

MINUTES OF A THE LAKEFRONT, PARKS, AND NATURAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON JANUARY 11, 2022, 5:00 PM. PURSUANT TO SECTION 7(e) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT, THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS HAS MADE A FINDING THAT IT IS NOT PRACTICAL OR PRUDENT TO HOLD IN PERSON MEETINGS BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY. NEITHER THE ELECTED OFFICIALS NOR THE PUBLIC WILL BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND REGULAR OR COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN PERSON BUT WILL PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY. LINKS TO THE VIRTUAL MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE PARK DISTRICT WEBSITE [HTTPS://WWW.PDHP.ORG/PARK-BOARD/MEETINGS/](https://www.pdhp.org/park-board/meetings/)

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

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

Guest Speaker: None

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Public Comment

Kathy McRae

1510 Old Deerfield Road, Unit 228, Highland Park

I am on the Board of North Shore Yacht Club and Director of Stand-Up Paddling. She has been working on fundraising for the breakwater boat ramp. Park District has been incredibly supportive. Best news is the community has almost achieved the \$300,000 fund raising goal, since there was a \$150,000 matching donor and well over 150 people have donated anywhere from \$20 to \$20,000. She anticipates in the next couple of weeks the community will surpass that goal of \$300,000. Fundraising has given her the opportunity to speak with hundreds of people from Highland Park, which she found several power boaters that over the past year have found other harbors since the boat ramp in HP is no longer available. Her largest concern is getting people to agree to loyalty program if the ramp is not operable for the 2022 season. In order to get people to sign up we need to make some sort of guarantee that they are going to have the ability to get their boats out, otherwise they'll go elsewhere which isn't good for the community or for the program.

Golan Mor

67 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park

I am on the Board with Highland Lakes Homeowners Association and spoke Executive Director Romes and Director Smith over a year ago regarding the Rory Deutsch Tot Lot. He thanked the Park District for working with Association to come to a resolution. The Association has an interest in keeping it as a park reporting that several young families have moved into the neighborhood, so he feels the tot park has certainly been an attraction to the neighborhood. If Park District decides to repair or replace any of the equipment, he has reached out to private park maintenance companies, of which those companies have asked who the manufacturer is. If it's a manufacturer that is compatible with some of the service

companies, that will determine who and how much it would cost the Homeowners Association should they bear the expense of maintaining the equipment. He would also like to know if it is possible for the Park District to conduct maintenance so long as the Homeowners Association compensates the District for those expenses.

Vice President Grossberg requested that Executive Director Romes and Director Smith follow-up with Mr. Mor to answer those questions.

RORY DAVID DEUTSCH TOT LOT PROJECT UPDATE

Director Smith reported that the Rory David Deutsch Tot Lot was constructed in 2001 thanks in part to a donation from the Deutsch family. The property is owned by the Highland Lakes Property Owners Association and the Park District maintains the site per an agreement between the Park District, the Property Owners Association, and the City of Highland Park. The 20-year agreement ended its term in July of 2021, so this topic of terminating the agreement with the Property Owners Association and not replacing the playground equipment was brought to the Park Board of Commissioners at the February 23, 2021 Workshop Meeting. In this instance, the Park District would be required to remove all playground equipment and other structures on the property. In addition, the Park District would be required to restore the site to the condition prior to construction of the tot lot. As a result, the Park Board of Commissioners provided consensus to allow a twelve-month renewal of the agreement to provide adequate time for planning and negotiation to come to an understanding of an acceptable condition in which the Park District would leave the site.

Director Smith reported that staff are proposing that the Park District restore and replace all decking, the bubble, the support brackets for the slide, the guard rails, post brackets and ring pulls, the duckling spring toy and the elephant spring toy, the red house, the fibar safety surfacing, and the 2 bay-swing. The restoration would cost \$33,654. Once completed, the agreement would be terminated, and the playground equipment and related site improvements would be donated to the Property Owners Association which would be responsible for future maintenance, repair, and replacement. Staff are anticipating that the agreement would be terminated by March of 2022, improvements would be completed by June of 2022, and the transfer of ownership would be completed in July of 2022.

Commissioner Bernstein commended staff for thinking outside of the box and reducing the renovation costs for the play structure. He is pleased that the recommended renovations are less than the estimated amount of \$50,000. He fully supports staff's recommendations.

Staff received consensus from the Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee to restore and replace the proposed equipment, terminate the agreement, and transfer ownership.

PARK AVENUE TEMPORARY BOAT RAMP REPAIR PROJECT UPDATE

Director Smith reported that on June 1, 2021, there was a failure in the concrete boat ramp at the Park Avenue Boating Facility that forced the closure of the ramp. A section of concrete collapsed due to a void under this area. Staff has explored a variety of repair options and worked with Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates to develop engineering documents for a temporary repair that would allow for safe use during the 2022 boating season. This repair approach was presented to the Lakefront Committee on November 4, 2021, and the anticipated cost was discussed with the Finance Committee on November 18, 2022.

He reminded the Committee that this project is separate from the replacement of the Park Avenue breakwater and concrete boat ramp being completed by SmithGroup. Bid solicitation for that project will

be in late January. Contingent upon Park Board approval, construction of the breakwater and boat ramp would begin after Labor Day Weekend 2022. Therefore, the intention of the temporary ramp repair is to allow use of the concrete boat ramp from Memorial Day Weekend 2022 through Labor Day Weekend 2022.

Director Smith reported that the bid for the temporary repair was released on January 4 and a pre-bid meeting was held yesterday in which nine (9) contractors attended. The bid opening will be on January 18 and staff will share an update at the January 20 Finance Committee Meeting.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know how much it traditionally costs to operate Park Avenue and compare that cost to the expense for the construction of the temporary boat ramp.

Executive Director Romes reported that revenues and expenses will be shared with the Park Board of Commissioners prior to the January 20 Finance Committee Meeting.

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know if staff has an estimate for the temporary boat ramp repair costs.

Director Smith reported that the temporary repair of the boat ramp could cost anywhere from \$35,000 - \$45,000.

MORAINES PARK PATH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Director Smith reported that Daniel Creaney Company was hired to develop construction documents for the repair. The preferred option was to construct a boardwalk over the path area. He shared an aerial image of the site highlighting the portions of the path in need of repair. Director Smith reported that the improvements include drainage repairs along the top of the ravine, path repairs, and steel wall improvements along the top of the slope. The opinion of probable construction is estimated at \$487,374 which includes a 10% contingency. There is \$485,000 in the 2022 Capital Budget for this project. The bid will be released in February, awarded on March 22, construction will begin in May with anticipated completion in July.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the repairs will make the path ADA accessible.

Director Smith reported that the repairs will not make the path ADA accessible.

Commissioner Bernstein requested that an update be shared with the community.

Director Smith reported that staff planned to provide an update to the community and on the Park District website after tonight's meeting.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know the condition of the beach compared to Park Avenue, reporting that he has received several questions about the old bridge. Additionally, he would like to have a separate discussion about dividing the beach so that there is a designated area for dogs.

Director Smith reported the beach is not very large., the bridge is separate from the path and will not be impacted as part of the project, and lastly, staff can address the designated area for dogs at a future meeting.

MILLARD BLUFF TREE REMOVAL BID

Director Voss reported that at the August 24, 2021 Regular Board Meeting representatives from V3 Companies provided an overview of their analysis report including several site recommendations and probable costs. According to the V3 report, given the existing bluff conditions and cyclical fluctuations of Lake Michigan water levels, there were several solutions appropriate for the Park District to consider. The solutions address existing bluff failures and minimize the potential for future failures or loss of land at the top of the bluff. On September 30, 2021, staff provided an update to the Parks and Natural Area Committee regarding capital planning and a list of projects that would begin in the winter of 2022 and continue into the summer. Director Voss reported that tonight's discussion is strictly focused on the tree removal and management to address leaning/undermined trees preventing further tearing of the underlying bluff face (entire 4 acres) for an estimated \$80,000 - \$100,000. Staff released the bid on January 4, 2022. Pre-bid meeting on January 7, 2022. Bids are due back on January 14.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know if the two lily ponds near the gardens would be filled with water. Additionally, he would like to know if the hut will be repaired or replaced.

Director Voss reported that the lily pond was never manually filled, however, he can have a follow-up discussion with the natural areas team. As for the hut, staff has removal and rebuilding estimates, and due to ongoing vandalism, the hut will be removed.

Open to Public to Address the Board

Chadd Berkun

856 Judson Avenue, Highland Park

Would like to know if the boat ramp is not available for the 2022 season would there be a cost for boaters to use the Winnetka harbor.

Executive Director Romes reported that there is no agreement with Winnetka Park District, however he will follow-up.

David Sogin

1105 Wade Street, Highland Park

He is encouraged that the estimates for the temporary boat ramp repairs are in the \$35,000 range suggesting that the amount is achievable and affordable. He would like the Park Avenue Working Group to have a discussion regarding other solutions when the sand ramp is washed out.

Mindy Deutsch

1151 Hilary Lane, Highland Park

She spoke with Executive Director Romes and Director Smith and wanted to thank everyone for the consideration for the Rory Deutsch Tot Lot.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski
Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary