

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF JOINT SPECIAL MEETING
WITH CITY COUNCIL OF HIGHLAND PARK
OCTOBER 9, 2017**

The Joint Special Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of Highland Park and the City of Highland Park City Council was held at the City of Highland Park, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois.

At 5:50 p.m., Mayor Rotering reconvened the Committee of the Whole Meeting and President Kaplan called to order the Park District of Highland Park's Joint Meeting with the City.

ROLL CALL

President Kaplan requested a roll call vote of the Park District of Highland Park Board of Commissioners

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

Absent: Commissioner Flores-Weisskopf

Staff Present: Executive Director McElroy, Deputy Director Donahue, Director Curtis, Director Gogola, Director Romes, IT Manager Johnson

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Highland Park Country Club with City of Highland Park

Mayor Rotering thanked those in attendance. She explained that the City and the Park District of Highland Park are meeting to discuss future plans of the Highland Park Country Club and golf course, exploration of the Highland Park Country Club to house dedicated space for the City's senior services, and flood mitigation efforts.

She explained that the City is exploring the possible relocation of its Senior Center to a portion of the Highland Park Country Club property or to a site that is adjacent to the Highland Park Public Library and how the City is coordinating with the Library and Park District on these initiatives. She informed the community that the City has engaged Williams Architects for exploration of possible relocation of Youth and Senior Services and also a possible expansion of the Library. She provided information on the work the City has done with the Army Corps of Engineers and regional partners to explore options to mitigate future significant flooding in the area. She explained that the Highland Park Country Club property will be considered for additional storm water detention.

Mayor Rotering invited the Park District of Highland Park to present their vision for the future of the Highland Park Country Club and property and financial plans for this project.

Park District Natural Areas Manager Rebecca Grill and Park District Senior Planner Amalia Schwartz presented information on the Park District's plan for the property.

She explained that the City is continuing to work with Williams Architects on the space needs, scheduling needs and accessibility needs. She informed the public that the City will provide updates on Senior Services by the end of November.

Mayor Rotering discussed the request to discontinue golf operations and voiced concerns regarding the request, most notably since the Park District's golf course at Sunset Valley will not be open to the public at the start of the 2018 season. She indicated that the City would work with the Legacy Club to preserve the green space adjoining their property if the Green Print Master Plan presented by the Park District were to go into effect. She asked if there was a way for golf operations to continue with mitigated costs or if the City should move forward with allowing the Park District as proposed.

Councilman Blumberg voiced concerns related to the Intergovernmental Agreement ("IGA") that is in place between the City and the Park District that establishes the responsibilities of the Park District to undertake golf operations; they may also buy the property over a 99 year time period.

Mayor Rotering and Park District Board President Kaplan explained that the development of a new building where the current Country Club is located would be part of the income generation needed to change the use of the property.

Councilman Blumberg voiced his concern of the time that would be needed for the walking trails and how it would leave the golf course fallow and not usable. He explained the City's expectation that the property be purchased or operated as a golf course. He voiced concern of gifting the property to the Park District without there being a specific plan, budget or timeline in place to manage the project.

President Kaplan addressed the concerns that were voiced by Councilman Blumberg.

Mayor Rotering and President Kaplan discussed the purchase of the property.

President Kaplan discussed the historical intended use of the property.

Councilman Knobel addressed how the City and the Park District work together and the importance of having these public discussions between the two government entities. She discussed the importance of the IGA and the priorities maintained by the City. She shared the concerns of the individuals residing near the property if the use were changed. She asked the Park District what they are offering the City, how the two government entities will work together, and why there is a need for this project now.

Councilman Kaufman explained the importance of a master plan for the property that benefits the community, understanding the concerns that have been expressed by individuals

pertaining to the closure of golf and the reuse of the golf course to open space. He discussed the processes that have been undertaken to review feedback on the relocation of Senior Services to the Library or Country Club. He explained that the City and the Park District will work together to create the best plan for the community.

Councilman Stolberg explained his involvement as the liaison to the Park District. He stated that through community engagement, there have been alternatives generated based on provided feedback. He explained that there have been discussions on the feasibility of operating two golf courses in Highland Park. He discussed the importance of being fiscally responsible and echoed the concerns of the Legacy Club residents. He stated that the feasibility of golf operations will need to be explored before golf operations are discontinued and the Park District is able to move forward with their Green Print Master Plan for the golf course.

Councilwoman Stone expressed her appreciation that both the City and the Park District are able to conduct a public meeting and that both government entities are looking to move in a direction that will benefit the community. She explained that more review needs to be done to determine the outcome of golf or a natural area, along with budgets. She expressed her interest in moving senior services into the Country Club building.

Councilman Holleman discussed the operation of two golf courses and the terms in the IGA regarding the transfer of ownership.

Councilman Holleman was disconnected from the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Councilman Holleman was connected to the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

President Kaplan discussed the financial losses of the property and that the Park District no longer has an interest in purchasing the property.

Park District Board Commissioner Bernstein discussed the Park District staff presentation that was presented at a July meeting with the Park District Board and the financial losses from operating golf at the Country Club.

Mayor Rotering asked what part of the financial loss is contributed to banquet loss, what the cost of repair is due to flood damage on the golf course and if Kemper would be able to take on some of the risk to alleviate the tax payers.

Alex Prior, Highland Park Country Club General Manager, addressed the Mayor's questions.

Mr. Prior and Commissioner Bernstein discussed the banquet business and the correlation of banquet business to golf.

Mr. Prior and President Kaplan clarified that the shortage of finances and Kemper will provide the Park District the financial information.

Councilman Stolberg and Commissioner Bernstein discussed the financial projections that

have been provided for the Country Club property.

Commissioner Bernstein stated that Sunset Golf Course will be substantially complete by the end of the week and should be open later in the summer season of 2018.

President Kaplan explained that the Park District does not want to operate the Country Club for golf as they are dedicated to operating Sunset Valley Golf Course, and that the Highland Park Country Club building is not necessary for the ongoing operations of the Recreation Center.

Mayor Rotering explained that since the Park District no longer needed the use of the Country Club building, the City was able to explore the option of moving Senior Services to that building.

President Kaplan discussed the Park District's decision to discontinue golf.

Mayor Rotering reiterated that there is an interest in maintaining golf for the 2018 season provided it is fiscally responsible to do so.

Dean Lit, Kemper Sports Management Executive, stated that the Park District is their client but they will work with the City and the Park District to help with the financials. He explained they would review their financial information and submit a proposal to continue management of the Club within a week.

Mayor Rotering and President Kaplan reviewed that the Park District is not interested in golf operations past 2018 and would like the City to maintain ownership but allow the Park District to construct an open recreation area on the green space.

Commissioner Bernstein clarified that if the City is requesting golf operations through 2018 but will ensure discontinuing golf in 2019, the Park District will use 2018 to develop a plan for the open recreation area on the property.

Councilman Knobel and President Kaplan discussed the costs related to the development and implementation of the Green Print Master Plan.

Mayor Rotering stated that the City will be in discussions with the Park District and Kemper Sports Management in regards to the operation of golf for 2018. She discussed next steps regarding the Senior Center and that reservations at the Country Club through 2018 will be honored.

City Manager Neukirch indicated that the City will work with the Park District and have a follow-up report by the end of November on the matters discussed. She also explained that a summary of the meeting and a questions and answer document will be posted to the web site and emailed to interested individuals.

Ray Geraci, Highland Park resident, discussed the importance of maintaining the Highland Park Country Club and how it is a niche in the City due to it being placed on an avenue with a lot of traffic and not in the middle of a residential portion of town.

Madeline Miller, Highland Park resident, discussed concerns of the Senior Center and how the City has a responsibility to take care of its seniors.

Mayor Rotering explained how the City is exploring the option to move the Senior Center to the Country Club.

Alan Handler, Highland Park resident, discussed the Green Print Master Plan proposed by the Park District and finances for future projects.

Mayor Rotering explained that the City and Park District are working together and she addressed the financial statements that were made by Mr. Handler.

Peter Livingston, Highland Park resident, explained that working with Kemper Sports Management will be beneficial.

Reed Ratel, Highland Park resident, discussed the possibility of having both a golf course and open land on the property.

Mayor Rotering explained that the suggestion by Mr. Ratel has been discussed and is being explored.

Mayor Rotering and Anthony Chaitin, Highland Park resident, discussed what the fair market value is for the golf course.

Lester Weinstein, Highland Park resident, discussed the IGA that is in place between the City and the Park District and that the two government entities need to work together to create a success plan.

Amelia Schwank, Highland Park resident, discussed the importance of maintaining the operation of golf at the Country Club.

Richard Cash, Highland Park resident, provided a suggestion for storm water mitigation.

Mayor Rotering, Corporation Counsel Elrod and Mr. Cash discussed the lease that was undertaken for the property.

Mr. Cash voiced concerns of the lease and disposition of the Country Club.

Mayor Rotering discussed her concerns with the information Mr. Cash was presenting to the community.

Glen Bernfield, Highland Park resident, discussed operating costs of the golf course and the possibility of a shortened course.

George Williams, Highland Park resident, discussed the survey conducted for the Green Print Master Plan. He requested residents be kept informed as to the decisions that will be made. He asked about what will happen with the property that the Legacy Club owns if the

golf course ceases to exist.

Mayor Rotering stated that the City and Park District will discuss the property with the Legacy Club during future discussions of regarding the golf course property.

Mr. Williams asked that the City Council and the Park District visit the Legacy Club and see how interconnected the properties are.

Peter Donahue, owner of the Golf Practice, explained that his business is located in Highland Park because the area was seen as a great place for youth golf learning. He discussed the Golf Learning Center.

Ralph Bernstein, Highland Park resident, discussed his connection with the Senior Center, the need for more space for Senior Services and that the relocation of Senior Services to the Country Club would be a step in the right direction.

Gerry Meister, Highland Park resident, discussed the Senior Center and Senior Services. He explained why the golf course should cease operations.

Cynthia Cash, Highland Park resident, discussed how golf is intergenerational and explained the importance of maintaining golf operations.

Mayor Rotering thanked the community for their feedback and provided information on next steps.

Mayor Rotering and the City Council thanked the Park District for their participation in the public meeting.

President Kaplan thanked the City for the opportunity to discuss the disposition of the Country Club.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Stolberg moved to adjourn. Councilwoman Stone seconded the motion.

On a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee of the Whole adjourned its meeting at 7:45 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein seconded by Vice President Ruttenberg and approved by unanimous voice vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joint Special Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2017

Liza McElroy, Secretary