

# MINUTES OF A LAKEFRONT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON THURSDAY, JULY, 8 2021, 4:03 PM.

**Present:** Commissioner Freeman, Commissioner Kaplan

**Also, Present:** Executive Director Romes; Director Voss, Director Smith, Director Carr; Manager Schwartz; Manager Johnson; Coordinator Hejnowski

**Guest Speaker:** None

## Public Comment for Items on the Agenda

None

## Millard Update

Director Voss reported that the bluff slope stability analysis is currently under review, however, staff anticipates the analysis will recommend tree removal, providing toe protection, and relocating the path along the bluff. Staff have a meeting next week to discuss cost estimates for toe protection. Overall, V3 Consulting Engineers, will present their entire analysis to the Park Board of Commissioners in August and staff will provide a timeline for those repairs to occur in 2022.

Vice President Grossberg joined the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

June 3, 2021, Lakefront Committee Meeting minutes were approved.

## Park Avenue Updates

### **A. Breakwater and Boat Ramp Update**

Director Smith reported that SmithGroup recently completed the topographical survey and site analysis for the breakwater and staff met with them to discuss deliverables. As a result, Smith Group will provide an update on design, opinion of probable cost, and the project timeline to the Park Board of Commissioners in August, at which point, staff will recommend that the Park Board approve Phase 3 of the proposal for the final design of the breakwater.

As for the boat ramp, staff has been in communication with engineers, local contractors, and members of the boating community to find a temporary solution, and while staff confirmed that permits would not be required for a temporary fix both SmithGroup and Cardinal Engineering are not comfortable with the proposal developed by a local contractor and declined to review and provide feedback. At this point, Director Smith reported that staff would like consensus from the Lakefront Committee to no longer pursue temporary solutions.

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know why SmithGroup refused to review the proposal from a local contractor and provide feedback.

Director Smith reported that in order for an engineer to develop repair options they need to survey the voids under the water line, which eliminates a temporary solution allowing boating to commence this season. However, since members of the boating community were able to find a local contractor who developed a proposal for a temporary solution, staff wanted an engineering firm to review the

proposal and provide feedback before presenting the solution to the park board. Both SmithGroup and Cardinal Engineering declined our request for review and feedback.

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know if boating could commence this season if the Park District approved destructive work so that a temporary solution could be installed.

Director Smith reported that there is a cost for demolition services, and it's difficult to say how much time would be left of the season to construct a temporary fix.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know why staff are seeking a recommended solution from an engineering firm.

Director Smith reported that the Park District filed a claim for the damages and the District's risk management agency advised staff to get a recommendation from an engineering firm before constructing a temporary solution.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know if the Park District would lose coverage and be liable if a temporary solution were constructed without the recommendation of an engineering firm.

Executive Director Romes reported that the claim would no longer be covered and the district would be liable.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know how staff discovered Cardinal Engineering.

Director Smith reported that Cardinal Engineering was recommended by members of the boating community, as they specialize in the development of boat launches in Lake Geneva, WI. When staff first spoke with Cardinal Engineering they were willing to review the proposal for a temporary solution, however, since then, Cardinal has failed to return any calls or emails.

Executive Director Romes reported that Cardinal's lack of response was a red flag, along with SmithGroup declining to review or provide feedback on the proposal since it fails to survey the voids. While the boating community has been cooperative in trying to help develop solutions, staff feel that a temporary solution comes with significant risk.

Vice President Grossberg indicated that it was to his understanding that permitting for the breakwater replacement would take several months so construction could not begin until spring of 2022, with an anticipated reopening in late June or early July. He would like to know if the original timeline for the repair of the breakwater changed due to the repair needed for the boat launch.

Director Smith reported that staff does not have clarity on permitting, which could delay the opening to July of 2022. Furthermore, what the Park District does with the current structure impacts permitting and project costs.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know if a temporary solution could be constructed if the existing concrete was removed.

Director Smith reported that the existing concrete is not the issue, it's understanding what caused the failure and the void. As far as a temporary solution such as a grate, he's concerned it would wash away since the sand ramp poses those challenges.

Executive Director Romes reported that staff met with City Officials and the Chief of the Fire Department to discuss temporary solutions and they too were unable to offer any solutions. Furthermore, staff has a tight window to apply for grants and begin permitting for long-term solutions, so they are seeking consensus from the Lakefront Committee to no longer pursue a temporary solution.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know if the long-term solution permits a 2022 boating season.

Executive Director Romes reported that SmithGroup will present an estimated project timeline and opinion of cost to the Park Board of Commissioners in August and staff will have project recommendations to which they will request approval from the Park Board. Overall, staff is anticipating a 2022 boating season.

#### **Public Comment for Items on the Agenda**

***Laura Knapp***

***700 College Place, Highland Park***

She reported that the boating community is enthusiastic and optimistic about the long-term solution, even though they have been disappointed in the past, specifically in 2013 when the water plant was constructed. The boaters appreciate the efforts and understands the tight schedule, so they encourage the Park District to get the details figured out, specifically the funding model. Furthermore, they are pleased to hear there are plans to address and repair all four lakefront properties.

***Peter Mordinin***

***1853 Sheahen Court, Highland Park***

He suggests that SmithGroup repurpose the rocks from the current breakwater to reduce the replacement costs. Additionally, he would like to know if the Park District receives money from the claim, will it be used towards the breakwater replacement costs. Furthermore, he stressed that the concrete boat ramp is the only water port for emergency vessels to use between Glencoe and Lake Forest. Currently boaters are rescuing guests on the lake.

#### ***B. Park Avenue Funding Model***

Executive Director Romes reported that a draft concept of the model was presented to the Finance Committee and Park Avenue Working Group in June. The concept model was developed around a long-term solution agreed upon by the Park Avenue Working Group. As a reminder, the Park Avenue Working Group met with SmithGroup in early 2020 to discuss several replacement or repair options for the breakwater, and the group selected Concept 7, the Rubble Breakwater with Pre-Cast Walkway, to be the most economical and effective approach. Unfortunately, Executive Director Romes reported that the cost estimate for this concept increased to \$1.5 million to include repairs for the concrete boat ramp.

The Park Avenue Funding Model assumes that 50% of the funds are supported by the District (public funding) and the remaining 50% is supported by private funding (the community). The project cannot commence without the full support of the community, 50% of funds, so staff developed a long-term

loyalty program, which is a 10year invest of \$10,000. As an incentive to those who purchase the loyalty program, their annual storage and launch fees will not increase from the time of purchase. Additional benefits are being developed based on feedback from members of the North Shore Yacht Club. A detailed version of this concept will be presented at the July 20 Finance Committee Meeting.

As for grants, staff would like to submit applications to the OSLAD and Illinois Department of Natural Resource (IDNR) boat access ramp grant.

Staff received consensus from the Lakefront Committee to no longer pursue a temporary solution.

Commissioner Kaplan left the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

### **C. *Site Master Plan Update***

Manager Schwartz reported that the Park Avenue Site Plan Project intends to bring together several initiatives that staff are working on and to look at the site holistically. The District is currently in the third phase of this three-phase project, which includes Phase 1: Analysis and Engagement, Phase 2: Visioning, and Phase 3: Final Preliminary Site Plan. Based on feedback from the Park Avenue Working Group, members of the Park Board, and the community the Lakota Group was able to take an existing site summary report and develop concept-level site solutions for a preferred plan.

Manager Schwartz shared an image of the site and highlighted improvements for each region.

#### ***North Side of the Site***

Improvements in this area help to define the site with the introduction of a pedestrian crosswalk which begins at the intersection of Engandale Rd. and Park Avenue Rd. and travels along the north parking lot to the north side of the beach. For enhanced beach views, a boardwalk, pergola, and gathering space will be constructed adjacent to the parking lot. Further improvements include the removal of the fence currently in the north parking lot, which increases vehicle maneuverability throughout the lot and provides a flow of traffic. This also increases the number of vehicle parking spaces from 28 to 40 lanes, while offering 21 boat storage spots.

#### ***South Side of the Site***

Improvements include signage and a painted pedestrian path along the road to notify vehicles to travel cautiously from the north beach to the North Shore Yacht Club, boat launch, and south beach since the road is shared by pedestrians. Additional repairs to the road and parking lot include repairs to the retaining wall and repaving of asphalt. Furthermore, storage spaces may be relocated to this area.

Manager Schwartz reported that staff are working with the Lakota Group to refine and prioritize the recommended improvements based on cost estimates.

Executive Director Romes reported that this concept is not an engineered plan, however, providing ADA accessibility throughout the site without having to significantly reduce storage spaces was a significant factor in the development of this concept.

Vice President Grossberg supports the Lakota Group's recommendation to remove the fence in the north parking lot, however, he requested additional security, such as a camera or lights, be installed

since this is a storage area. Additionally, he would like to know how many boats are currently stored in the north lot.

Director Carr reported there are 34 boats stored in the north parking lot.

Vice President Grossberg requested that staff work with the Lakota Group to find creative ways to provide the recommended changes for the north parking lot while trying to maintain the current number of storage spots since the current concept removes 13 spots.

#### **Public Comment for Items on the Agenda**

##### ***Peter Mordinin***

##### ***1853 Sheahen Court, Highland Park***

He is concerned since the proposed storage area will pose significant risks since it's on a slope. Additionally, he reported that the City of Highland Park reported that they are willing to contribute funding towards Park Avenue at a recent public meeting.

##### ***Laura Knapp***

##### ***700 College Place, Highland Park***

It's clear that what the park district owns is getting a lot of improvements, however land owned by the city is not, which includes the storage racks and the garage, so please look at the revenue and maximize the beach. I don't want the barge/breakwater replacement to be dismissed and the Lakota improvements to commence, which is a loss for the boaters.

#### **Other Business**

Executive Director Romes reported that the next Lakefront Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 17 at 4:00 p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.