

MINUTES OF A THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON JULY 15, 2021, 4:03 PM. THE MEETING WAS HELD AT WEST RIDGE CENTER, 636 RIDGE ROAD HIGHLAND PARK.

Present: Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Dunn, Manager Johnson; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: None

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Executive Director Romes provided a brief overview of the District's recent discussions regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. The journey began in July of 2020, in which staff attended webinars regarding DEI. To which the Park District conducted an internal audit and pledged to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the District's values. As a result, the District formed an employee-driven task force.

The task force developed a pledge and value statement to ensure the District's policies, practices, and values incorporate, encourage, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Staff will recommend that the Park Board of Commissioners adopt the pledge and value statement at the July 27 Regular Board Meeting.

Staff received consensus from the liaison to adopt inclusion into the District's current values.

Additionally, the task force developed a DEI Experience Form. This form allows visitors of Rosewood Beach to share their experience as it pertains to DEI. This form was developed because of negative feedback from the summer of 2020, so the task force is hoping that the feedback from this form will help shape new policies and procedures so that our parks and facilities may be more inclusive.

Lastly, Executive Director Romes reported that the District recently conducted an employee perception survey to discern employees' feelings regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. Responses were anonymous so that employee perceptions could remain confidential. Findings included, some managers feel they no longer are empowered to make decisions and that their ideas are not valued, and some employees felt that there is inequality regarding opportunities for advancement. While these feelings could have been brought on by the pandemic Department Heads are developing plans to address these weaknesses.

As for next steps, the District is working with the Illinois Association of Park Districts to host safe zone conversation workshops. The first conversation is scheduled for July 21 and the discussion topic is Latinx. Additional conversations will be scheduled in the fall, each conversation will focus on a different subject related to racism.

President Ruttenberg would like to know how the District plans to incorporate all staffing levels into these trainings and conversations.

Executive Director Romes reported that the challenge is timing and availability, however, full-time staff will be required to attend a certain number of trainings.

President Ruttenberg requested offering multiple workshops and trainings so that most, ideally, all staff attend. Overall, he is supportive of these efforts and requested that the value statement be placed on the consent agenda at the July 27 Regular Board Meeting.

Vice President Grossberg is pleased with the direction the District is headed, and the number of actions staff are addressing related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know how often the District's values are evaluated, suggesting that become a part of everyday practices.

Executive Director Romes reported that this committee will be involved in the development of the strategic plan since this plan also incorporates the District's values.

Salary Survey and Workload Analysis

Executive Director Romes reported that employee recruitment is becoming an issue since the District has not conducted a salary survey since 2015. The compensation study compares workload to the industry compensation scale along with minimum wage phasing. Staff recommendation is to conduct the survey and workload analysis in the fall, with a consultant hired in the fall, and an anticipated completion date in the winter.

President Ruttenberg feels people are not going back to work because they want higher wages, so he would like the RFP to go out earlier, so that the District has a plan in place by January 1, 2022.

Executive Director Romes reported that the District must analyze every job description before submitting materials to a consulting firm, however, a timeframe can be incorporated into the RFP.

Commissioner Freeman would like to know the cost and where the funds are coming from.

Executive Director Romes reported that staff would like to differ a couple of projects to 2022 so that \$40,000 will be available for this survey and analysis.

President Ruttenberg is concerned about employee morale, so he requested that communications be shared with employees indicating the support of the Park Board and expedite the process, however, he would like the cost recovery plan to occur in 2021 instead of being differed until 2022.

Executive Director Romes reported that it would be near impossible to conduct a salary survey and workload analysis in conjunction with the cost recovery plan, so the cost recovery plan will commence in 2022.

President Ruttenberg would like to know if any quick fix salary adjustments are needed prior to the study.

Executive Director Romes reported that although there are areas in need of a quick fix, he does not feel comfortable adjusting salaries prior to the salary survey and workload analysis.

President Ruttenberg reported that he supports adjustments being made to the budget related to staff salaries.

Whistleblower Policy (Personnel Policy Manual)

Executive Director Romes reported that this policy outlines procedures related to the reporting process and designates an auditing official (Executive Director) to protect employees when dealing with intergovernmental actions and has been reviewed by the Park District’s legal counsel. Staff will be seeking approval of the policy from the Park Board of Commissioners at the July 27 Regular Board Meeting.

President Ruttenberg requested that the Human Resources and Risk Management Director be listed as an alternative auditing official so that employees have an outlet if the Executive Director is absent.

The liaisons requested that the Whistleblower Policy be placed on the consent agenda at the July 27 Regular Board Meeting so long as President Ruttenberg's recommended change is included.

Military Discount Policy (Park District Policy Manual)

Executive Director Romes reported that the current Military Discount Policy does not include veteran military, so staff are proposing that the policy is updated to include veterans and their families.

The liaisons requested that the recommended changes to the Military Policy be placed on the consent agenda at the July 27 Regular Board Meeting.

The liaisons would like to discuss creating a discount policy for active police, fire, and EMS at the next Policy Committee Meeting.

Strategic Plan Update

Executive Director Romes reported that the current plan is still operating, however, staff are proposing making changes in 2022 and would like the Policy Committee liaisons involved in the development of the updated plan.

Park Board Self Evaluation

Executive Director Romes reported that he would like to schedule a Park Board Self Evaluation with Peter Murphy from the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) to review and discuss best practices and expectations. He would like to schedule a Special Meeting this Fall.

Other Business

None

The meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.