

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
MARCH 9, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by President Ruttenberg.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

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

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.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 6:06 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 6:23 p.m.

ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION IF ANY

President Ruttenberg reported that the Board met in Closed Session under Section 2(c)5 the purchase or lease of real estate including discussion on whether a certain parcel of property should be acquired.

No action was taken.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

President Ruttenberg requested moving public comment for items on the agenda to the end of the meeting so that the public can hear tonight's presentation before providing comments. This section of public comments is for items not on tonight's Agenda. There will be a second opportunity at the end of the meeting for items on the agenda. This will allow the public to hear tonight's presentations before providing comments.

Rick Steinburg

2116 St. Johns, Highland Park

Always had a house and a wonderful garden. Came here expecting to get a garden plot to discover there are only 12 plots, so I am unable to purchase a plot. He thinks half of the community lives in apartments and condos, suggesting those property owners would like the opportunity to purchase garden plots. He recommends the Park District acquire more property for garden plots.

President Ruttenberg appreciated Rick's comment.

2022 PARK AVENUE BOAT LAUNCH IMPROVEMENTS BID

Director Smith reviewed the base bid which includes mobilization and site preparation, demolition and removal of barge breakwater and boat ramp, breakwater construction, boat ramp construction, installation of guide piles for a floating dock, and installation of limited bollards.

He shared an image of the site with an overlay of the proposed improvements.

Alternates were put in the bid, based on receiving IDNR grant funds, this includes solar flood lights and poles, solar navigation lights and poles, breakwater bollard and chain system, breakwater cleats, floating dock system, and temporary boat ramp repair removal.

Showed bid results from the six contractors. Lake & Rivers Contracting was the low bidder at \$2.5 million. Favorable references.

Financial Impact

Director Smith reported that staff budgeted \$2 million. Community raised \$361,881 in donations. IDNR boat access grant, if awarded would be \$200,000. As for expenses, the construction bid is \$2.5 million with a 5% contingency of \$129,120. The overall anticipated amount over budget is \$218,149.

Value Engineering

Staff has been working with SmithGroup and Lakes & Rivers to identify savings. As a result, the District could change the breakwater fill stone type for a savings of \$43,560. Floating dock piles could be reduced or the thickness of steel, for an estimated \$10,000 reduction if any. Staff is recommending bidding grant-related items separately, for an estimated \$32,000 reduction. Overall, possible savings is \$280,000.

Furthermore, IDNR confirmed they are understaffed so grants will not be awarded until the Fall or Winter of 2022, which impacts the project timeline.

Updated anticipated amount over budget by changing the breakwater stone fill type reduces the project to \$172,411 over budget.

If the District is not awarded the grant, solar flood lights, poles, and the crown wall bollards and chains along the east side could be removed, the length of the floating dock could be reduced, or the dock could be purchased in portions to spreading costs into future years for a \$125,000 savings. However, these projects would have to be bid out. Overall, the project would reduce to \$197,000 over budget.

Next steps

Staff will work with SmithGroup to fine-tune value engineering savings and work with Parks Foundation to raise additional funds. Staff will provide an update at the March Finance Committee meeting. The Park Board of Commissioners would have to approve the project at the April 27 Regular Board meeting in order to stay on schedule. If approved, construction begins September 6 after Labor Day. Hope to hear from IDNR regarding grant funds in the fall. Project completion is estimated for May of 2023.

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know the odds of getting the grant funds.

Director Smith reported that he feels the odds are in the District's favor but there is no guarantee. He is not in favor of making cuts. Overall, he would like to know how much the District has spent on this project.

Director Smith reported likely a couple hundred thousand.

President Ruttenberg agrees with Commissioner Kaplan that any reduction would have to be further discussed as reducing lights is a safety concern.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know if it's relatively easy to extend the floating docks in the future.

Director Smith reported that staff would like to further explore that option, however, the extension added in the future will come at a high cost.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know if all the lakeside bollards would be removed.

Director Smith reported that all the lakeside bollards would be removed.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Sam Keshy

184 Oak Mill Terrace, Highland Park

What are the consequences of not doing this project, and how will affect the water plant and shore erosion? Are there any options for a phased approach?

What is the 2023 capital budget? Are there options to fund more strategically?

Is the contingency budget a Park District requirement?

He feels contingency may not be necessary and would hate the project to falter because of the contingency costs.

Peter Mordini

1853 Shehan Court, Highland Park

Look around this room, we have gone very far in this endeavor spending almost \$200,000. He thanked everyone for helping us to get here. This is what realtors want, this is how we showcase Highland Park and the Park District. If we don't have eyes out there providing rescue support, it's a concern. It's been 7 years since these conversations started. Don't get frustrated, we're a team, we have to look forward to getting this done even with the challenges. I have not seen the District walk away from a project with a \$200,000 investment. I know there are ways to cut costs, he's here to help figure it out and get it done.

Steve Knapp

700 College Place, Highland Park

In the current state of the economy, there is a lot of inflation, we're only 10% over budget which is pretty impressive. He urges the Board to act now to avoid additional costs. If we have to cut, he feels all the boaters would support reducing the floating dock or removing floodlights. Aesthetics doesn't have a large impact if it prevents the project from moving forward. We could always add those items down the road when funds are available.

PARK AVENUE SITE PLAN

Manager Schwartz reported that The Park Avenue Site Plan is an initiative from the Lakefront Master Plan Update that consolidates the various lakefront planning efforts to develop a holistic, sustainable, conceptual site plan for Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility. The plan considers access, boat storage and amenities, passive and active recreation, infrastructure repair and replacement and is also consistent with the District's Beach Management Plan. The Site Plan includes Concept Plan Drawings, but does not include specific engineering, architectural, or construction plans. Concept Plan Drawings provide the Park District support to apply for grant funds and budget for future projects.

The Park Avenue Concept Plan Drawings were presented to the Park Board at the August 10 Workshop for board discussion. They were also shared with the public at a community meeting on August 16 where over 90 people attended to provide feedback. The preferred concept plan was presented in August, so she is here this evening to represent the summary plan document. As a reminder, the Master Plan is an initiative from the Lakefront Master Plan, that consolidates planning efforts around Park Avenue. Phase 1 of the plan was submitted for OSLAD grant funds.

Summary plan highlights include observations, divided between north and south beaches, existing conditions, an overview of engagement efforts and comments heard, overview and explanation of the preferred site plan and phasing.

Shared an image of the preferred concept plan, which includes all three phases (north lot configurations with boardwalk, improved pedestrian access when traveling from the north to south beach, and south end storage configurations).

Commissioner Kaplan would like to know if the repairs to the south parking lot are included in this site plan.

Director Smith reported that the repairs to the south parking lot are a separate project which will be addressed at a future Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Elliot Rossen

791 Apple Tree Lane, Highland Park

He thinks the plan is wonderful. Is there an accommodation to address the adjacent boat ramp?

Executive Director Romes reported that staff are repairing the sand ramp and looking for long-term solutions.

Margaret Winker Cook

350 Willow Road, Winnetka

Would like to know if swimming will be possible along the north beach as well as kayak storage. She would like to know when erosion will be addressed.

Manager Schwartz reported that phase 3 of the site plan will address the bluff stabilization.

Executive Director Romes reported that the site plan is 40 pages. He will answer questions via email.

Steve Knapp

700 College Place, Highland Park

Seems like the south lot should be placed as a priority over the other items in this plan. Urges the Board to permit swimming at the north beach, suggesting swim at your own risk. There were discussions to expand the yacht club to 130 people, please provide an update, as he does not feel that upgrade is necessary. Lastly, he would like to know how the public can access the 50/50 lot.

REVIEW OF VOUCHERS

Director Peters reported that the District has received a GFOA Certificate of Excellence for the 2020 Financial Statements. Additionally, there were \$500,000 of expenditures last month.

President Ruttenberg commended staff.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan and seconded by Commissioner Bernstein and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary