

MINUTES OF A FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 4:03 PM. THE MEETING 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 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AND SUBMIT ITEMS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT VIA EMAIL TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO BE READ ALOUD DURING THE MEETING.

Present: Commissioner Bernstein, Vice President Kaplan, President Ruttenberg

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Peters, Director Dunn, Director Gogola, Director Voss, Director Smith, Director Carr; Assistant Director Maliszewski; Manager Ochs, Manager Warsaw; Administrator Rosen; Accountant Bhardwaj; Manager Johnson; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: None

Public Comment for Items on the Agenda

None

March 17, 2021 Finance Committee Meeting minutes were approved.

2021 Landscape Services Bid

Director Voss reported that the 2021 Landscape Services Contract comprises 12 Park District sites and 9 alternate sites, plus maintenance at North Shore Special Recreation Association’s (NSSRA) new building, over 26 weeks. Services include mowing, string trimming, weeding, edging, cultivating, and mulching. Staff received two bids on March 18 for the 2021 Landscape Services and are recommending approval from the Finance Committee for the bid of \$51,756.36 from Balanced Environments Inc, as they were the low bidder. Balanced Environments Inc. has already been approved for the 2021 Turf Maintenance contract. The District budgeted \$103,700 for such services, and the bid came in significantly under budget. Additionally, NSSRA will reimburse the Park District for their services conducted at their facility.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know why the Park District included the NSSRA facility in the bid.

Director Voss reported that NSSRA received better pricing for landscaping services when combined with the Park Districts bid.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if maintenance at West Ridge Center includes landscaping for the daycare facility.

Director Voss reported that landscaping at West Ridge does not include maintenance for the daycare facility.

President Ruttenberg requested that staff reach out to the daycare facility and inform them of the current bid.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that it is the consensus of the Finance Committee to recommend to the Park Board of Commissioners to accept the bid proposal from Balanced Environments Inc. in the total amount of \$51,756.36.

Path Work at the Preserve of Highland Park

Manager Grill reported that construction at the Preserve of Highland Park began the first week in December 2020. As a first step, a walking path providing access for park users from the Highland Park Woods path during construction was opened. Construction progress over the winter included grading and seeding for the IEPA funded north pond restoration, which is now complete. The next steps for the IEPA portion of the project will be planting live plants around the shoreline and swales leading to the pond. Manufacturing of the two overlook structures (Gateway Path and North Pond) has been completed off-site. After winter hiatus, work resumed this April on trails at the north end of the park, including the construction of the Connector Trail.

As staff continues to evaluate site conditions, opportunities for additional path repair have been identified. These improvements will improve accessibility and connectivity for the overall site. Staff prepared a prioritized list of 10 locations for improved path work based on condition, connectivity to site amenities, and accessibility improvements for frequently used “trail loops”.

The total project budget (FY 2020/2021) including grants from IDNR (OSLAD, \$400,000) and IEPA (Section 319, \$144,672) is \$1,695,209. The estimated project costs are currently \$1,378,766, leaving \$316,443 available for project contingency. Construction cost per linear foot for additional path work was established during the bidding process, allowing staff to provide the estimated costs for the additional path work of \$177,240. After taking into consideration future expenses required for a potential RTP grant (\$50,000), and approval of the 10 areas for additional path work, the remaining balance for project contingencies is projected to be \$89,203.

Manager Grill reported that staff are seeking approval from the Finance Committee to increase the contract amounts by approximately \$101,052 for additional path work of sections 1-8.

President Ruttenberg would like to know what items are remaining of the project after the path work is completed.

Manager Grill reported a possible boardwalk along the south pond, a communal area, and enhancements to the shelter area.

President Ruttenberg reported that he is in favor of approving sections 1-8 and would like to know if staff plans on using permeable material for the paths.

Manager Grill reported that permeable materials cannot be used for the paths since the Preserve is on a flood plain and permeable material would be lost when the area floods.

Vice President Kaplan is in favor of approving sections 1-8 as well and would like to know if staff have taken cross-country racing was taken into account.

Manager Grill reported that the cross-country path is a mown trail and will be completed when construction is complete.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know if the additional path work will delay the completion date.

Director Voss reported that the additional path work is a minimal setback and he will follow up with the contractor to provide a definitive completion date.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if staff explored grant opportunities.

Manager Grill reported that a portion of the path work is being funded by OSLAD, however, staff has not explored additional grant opportunities. Instead, staff have been exploring fundraising opportunities for the river walk.

Executive Director Romes reported that staff has pursued grants up to this point. However, if the District wanted grant dollars for the additional work, it would delay the project until 2022 or 2023.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if there will still be contingency costs if sections 1-10 were approved.

Manager Grill reported there will still be around \$90,000 in contingency costs if sections 1-10 are approved.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if ADA was considered for the additional path work.

Director Voss reported that not all paths will be ADA accessible, however, this will increase the number of ADA accessible paths throughout the site.

Commissioner Bernstein requested that staff set a goal to renovate all paths so that the entire site is ADA accessible.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that it is the consensus of the Finance Committee to recommend to the Park Board of Commissioners to approve sections 1-10 of additional path work at the Preserve of Highland Park with Team Real in the amount of \$177,240.

2021 Hidden Creek AquaPark Operational Plan

Guidelines:

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 maintain 30ft apart at all times, 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 wear their face coverings at all times, 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 maintain 30ft apart at all times. 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.

Schedule:

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.

Pricing:

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.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know if the summer family fun pass is a punch card.

Director Carr reported that the summer family fun pass is a punch pass per household, so if a family of 5 purchases a pass and four members of the family visits the aquapark, 4 punches will be deducted from the household pass.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know the cost difference from a 2019 membership.

Director Carr reported an individual membership was \$130 whereas a membership for a family of four was \$270, so the cost for the summer family fun pass is \$7 per punch.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if walk-ins will be welcome if the aquapark is not at capacity.

Director Carr reported that walk-ins will not be welcome as reservations will be required to enter the aquapark.

President Ruttenberg requested that staff purchase a highway-style reader board at the entrance indicating if the aquapark is “full” or the number of spots available, which would permit walk-ins.

Vice President Kaplan requested that several communications are shared with the community about the reservation system.

Vice President Ruttenberg would like to know how much of a loss is anticipated from the aquapark.

Director Carr reported that the District budgeted a loss of \$143,000.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if the chairs can be relocated on the pool deck to accommodate families larger than the pod sizes.

Director Carr reported that staff does not want guests relocating chairs.

President Ruttenberg commended staff, reporting that it is a great plan.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if seniors have had a hard time scheduling reservations at the RCHP.

Director Carr reported there were challenges early on, so the registration team assisted people through those challenges, and will do the same for aquapark reservations.

Commissioner Bernstein suggested offering phone reservations like Sunset Valley Golf Club.

Hidden Creek AquaPark Heater Replacement Project Update

Director Carr reported that staff released a 2nd on the replacement of the pool heater to determine the cost to replace a single. Operationally, one of the units is in dire need of replacement, where the other could wait until 2022. He reported that the bid results to replace a single unit were as expected, all 6 bids came in at half the cost of the previous bid. Staff are recommending approval from the Finance Committee to accept the bid from Recreonics, who was the lowest bidder at \$32,695. Staff budgeted \$50,000 for this project, so replacing a single unit would keep the project under budget.

President Ruttenberg is fearful the second unit could fail mid-season, costing the District more than accepting the previous bid.

Director Carr reported that both units have met their useful life, however, the one being differed has not presented any issues but there is always the possibility.

President Ruttenberg is in favor of accepting the previous bid of \$65,390 from Recreonics to replace both units, even though it's over budget.

Vice President Kaplan agrees with President Ruttenberg to accept the previous bid from Recreonics for \$65,390.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the 2021 budget would have to be amended if the previous bid of \$65,390 is approved.

Executive Director Romes reported that the 2021 budget would not need to be amended. An amendment is only required if the entire capital budget exceeded 10% of the budgeted amount.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that it is the consensus of the Finance Committee to recommend to the Park Board of Commissioners to approve the previous bid from Recreonics in the amount of \$65,390 to replace both heater units.

2021 Second Quarter Project Updates

Director Smith provided a brief update of second-quarter capital projects.

Park Related Projects

Director Smith reported that Fink, Sunset Woods, and West Ridge Parks have asphalt replacement projects scheduled, so the three parks were combined into a single bid.

Centennial Ice Arena

There are two projects scheduled for Centennial Ice Arena, facility renovation planning and drainage improvements. Unfortunately, the Park District was not awarded the PARC Grant for the facility renovations, however, plans will commence in July, as staff should have a better idea of where gymnastics will be located from the West Ridge Center renovation plans. Additionally, staff has met with the Highland Park Giants to discuss the renovation plans, which the Giants requested that the Park District construct a separate locker room for the giants, as this would be their dedicated space and permit players to store equipment at the facility.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if staff has met with architects regarding the renovation.

Director Smith reported that staff have held discussions with Woodhouse Tenucci regarding basic floor plans and costs associated with those plans.

President Ruttenberg request copies of those plans.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if Centennial Ice Arena is home ice for the Highland Park Giants and if they are willing to contribute to locker room construction costs.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that Centennial Ice Arena is home ice for the Highland Park Giants, and they have had preliminary discussions regarding the proposed locker rooms.

President Ruttenberg supports the construction of separate locker rooms so long as the Giants contribute to the costs.

Commissioner Bernstein reported that the Giants intend to conduct their own fundraising for the development and construction of this, so Centennial Ice Arena becomes an official home rink for the high school team.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that the current renovation plans does not include a 5th locker room for the Highland Park Giants.

Vice President Kaplan would like to know how this impacts the Falcons.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that the structure of the facility would not change, so the Falcons would still have their logo on the ice and along playing surfaces. The proposal is to create one dedicated space within the facility for the Giants. The facility is already the Giant's home; however, this dedicated space would create a home that is more welcoming and attractive to players.

Deer Creek Racquet Club

Vice President Kaplan would like to know if the tennis court resurfacing is due to the damages from recent roof repairs.

Director Smith reported that the court resurfacing is not related to damages from the roof repairs, and the contractor conducted patchwork to amend those damages. This resurfacing project is conducted every couple of years due to wear and tear.

Heller Nature Center

Director Smith reported that a Kubota utility vehicle needs to be replaced.

Recreation Center of Highland Park

Two projects are scheduled for the Recreation Center of Highland Park, which includes the replacing of fans in the gymnasium along with lighting renovations.

West Ridge Center

An HVAC replacement is scheduled to occur at West Ridge Center. As a reminder, only projects in dire need will be repaired or replaced at West Ridge Center.

Other Business

Director Peters reported that the next Finance Committee meeting is Thursday, April 22 at 4:00 p.m.

Beach Management Plan

Director Smith reported that as you know, there has been erosion along the toe of the bluff at Millard Park. In the beach management plan that SmithGroup recently completed one of their recommendations was to conduct a stability analysis, to better understand the unstable areas. With the erosion at the toe of the bluff, the bluff has been deemed unstable and will subside to correct itself. The purpose of this analysis is to get a better understanding of the severity of the subsidence and how to move forward. The analysis alone could cost around \$20,000. Since this work has not been budgeted for, reached back out to SmithGroup to see if the analysis could wait until next year.

Director Smith reported that the opinion of SmithGroup that the analysis could be differed until 2022 so long as the District is comfortable limiting activity along the top of the bluff. As a result, staff would have to limit access to portions of the park to reduce activity along the top of the bluff, so staff are recommending conducting the analysis this year.

The Finance Committee Liaisons support staff's recommendation, requesting staff to conduct the stability analysis this year.

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.