

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
AUGUST 10, 2021**

The Workshop Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of Highland Park was held in the Multi-Purpose Room, 636 Ridge Road, Highland Park, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Freeman, Commissioner Kaplan, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

Absent: Vice President Grossberg

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Smith, Director Voss, Director Dunn, Director Peters, Director Gogola, Director Carr; Assistant Director Maliszewski; Assistant Director Murrin; General Manager/Superintendent of Golf Operations Ochs; Manager Johnson; Manager Schwartz; Manager Grill; Manager Johnson; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan, seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of Section 2(c)5 – the purchase or lease of real estate including discussion on whether a certain parcel of property should be acquired; - for discussions between internal or external auditors and the Board.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, Commissioner Freeman, Vice President Grossberg, President Ruttenberg

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 6:03 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:01 p.m.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Layosh Dobos

1431 Green Bay Rd, Highland Park

As a taxpayer, I request the park district to invest in our parks, maintain and improve all facilities.

I moved from Glencoe in 2013. The parks in Glencoe are continuously updated, improved and are in beautiful shape. Parks in Highland Park are closed off, neglected or access to using the park is restricted.

The dog beach to the North has been closed for many years. Cannot swim at beaches except at Rosewood beach. At Park Avenue beach, first the barge, now the boat launch is blocked off.

The fire department cannot launch rescue boats anymore at Park Avenue beach, significantly increasing their response time in times when every minute counts.

Now the Park District is working on plans that would require funding from a not-for-profit boating community - mainly local residents.

This funding request from the recreational boaters would be unprecedented. Will the park district request funds from dog owning residents to fix the dog beach? It would be problematic to compel a tenant (NSYC) to pay for major facility improvements, improvements that are essential in order to avoid completely closing of this beach as well.

This means that the funding plan will most likely fail as it depends on funding that cannot be guaranteed, leaving everything at Park Avenue beach in awful, deteriorating condition.

We will no longer have the possibility to enjoy kayaking, sailing and otherwise enjoy this beautiful lake.

As a taxpayer I urge you to fully fund (without relying on untested and uncertain sources like a not for profit, local boating club) and IMPROVE the Park Avenue beach and the facilities that help us to enjoy Lake Michigan and all what it has to offer.

Thank you for working hard and making decisions that results in improvements and benefits the entire community. I know you all would like to see our city, parks, and all beaches in much better shape.

APPROVAL OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK AND CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT REGARDING PARK AVENUE BOATING FACILITY

Executive Director Romes reported that Park District staff and officials from the City of Highland Park are not ready at this time to approve the intergovernmental agreement since further language needs to be addressed to ensure that the water plant and any investments made by the Park District are protected in the case of an emergency. As a result, a follow-up meeting is scheduled with the City to finalize negotiations. The City of Highland Park will be requesting approval at the August 23 City Council Meeting and the Park District will be seeking approval at the August 24 Regular Board Meeting.

PARK AVENUE SITE PLAN PROJECT UPDATE

Manager Schwartz reported that the plans being presented this evening will be presented by the Lakota Group at the Community Meeting on Monday, August 16. As a reminder, the site plan looks at the existing condition and identifies problematic elements to develop options to holistically improve the site. Some of the problematic elements identified include lack of connectivity from the north to the south end of the site, lack of pedestrian routes to safely travel throughout the site, lack of seating along the beachfront, and degraded and eroded environmental conditions.

As a result, the Lakota Group developed two concepts to improve the site.

Concept A

Significant improvements to parking on the north end of the site, by removing the fence that surrounds boat storage. While we understand storage users may prefer the fence, this improves the flow of traffic throughout the parking lot and allows for construction for pedestrian walkways from the parking lot to the north beach. Additionally, a boardwalk will be constructed along the waterfront of the north beach. The boardwalk leads to the paved surface of the east parking lot. Designated fishing posts will be constructed along the east parking lot and the retaining wall will be repaired. At the south end, improvements will be made to the clubhouse and the surrounding beach.

Concept B

The only difference between Concept a and B are improvements along the north side of the site. In this concept, boats will continue to be stored in a fenced area in the north parking lot, however, the asphalt will be restriped to improve traffic flow without making significant changes to the layout.

President Ruttenberg requested a timeline of public meetings in which Park Avenue will be presented upon.

Executive Director Romes reported at the August 16 Community Meeting, the August 17 Lakefront Committee Meeting, the August 19 Finance Committee Meeting, and the August 24 Regular Board Meeting.

President Ruttenberg is pleased that the proposed concepts will attract more than just boaters to Park Avenue.

THE PRESERVE OF HIGHLADN PARK PROJECT UPDATE

Manager Grill reminded the Park Board of Commissioners that this past June and July, work continued on amenities and the IPEA-funded shoreline restoration project at The Preserve. Planting is substantially complete for the IEPA shoreline and vegetative swale restoration. A review of the project by the IEPA grant administrator was positive. The planting of plants, trees, and shrubs that make up the Pollinator Garden and Nature Maze is complete. Landscaping around the Entry Plaza, Sand Play Area, and North Pond Overlook is complete. Progress was made with structural reviews for Pond and Gateway Path overlooks. Maintenance of natural areas and mowing continues. Signage is being developed in conjunction with the District's Communications Department. In the meantime, the community continues receiving progress updates through social media, the Park District website, and changes to signage on-site.

On September 22, 2020, the Park District of Highland Park Board of Commissioners awarded a construction contract in the amount of \$1,204,290 to Team REIL Inc. of Union IL for Construction of The Preserve of Highland Park. This work is supported by grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources OSLAD and Illinois EPA Section 319 Grant funding, through the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission for shoreline restoration and vegetative swales. She is pleased to report the path work change order came in lower than anticipated, which helps to reduce the total projects costs.

Overall, the estimated completion date is still on track for a grand opening in May of 2022.

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know if any pathways are currently open and available for the public to use.

Manager Grill reported that some pathways are available for public use, which are clearly marked when visiting the site and listed on the Park District website.

REVIEW OF VOUCHERS

President Ruttenberg reported that he reviewed the vouchers.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Chadd Berkun

856 Judson Ave, Highland Park

He would like to know what he could share with the North Shore Yacht Club and the boating community regarding the status of the intergovernmental agreement shared between the Park District and the City of Highland Park at Park Avenue.

President Ruttenberg reported that both parties have exchanged drafts, however, further revisions were requested by both parties. The City of Highland Park hopes to approve the intergovernmental agreement at the August 23 City Council Meeting, and the Park District hopes to approve the agreement at the August 24 Regular Board Meeting.

Workshop Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2021

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary