activity. It was truly incredible. I am so grateful that with everything else being canceled this summer (Ravinia festival, Highwood summer festivals, etc.), the Park District opened Park Ave. beach. It made all the difference for me in an otherwise strange and disappointing summer. Thank you!

Chadd Berkun

856 Judson Avenue, Highland Park

Please add my comments below to those of other PABF users at tonight's meeting. Thank you Park board commissioners for opening PABF this season. Despite the many challenges my family did have an enjoyable season. Please extend my thanks to all of your staff that made the season possible. Looking forward to 2021 and beyond.

Stephen L. Knapp

700 College Place, Highland Park

I wanted to reach out and thank the park board and staff for making Park Av. happen this year. I think you all will agree we had unprecedented use of the lakefront this year. With all the current issues happening, the lake front and all associated activities were desperately needed. A lot of residents would have suffered both physically and mentally without it. I look forward to next year and hopefully more normal operations! Here is an image from 9/13:

Kim and Adi Mor

67 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park

I wanted to take a moment to thank the HP Park District for figuring out how to open the beach and boat area this season especially with COVID concerns. It brought a lot of Joy to our family and the community as a whole. It was wonderful seeing how much the area was enjoyed this year and looking forward to next year already. Great Job!

Andrew Cohen

271 Charal Lane, Highland Park

I wanted to take a minute to send a huge THANK YOU to you for allowing the Park Avenue beach and boating facility to open this summer. As Highland Park residents for the last 15 years, my wife and I have said many times all summer how lucky we are to live in Highland Park and to have access to the lakefront and the Park Avenue facility. We were down there every Saturday and Sunday, and many times during the week as well. In the late spring we purchased a wave runner. The entire family had an absolute blast every time we went down to the Park Avenue boating facility. As bad as COVID has made things this summer with the kid's summer programs being cancelled, having the PWC and having access to Park Avenue for launching turned what could have been a miserable summer into a fantastic summer. So again, thank you for allowing the Park Avenue facility to open this year. We can only look forward to next summer at the Park Avenue facility.

Brett & Marina Tolpin

283 Leslee Lane, Highland Park

I wanted to voice support for the decision to open Park Ave. boating during the COVID Pandemic and enabling the activity this summer. For nearly 10 years, I have parked my motorboat at the boating facility on Park and used the boat ramp, except this summer. The difficulty we had signing up in spring due to technology issues with the PD website and indecisiveness by the city/PD of if and when the Park Avenue boat ramp would open compelled us to slip our boat at Waukegan Harbor this summer for the first time. The decision was not easy but the investment in owning and using a boat is considerable and there given the risk that access would be denied and/or restricted, this was the best option. Waukegan is a long way to

drive to access the water, but they opened up in April and made it easy while Highland Park would not commit, which ultimately reduced the season to 50% of that of Waukegan. Boating in Highland Park and specifically Park Avenue is a great asset and historically, the HPPD has done a great job. We have every intention of returning once the city/PD decisively opens up boating for the next season and there are others like us that would like nothing more than to come back to boat at Park Avenue. We hope that improvements will continue to be made and that a full season to access Lake Michigan is restored next summer.

Lynn West

1342 Ferndale Ave, Highland Park

Kudos to you for stepping up to the plate during these unprecedented times. I have enjoyed many hours of kayaking on the lake. The patrol team has been so very friendly and helpful. One young man actually got help for a sea gull injured by a fishing hook. Please let me and other members of the Yacht Club know if there is anything we can do to help.

Michael West

1342 Ferndale Ave, Highland Park

As a Highland Park resident whose nearly continuous association with NSYC and use of the PABF dates back to 1977, I would like to commend and thank the Board for all their efforts in finding COVID compatible ways to keep this valuable community asset open and functioning this season. WELL DONE

Tom and Kim Corning

261 Laurel Ave, Highland Park

Just a quick note of appreciation for opening the Park Ave Boat ramp during COVID this Summer. My family and I so much appreciate being able to use this valuable community resource, especially when so many other public facilities are still on shut down. We know that this has been a difficult period for the Park District with the challenges COVID brings. Your staff has been always available to help when information was needed. I want to make special mention of Robyn Zullo. Her patience in handling security and access to the ramp has been huge for us; and especially in light of what is going on with current lake levels. These conditions we know made it especially difficult to maintain the facility and to keep the boat ramp open. Thank you. My family and I were able during this period to launch our boat on a regular basis and access the wonderful asset that lake Michigan is. My name is Tom Corning, and my address is 261 Laurel Ave in Highland Park, just up the hill from the boat ramp.

Anne and Tim Mahon

1782 Clifton Avenue, Highland Park

Now that the season is winding down, we wanted to take a minute and thank you, and your team, for opening and managing Park Avenue Boating this season. We know things are very difficult and you have many constraints but that you allowed the community to use that gem was wonderful. It is always a terrific asset and especially this year, it was very important.

Stacy Winternitz

1130 Hilary Lane, Highland Park

This is the first year that I have used the yacht club. It MADE my summer. I mainly paddle boarded and I have new appreciation for the lake and living in HP. Thank you for keeping it open this year. It also was a welcome diversion for my 15-year-old who loves the lake now as much as I.

Justin Tubero

647 Onwentsia Avenue, Highland Park

"My neighbors and my own family that live near Park Avenue beach would like to formally congratulate and thank the Park District of Highland Park and the board for the courage that they showed earlier this year to look beyond the uncertainty that was swirling around them and the courage they showed in opening the beaches and more specifically Park Avenue Beach and boating facility. Many of my neighbors and myself are down at Park Avenue Beach are down there every single day, (even in the winter) and if you all could have experienced:

- The smiling eyes when people greet one another from behind the mask. All just happy to be by the water on a sunny day.
- The leashed new dogs everyone adopted or purchased. The new K-9 family members all greet one another for the first time. So fun to see.
- So many daily determined faces of those committed to shedding the "quarantine weight" by pushing themselves up the hill and using the Park avenue beach entrance and exit hills as a challenge they pushed themselves through.
- The stunningly colorful sails from the sailboats racing in what can only be described as a colorful choreographed dance on water.
- The early morning athleticism and peacefulness shown by the large deeply committed paddleboard community, all paddling while greeting the rising sun together over the lake we are so lucky to live near.
- The seamlessly executed water safety instruction done by the yacht club volunteer instructors brought so much water safety awareness to the community.
- The beautifully gliding Hawaiian outrigger canoes and the teams of canoers and kayakers with their early morning beachside /socially distanced workout regimen while the rest of us are still sleeping.
- The sincere care and sense of community took to clean up the parking lot and beach, time and again when the storms rolled through and did damage or made a mess of the beach areas.
- The love and spirit of inclusion that the members of the North Shore yacht club shows on a daily basis to the inquiring citizens and the community at large by sharing the love of the water while also keeping a watchful eye on the beaches to insure safety is always in the forefront of beach side activities.

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- The happy brief chats between Park District employees and the citizens all showing each other appreciation and respect while merely talking about how beautiful of a spot we have down there and how nice the weather has been.
- The many wave runners showing off their incredible skill in the open water while also being respectful of those launching, teaching, or learning, at the south bay.
- The free paddleboard lessons for the kids of highland park done at proper distances using a new invention that uses a floating rope and safety buoys. Invented right here in Highland Park at Park Avenue Beach.
- The sandcastles, the beach glass hunting, the beach stone gathering, the first annual race, and so much more fun and happiness.

If you could have experienced all of this. It would make you even more proud to serve the community in the capacity that you have chosen. All of this was all possible because you looked beyond mere uncertainty in such an uncertain time and chose to act in accordance with the desires and needs of the very large beach loving community of Highland Park. Park Avenue Beach is a mainstay of this community and the fact that you all pushed to get it open this year and working hard with the North Shore Yacht club to make sure it was a good experience, was an exercise in collaboration that from my very simple perspective should be congratulated. Keep up your focus on the lakefront as it is a special and rare resource that should be cared for with the utmost love and diligence while being used by the community to help our children learn why Highland Park is as unique as it is. I can honestly attest to the fact that the many kids that spent their time beaching, boating, canoeing, paddle boarding, kayaking, and sailing, at Park Avenue Beach this season all now further understand why Highland Park is as unique and as a special community that it is.

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice President Kaplan asked that Item C, the 2020 Parks ADA Pathway Improvement Project, be removed from the consent agenda and discussed separately.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to remove Item C, the 2020 Parks ADA Pathway Improvement Project, from the consent agenda and to approve the Minutes from the August 11, 2020 Workshop Meeting; Minutes from the August 25, 2020 Regular Board Meeting; and the Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$1,487,290.77.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Kaplan

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Ruttenberg

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

2020 PARKS ADA PATHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Director Smith reported that the Park District of Highland Park received four sealed bids on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, for materials and labor to complete the 2020 Parks ADA Pathway Improvements

Project. The objective of this project is to improve ADA access pathways and features at Cloverdale Park, Devonshire Park, and Woodridge Park. This work is necessary to meet ADA requirements.

The low bidder for this project was Continental Construction, for a total project cost of \$228,579, which included the base bid for Cloverdale and Devonshire Park and the alternate for Woodridge Park. While the Park District had issues with this contractor in the past and eventually removed them from the job for the Mooney Park Playground Replacement in 2013, staff felt comfortable recommending them to the Park Board of Commissioners after speaking with references. However, this past Friday, staff were made aware of other agencies who had similar and additional issues with this contractor, so staff contacted those agencies to discover that Continental Construction failed to pay several sub-contractors, significant errors occurred on the job, and they failed to provide required paperwork, which resulted in removal from the job or incomplete jobs.

Director Smith reported that the second-lowest bidder was Emerald Site Services, Inc., for a total project cost of \$259,500. After contacting references staff found the reviews to be favorable, and staff recommends the Park Board of Commissioners approve the base bid for Cloverdale and Devonshire Parks and alternate bid for Woodridge Park with Emerald Site Services, Inc. as the lowest, responsible bidder.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know how contractors find out who was the lowest bidder.

Director Smith reported that this project was a sealed bid, which are due by said date, and opened during a public meeting where the results are read aloud. Due to the pandemic, bid openings are currently conducted virtually and open for anyone to attend. After the bid opening staff review the bids, check references, post bid results on the website, and provide a recommendation to the Park Board of Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg to approve Emerald Site Services, Inc., which is the second-lowest bidder and the lowest responsible bidder for \$259,500 as the contractor for the 2020 Park ADA Pathway Improvement Project.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Kaplan

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Ruttenberg

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

TREASURES REPORT & FINANCIAL FORECAST

Director Peters provided an update of the District's financial forecasts and presented a report from the September 17, 2020, Finance Committee.

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 August 31, 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 December 31, 2020. As of today, staff are projecting to have \$10.8 million in cash on hand 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 "worst case scenario" projections made in June for the end of the year. Director Peters reported that the District budgeted a \$3 million surplus for the end of the year. Due to the pandemic and its financial impacts, staff projected a \$1.8 million surplus for the end of the year. She reported that the overall reduction between our original budget vs. the projections is a \$1.2 million deficit. As of August 31, the Park District has generated a little over \$10 million in actual revenue vs. the \$9.4 million projected, which is \$843,000 higher than projected. As for expenses, the Park District has spent \$8.37 million as of August 31 vs. the \$8.66 million projected, which is a \$286,000 positive variance. The year-to-date net difference, which compares the actual vs. projections is a \$1.1 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, the "worst case scenario" projections made in June 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 a 2.4 million operating deficit for the end of the year. Due to the pandemic, staff projected the deficit to increase by \$1.3 million. As of August 31, 2020, the District has generated \$4.35 million in actual revenue vs. our projections of \$3.52 million, which is an \$832,000 surplus in revenue. As for expenses, the Park District has spent \$5.74 million vs. the \$5.71 million projected, for a net difference of \$25,000 more in actual expenses vs. projected. She reported that the year-to-date net difference, which compares actual vs. projections is \$807,288. Expenses have come in higher than projected due to payroll expenses. However, the Park District has a \$1.1 million surplus in overall revenue.

Monthly Payroll Budget vs. Actual vs. Projection

Director Peters reported that the District budgeted around \$10 million in payroll expenses. However, through 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 August 31 are higher than staff projected. The actual expenses were \$4.9 million vs. the \$4.78 million projected, so the Park District has spent \$126,270 more than projected. However, the Park District could not have a \$1.1 million surplus in overall revenue without increasing payroll expenses due to increased programming. Once COVID-19 struck, the District's payroll expenses decreased until June. When the state began preparing and training for Phase 4 guidelines in July, this allowed the Park District to offer more services.

Commissioner Bernstein asked if it would be accurate to say that the financial conditions of the Park District are stable and solid.

Director Peters reported that the Park District will be able to pay the debt certificate and the reserves are healthy, so she would confirm that the Park District's financials are stable.

Commissioner Bernstein thanked staff for their hard work as the financial reports are easy to understand and follow. He reported that the Finance Committee liaisons will continue to monitor the Park District's financials.

Commissioner Grossberg agreed with Commissioner Bernstein and he complimented Executive Director Romes regarding his planning efforts during such difficult and unprecedented times.

Finance Calendar

Director Peters highlighted key changes to the 2020/2021 finance schedule which includes, filing for the Cares Act which is due October 15, the DRAFT HP Field House Pro Forma and Business Plan for the Recreation Center of Highland Park presented December 8, filing for FEMA will be submitted by December 21, the 2021 budget will be presented to the Park Board of Commissioners January 21, 2021, and the budget will be approved on February 23, 2021. In 2019, the budget was presented to the Park Board of Commissioners in November and the budget was approved in December of that same year. The delay is recommended by the District's legal counsel and auditors. Staff also found that many neighboring districts will also follow this schedule. She reported that the Park District no longer needs to amend the budget, which was originally planned since the funds to support the construction of the NSSRA facility are in the capital fund instead of the special recreation fund. However, as the amount is shown in transfers, an amendment is not necessary. Additionally, due to the impacts of COVID-19, the district's expenses and revenue will be significantly different from the figures filed with Lake County. However, our auditors, Sikich LLP, and legal counsel reported that the Park District does not need to amend the 2020 budget. Director Peters reported that our auditors will most likely release a statement for the Park District to place in the CAFR package regarding the impacts of the pandemic. Thankfully, Director Peters reported that none of these changes will negatively impact the Park District GFOA certificate.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if it is the opinion of the Park District's auditors and legal counsel, that by not amending the budget, that it will not negatively impact the Park District's triple AAA bond rating.

Director Peters reported that she has not heard anything from the Park District auditors regarding negative impacts on the bond rating should the District not amend the budget. She will follow up with both parties to ensure the bond rating will not be impacted by our decision.

Treasures Report

Director Peters reported that the Special Recreation Fund is trending favorably due to budgeted tax receipts and the District has yet to receive the \$350,000 bill in contractual services for the NSSRA building. As for the Capital Fund, it is significantly under budget due to the reduction of projects from the pandemic. As for the General Corporate Fund, it has a favorable variance due to reducing payroll, expenses, and a timing difference in health insurance. As for the Debt Service Fund, it has a favorable variance due to timing differences from tax receipts. Lastly, she reported that the Recreation Fund has an unfavorable variance which is due to the closure and reduction of services from the pandemic.

President Ruttenberg would like to know what is happening with the development of the NSSRA building.

Executive Director Romes reported that demolition was completed in February, however, construction has been delayed since the Illinois Department of Natural Resource (IDNR) has not awarded the PARC Grant, Therefore, NSSRA is delaying construction until a grant recipient is selected. If awarded, those grant dollars would be used for the construction of the new facility and will reduce some of the costs the Park District will provide in support of NSSRA.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Rosewood Beach Revetment Project

Vice President Kaplan asked that this item be removed from the agenda due to the absence of Commissioner Flores Weisskopf and President Ruttenberg. He asked that this item be reviewed at the October 13 Workshop Meeting.

B. Approval of the Construction Bid for the Preserve of Highland Park

Manager Grill reported that the Park District issued a bid request for the construction project at the Preserve of Highland Park on August 18, 2020. A pre-bid meeting was attended by nine vendors on August 25 and the Park District received three sealed bids on September 10 for materials and labor to complete the project.

The low bidder for this project was Team REIL Construction, which the Park District has worked with in the past. Manager Grills was pleased to report that staff was able to negotiate and reduce the base bid from \$1,358,090 to \$1,172,690 and reduce the alternate path work bids for a total project cost of \$1,204,290.00. Manager Grills reported that the Park District will have \$416,119 left in the budget for the conversion of the Highland Park Country Club, which has been renamed as the Preserve of Highland Park, once construction with Team RIEL is complete.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know if the existing cart paths will be repaired by Team RIEL Construction.

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Manager Grill reported that alternates A9 and A10 are locked in costs for path work repairs, which includes the existing cart paths. With no further questions, Manager Grills reported that staff recommends approval from the Park Board of Commissioners for the 2020 Preserve of Highland Park Project base bid (minus items L7 and section N) and alternates A3 – A10 from Team REIL Construction in the amount of \$1,204,290.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know what the site will look like by December of 2021.

Manager Grill reported that the site will have specialized gardens, plantings, completed path work, and two overlooks, and finally the gateway path and the connector trail will be built. Additionally, there is a shoreline project for the IPA, which staff are meeting with the contractor this month.

Commissioner Grossberg would like to know what the center of the old golf course will look like in June of 2021.

Manager Grill reported that the shoreline work will be almost complete, quite a bit of infrastructure will be done, however, most planting will occur into the Fall of 2021.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know what the Park District will do to marketing the new nature preserve.

Director Gogola reported that once the bid is approved, staff can begin messaging what the progress will be, promote the grand opening, and so forth so the marketing plan will be similar to the one for Sunset Valley Golf Club.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg to approve the Construction Bid for the Preserve of Highland Park.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Kaplan

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Flores Weisskopf, President Ruttenberg

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation Update

Commissioner Grossberg reported that the Parks Foundation is working to launch two fundraising programs. First is the “Bike the Parks” event which currently has 234 people registered to raise \$2600 from sponsorship. Second, is the annual appeal.

B. Summer Recreation Usage Report

Assistant Director Maliszewski provided an overview of the financial impacts, significant changes, and the tireless efforts of staff who created and ran programs this past Summer. He reported the amount of planning, flexibility, versatility, and creativity applied to these programs was a true testament of staff’s abilities.

As a reminder, Phase 3 of the Governor’s Restore Illinois Plan was in effect from May 5th through June 25th, which permitted gatherings of 10 or less. All participants and instructors were required to social distance and wear mask and extensive cleaning measures were implemented along with activity-specific guidelines. Phase 4 permitted gatherings to increase to 50 or less and reduced the activity-specific restrictions. However, social distancing, face coverings, and extensive cleaning measures were still required.

i. Summer Camp

Assistant Director Maliszewski provided a report comparing the 2019 and 2020 Summer Camp financials. He reported that registration figures for 2020 do not represent unique users, unlike most of the figures in 2019. He is pleased to report that athletic, tennis, and heller camps were very sought after this summer, and were offered weekly. Due to the restrictions provided by the Governor, the Park District was unable to offer its traditional summer camp. Therefore, staff created Camp Hometown which was marketed and catered to families with an essential daycare need. When comparing gross revenues, in 2019 the Park District generated \$1.6 million from summer camp as opposed to this summer which the District generated \$320,797. This is a 19% revenue capture in comparison to the previous year.

Staff are planning to follow the Phase 4 guidelines of Restore Illinois Plan for 2021 Summer Camps, while preparing to transition to traditional programming should the state enter Phase 5 of the plan. The branding of Camp Hometown will continue. However, staff are increasing to 7 weeks of camp, running from June 21st through August 6th weekdays from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Additionally themed camps will be re-introduced, such as Spotlighters and Trekkers. As for before and after camp, the Park District will only offer after camp at each location so campers cannot intermingle. He is pleased to report, that field trips outside of Highland Park and swim lessons at Hidden Creek AquaPark will be re-introduced. Finally, the Park District will still offer weekly unique camps, such as tennis and athletics since these were so successful in 2020. Registration for summer camps are anticipated to begin in January of 2021.

ii. General Summer Programming

Assistant Director Maliszewski provided a report comparing the 2019 and 2020 Summer programming financials. The first line item reviewed was athletics. Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that leagues were restructured several times due to guidelines provided

by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) this summer, which resulted in a 50% reduction in revenue from 2019. While the registration figures may not reflect this reduction, Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that the league's fees were significantly reduced because of the DCEO guidelines.

The next line item reviewed was Centennial Ice Arena. He reported that the ice arena was closed due to the approved compressor replacement, so there was a significant loss in revenue since gymnastics was the only program within that facility generating revenue. As for tennis, outdoor lessons were highly sought after this summer, so there were little changes when comparing 2019 to 2020. As for Recreation, which includes ParkSchool and similar programs, there were little changes. He was pleased to report that Safety Village was a highly sought-after program, in which staff was able to provide more instructors and pull families from the waitlist. Overall, Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that summer programming bounced back much better than camp, capturing 70% of revenue year to date.

As for 2021 staff are going to follow the Phase 4 guidelines of Restore Illinois to develop programs, with some virtual options. However, most will be offered outdoors and in-person. Staff feel residences have a desire to stay outside, so programming is being developed around those desires. Additionally, the Park District will offer "Create-A-Class" programs based on needs and interests provided by micro-groups, which could be a small group of homeschoolers. Once again, full-time staff will be available to teach, coach, and instruct the recreational needs of the community and supplies will be re-purposed to reduce costs.

Vice President Kaplan commended staff for all the work completed in the past 6 months, stating that he feels the Park District has come through with flying colors considering the challenges we were up against.

Commissioner Bernstein thanked staff for their flexibility and the ability to think outside of the box. He is confident that no matter what the Park District is dealt with staff will continue to find creative ways to keep the community engaged.

C. Director's Report

Executive Director Romes reported that Sunset Valley Golf Club is having a record year, the resident usage for August has almost doubled, and he is pleased to report that staff are providing a much-needed service to the community. Some upcoming events at the golf course include the Illinois Junior Golf Association Tournament October 3rd through 4th. Additionally, the rest of the District has found ways to provide enriching events to the community while adhering to the guidelines and keeping safety as a top priority. These events include the Highland Park Hauntings, which is a sold-out event, occurring on Friday, October 23rd, which participants will drive from the Debbie Gottlieb Beitler Dog Park to Deer Creek Racquet Club, where they'll find many haunting scenes and zombies lurking throughout the woods. The Park District is also offering an outdoor screening of Hocus Pocus. Tickets are still available for the screening on Thursday, October 15th, whereas tickets are sold out for the Friday, October 16th feature. Additionally, the

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Highland Park Golf Learning Center is offering Halloween mini golf beginning Thursday, October 22nd through Sunday, October 25th. Families can also enjoy “Reverse Trick-or-Treating” where families will be visiting by Mike and Sully, from Monsters Inc. Mike and Sully will arrive at your home between 9:30 a.m. through 12:30 p.m. on Halloween, where children can take pictures and receive a bucket of candy. Finally, the Park District is offering a variety of online costume contests for families to take advantage of throughout October. Winners from each category will be selected on October 30th with their photos posted to the Park District’s Facebook page.

C. Board Comments – None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Romes", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Brian Romes, Secretary