

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 27, 2021**

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, 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; Manager Johnson; Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Executive Director Romes provided a brief update regarding the recent notice of a public hearing from the City of Highland Park Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the construction of a proposed equipment storage station at the Bob O’Link Golf Club. The proposed construction site will be adjacent to Larry Fink Park; however, the area is currently inaccessible so staff feels construction and the operational equipment storage station will not impact the Park District.

President Ruttenberg reported that there is no reason to object to the application pending before the City since construction and the operational equipment storage station will not impact the District.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA – None

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg and seconded by Vice President Kaplan to approve the Minutes from the March 9, 2021 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes from the March 30, 2021 Regular Board Meeting, the Park Avenue Gate Non-Exclusive Special License Agreement with the City of Highland Park, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$1,081,552.37.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURERS REPORT

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

Director Peters presented the District's chart of 2021 operations which examines the General and Recreation Funds comparing the budgeted vs. projected cash on hand at the end of each month. As of December 31, 2021, the Park District budgeted to have about \$12.2 million in cash on hand. However, as of March 31, staff are projecting that to increase to \$13.6 million. She reminded the Finance Committee Liaisons that the General and Recreation Funds have a 25% reserve policy, which based on the 2021 expenditures is about a \$4.1 million reserve balance.

Operations (General and Recreation Funds) Budget vs. Actual

As of March 31, 2021, staff budgeted \$1.49 million in operating revenue and she is pleased to report the actual revenue is \$1.63 million, surpassing the budgeted amount. Additionally, the actual expenses are significantly less than the budgeted amount. The actual expenses as of March 31, were \$2.46 million vs. the budgeted \$3.16 million, resulting in a year-to-date net surplus of \$835,208.10. When comparing the District's current financial status to a three-year average pre-covid (2017 – 2019), the year-to-date monthly net difference is a \$76,617.89 shortfall.

General Fund

As of March 31, 2021, actual revenue is trending with the budgeted amount of \$55,833, whereas actual expenses are significantly less than the budgeted amount. The actual expenses as of March 31, were \$831,386 vs. the budgeted \$1.13 million, which contributed to the resulting year-to-date net surplus of \$281,603.81.

Recreation Fund

As of March 31, 2021, staff budgeted \$1.43 million in revenue, whereas the actual revenue is slightly higher at \$1.57 million. Much like the general fund, actual expenses are significantly less than the budgeted amount. The actual expenses as of March 31, were \$1.63 million vs. the budgeted \$2.04 million, resulting in a year-to-date net surplus of \$553,604.29.

Special Recreation Fund

Director Peters reported that this fund is trending as expected.

Debt Service Fund

Director Peters reported that this fund is trending as expected.

Capital Fund

Director Peters reported that the \$64,925.25 year-to-date net difference is due to timing differences.

Cumulative Monthly Payroll Actual vs. Budget

As of March 31, the Park District budgeted \$1.69 million in expenditures, and she is pleased to report that the actual expenses are slightly less at \$1.54 million, resulting in a year-to-date savings of \$148,211.11.

Non-Cumulative Monthly Payroll Actual vs. Budget

For the month of March, the Park District budgeted \$620,404.53 in expenditures, whereas the actual expenses are slightly less at \$565,056.33, resulting in a month-to-date savings of \$55,348.20.

Conclusion

Director Peters reported that several programs and services were canceled until mid-January due to COVID-19 mitigation measures. Fortunately, that allowed the Park District to significantly reduce payroll expenses resulting in a \$148,000 savings. Additionally, the number of people being vaccinated is increasing, while positivity rates and hospitalizations are decreasing so the Park District has seen a significant increase in Spring and Summer registrations resulting in an \$835,208 surplus in revenue. Indoor tennis had a \$254,000 surplus of actual revenue vs. budgeted and golf had a \$110,435 surplus. Furthermore, when comparing the pre-covid three-year average to the current year, the District has reduced the shortfall to \$77,000. Lastly, the Park District is continuing to receive unbudgeted financial support, which includes \$200,000 in property taxes.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the \$77,000 shortfall is a net figure or revenue.

Director Peters reported that the \$77,000 shortfall is a net figure.

Commissioner Grossberg requested that staff update the financial forecasts to include a 2019 vs. 2021 comparison, rather than the three-year average.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Hidden Creek AquaPark Update

Director Carr reported that the state guidelines, PDRMA, and the IPRA aquatics roundtable guided the District's operational plans which have been reviewed by the District's Safety Coordinator. Typically, the aquapark can accommodate up to 1,000 bathers, but the state guidelines and IDPH are only permitting pools and aquaparks to operate at 50% capacity, with groups sizes of 50 people. Multiple groups are permitted so long as they can always maintain 30ft apart, and smaller groups within each group of 50 need to adhere to the social distancing guidelines. Groupings apply to anyone on the pool deck, so the maximum capacity has been significantly reduced to 100 bathers. Due to the limited capacity, reservations will be required to access the aquapark. Guests can reserve 2hour time blocks, which can be made up to 3 days in advance. Regarding face coverings, they are not required when in the pool, traveling from the pool to water features, or when seated in a lounge chair, however, staff will be required to always wear their face coverings, unless in a guard chair or in the pool.

Director Carr shared an aerial image of the aquapark, revealing the two zones created to ensure groups of 50 bathers always maintain 30ft apart. As a reminder, zoning is specific to the pool deck, not the pool and water features. For instance, if a guest is seated in zone two, and they wanted to utilize the splash pad they can do so, even though the splash pad is in zone one. He reported that during normal operations there are 225 chairs on the deck, but due to the limited capacity and zoning, there will be 120 -140 chairs on the deck, in pods with two or four chairs. Currently, staff are developing plans to address distancing guidelines when waiting in line to utilize water features and the splash pad will permit a maximum of 20 guests at a time. Lastly, concessions will not be available this summer, so staff are exploring other alternatives such as food trucks and vending machines.

As for the operational schedule, the aquapark will be open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. On weekdays, lap swim will be available from 5:30 – 10:00 a.m., and in the evenings from 6:45 – 7:45 p.m., Aquafit classes will be offered from 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. PDHP camps will utilize the aquapark from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 pm. Due to the limited capacity, the aquapark will not be available to external camps. Open swim will be available from 2:15 – 6:30 p.m. As a reminder guests are able to reserve 2hour time blocks during this time. Lastly, the HPAC has the aquapark rented weeknights from 8:00 – 9:30 p.m. Weekends, lap swim will be available from 6:00 – 10:00 a.m. Rental party reservations can be made for groups up to 50 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Open swim will be available from 12:00 – 7:00 p.m. and private rentals are available in the evenings from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. after the facility closes.

As for pricing and memberships, Director Carr reported that the District will not be offering an annual membership due to the guidelines. Neighboring Park Districts such as Wilmette, Glenview, and Northbrook have vetoed the annual membership as well. Instead, the District will be offering a full-season lap swim pass, which members can use at the aquapark or the Recreation Center of Highland

Park. The full-season lap swim pass is \$139 for residents, \$159 for non-residents, and \$124 for seniors. Only 150 sales are permitted. Guests will not be able to purchase a daily lap swim pass at the aquapark, however, this option is available at the RCHP. Current RCHP aquatic members can utilize the aquapark for lap swim. As for open swim, daily passes are available, \$10 for residents and \$16 for non-residents. Lastly, staff are offering a summer family fun pass, which is a 10-visit pass that is \$70 for residents and \$112 for non-residents. Overall, staff are anticipating meeting the budgeted revenue even with the reduced capacities and limitations and have mid and late-season membership options available should the state enter the Bridge Plan or Phase 5 of Restore Illinois.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf would like to know how staff plans to accommodate low-income residents wishing to visit the aquapark.

Director Carr reported that the family fun pass is an option through the grant in aid program.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf requested that staff reach out to families who have received financial assistance in the past to inform them of the scholarship program which can be used toward the family fun pass at the aquapark.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know if the 15minute increments between programs is enough time for proper cleaning and sanitization between groups.

Director Carr reported that staff feels the 15minute increments between programs will suffice since staff will be required to spot clean throughout the day to ensure the aquapark is sanitized and safe for use.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know if staff are budgeting the aquapark to operate at a loss.

Director Carr reported that staff budgeted a \$150,000 loss for the aquapark.

President Ruttenberg would like to know how staff plans to manage the splash pad to ensure there are no more than 20users at a time.

Director Carr reported that an employee will be responsible for managing the access gate into the splash pad. Additionally, parents and/or guardians are not included in the capacity limit, instead, employees are counting the number of children playing in the splash pad.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the aquapark typically operates at a loss.

Executive Director Romes reported that each year is different, however, in most cases the aquapark operates at a loss.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Resolution 2021-03 A Declaration Honoring Lori Flores Weisskopf

Executive Director Romes presented Commissioner Flores Weisskopf with Resolution 2021-03, which is a declaration Honoring her and her contributions to the Park District while serving as a Park Board Commissioner from May 2011 through April 2021. He reported that the Park District of Highland Park Board of Commissioners wishes to recognize one of its most dedicated and distinguished board members serving for ten years as a volunteer and Lori Flores Weisskopf's service to the Park District of Highland Park spanned a period of growth and development for the Park District including the renovations of Rosewood Beach, Deer Creek Racquet Club, Recreation Center of Highland Park and Sunset Valley Golf Club; construction of a new Parks and Golf Operations Center; creation of the Parks Foundation of Highland Park; added amenities at Heller Nature Center; acquisition, naming, and transformation of The Preserve of Highland Park; numerous improvements in our parks, most notably, the playground renovations at Kennedy Park, Danny Cunniff Park, and Sunset Woods Park, along with accomplishments which vastly enriched recreation opportunities for the residents of the Park District of Highland Park; and

During her term on the Park Board, the Park District of Highland Park adopted its 10-year Master Plan, GreenPrint 2024; successfully completed its 2012-2016 Strategic Plan and implemented the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan; served as a Board Liaison to several project committees; adopted emergency resolutions and measures to safely and successfully carry the Park District throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic; all while keeping residents' taxes in check, balancing the Park District budget, adopting a comprehensive fund balance policy, and decreasing the District's reliance on taxpayer funding.

While Lori Flores Weisskopf was in office, the Park District of Highland Park expanded its programming and community services, its commitment to diversity and inclusion through the SMILE program and its support of NSSRA, created record-breaking attendance at community-wide events, including the Martin Luther King Day of Service, Fourth Fest, Autumn Fest, and numerous Halloween events.

During her tenure, the Park District of Highland Park was recognized as a Distinguished Accredited Agency by IPRA/IAPD and won numerous awards, including IPRA Facility of the Year Award for Rosewood Beach and Sunset Valley Golf Club and Program of the Year for ParkSchool, American Institute of Architects - Distinguished Building Award for Rosewood Beach, Chicago Building Congress Merit Award for Rosewood Beach, American Shore and Beach Preservation – Best Restored Beach Award for Rosewood Beach, United States Tennis Association Facility of the Year for Deer Creek Racquet Club, Lake County Storm Water Management Award for Skokie River Woods, ten Government Finance Officers Association Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Lori Flores Weisskopf's service as Park Board Commissioner included hundreds of hours attending numerous Park Board meetings and public hearings to improve the delivery of recreation services and facilities and leaves an indelible mark on the community.

Therefore, be it hereby declared that the Park District of Highland Park Board of Commissioners honors the dedicated service of Lori Flores Weisskopf to the Park District of Highland Park and her community.

A motion was made by Vice President Kaplan and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg to approve Resolution 2021-03, A Declaration Honoring Lori Flores Weisskopf and Her Contributions to the Park District of Highland Park While Serving as a Park Board Commissioner from May 2011 through April 2021.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

President Ruttenberg reported that today is the end of one chapter in the life of the Park District. The growth of the District into a top tier of the prestigious park districts in our state is due in no small measure to the contributions and efforts of Lori Flores Weisskopf. Resolution 2021-03 does not tell the whole story of the Park District benefited from her services.

Commissioner Flores Weisskopf thanked Executive Director Romes and President Ruttenberg for the resolution and their kind words. She thanked her fellow commissioners and park district staff, reporting that it has been a privilege to serve as an elected official. She truly enjoyed serving as a commissioner for the last ten years, as she fully supports and stands behinds the district's programs and services. She commended staff for their creativity and efforts, as her children have participated in several programs. Additionally, she commended staff for their customer service skills ensuring the community feels welcome when visiting facilities. She wished the remaining members of the Park Board the best of luck and welcomed Commissioner Elect Freeman to the Board. She thanked President Ruttenberg for his friendship and his support over the years. While her term with the Park District has concluded, she is going to continue to

be an active and engaged volunteer since she is debating between a housing commission or a human relations commission position with the City of Highland Park.

B. Parks Foundation Update

Commissioner Grossberg reported that Rafael Labrador is the new president of the Parks Foundation, and while Bob Bernstein will continue to assist, this is a much-needed relief for Mr. Bernstein as he has been serving as president for several years. Additionally, he is impressed with the members of the community who volunteer their time to serve on the Parks Foundation, and he feels the foundation's financial governance, fundraising, and marketing efforts are becoming more successful thanks to the creative ideas and efforts from those volunteers.

As for current and upcoming events, he reminded the Park Board of Commissioners that Fitness in the Park is currently going on and he would like the Park Board of Commissioners to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 24 for the grand opening of the Youth Golf Development Center.

As for the Kids Helping Kids campaign and summer internships, he is pleased to report that six high school volunteers are serving on the student board, and the foundation will receive a percentage of proceeds from their upcoming mid-May restaurant week bingo fundraiser, which participants go to local restaurants and receive a bingo stamp for a chance to win prizes. Summer internship opportunities are still available; however, the Parks Foundation has already begun interviewing interested college students.

Executive Director Romes reported that Rafael Labrador and Bob Bernstein will provide an update at the May 11 Workshop Meeting.

C. Director's Report

Executive Director Romes provided updates for spring and summer events.

1. The Spring Ice Show is Friday, May 14 and Saturday, May 15. This year's show "Skate U" features 48 skaters, 14 soloists, and 2 Showcase teams performing to music that inspires skaters to pursue their dreams. Under IDPH guidelines the Park District is able to sell 104 tickets per show, so tickets will only be available to families with children participating in the show.
2. The Youth Golf Development Center Grand Opening Outing is Monday, May 24, which is currently sold out with 130 players.
3. Athletics will be offering a 16inch Father's Day softball tournament on Thursday, June 17 through Saturday, June 19.

As for summer events, the District's traditional 4th Fest will not take place due to COVID guideline restrictions, however, staff have developed a variety of safe smaller-scale events to provide to the community over the holiday which include:

1. Firecracker Baseball Tournament beginning July 1 through 4 for ages 9U - 13U. The tournament will be held at various fields throughout the District.
2. Virtual Firecracker 5k is July 2 through 5, where participants run a 5k at their own leisure and report their time back for prizes.
3. On the morning of July 3, the Recreation Center of Highland Park is offering a Firecracker Family Bootcamp where families compete against each other in fitness activities for prizes. This class is open to all ages.
4. The evening of July 3, the Park District is offering a Drive in Movie, the Sandlot, at the Recreation Center of Highland Park parking lot.
5. On July 4th River's Edge Mini Golf is \$4 per player all day, a foursome is \$40 after 4:00 p.m. at Sunset Valley Golf Club, and families can enjoy virtual fireworks and float at Hidden Creek AquaPark.
6. Various tennis tournaments will be offered on July 10 and July 11 which includes the Men's Singles Firecracker Open, the Women's Doubles Firework Open, and the USTA Single Day Showdown children 10U Green Dot.

D. Board Comments

City Councilman Blumberg reported that City Council approved the non-exclusive special license agreement for the installation of an access gate system at the Park Avenue Boating Facility and thanked the Park Board of Commissioners and Park District staff for their patience. Additionally, he thanked Executive Director Romes for his cooperation and willingness to meet with Mayor Rotering and City Manager Neukirch along with attending the April 26 City Council Meeting as it offered an opportunity for the City to express some of the concerns presented by residents regarding beach access. Lastly, he thanked the Park Board of Commissioners and Park District staff for their commitment to repair the barge by retaining the Lakota Group.

President Ruttenberg thanked Councilman Blumberg for his assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Lori Flores Weisskopf and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BR', written over a horizontal line.

Brian Romes, Secretary