

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
May 22, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:17 p.m. President Bernstein.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Peters; Director Voss; Director Gogola; Director Baird; Assistant Director Reyes; Assistant Director Acevedo; General Manager Ochs; Manager Sassorossi; Manager Good; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

President Bernstein asked that Item XI. Open Public to Address the Board, be moved to Item V.

The Park Board of Commissioners supported the president’s recommendation.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Heather Redisch

280 Poplar Rd, Highland Park

I along with many of our other community members shared a deep interest in the Centennial Ice Arena Facility and addressed this Board on April 24th about converting the gymnastic room to the studio rink it originally was intended to be. I come back to you representing so many in the community who are currently busy at this 6 pm hour with our children’s activities and dinner time. During the April 24th Meeting the Board had many questions after public comment regarding the West Ridge rebuild and renovation. It is clear the plans are from being solidified before any significant decision should be considered for this gymnastics room. While it has been stated that the batting cages move in after gymnastics in 2026. It’s hard to comprehend how three cages could become such an enormous priority based on the current planning state of West Ridge. On May 3, a parent of a child attending a gymnastics class reached out to me because she had seen my posts on Facebook and was intrigued about the studio rink update. Her interest was piqued because a man had entered Centennial wishing to measure the gymnastics room. You’re skating and hockey community of parents cannot understand how you can take a room that was built and still has the existing mechanics for a rink and convert it into batting cages for a maximum of 3 boys at a time. Why only boys? Unfortunately, girls’ softball was not prioritized, and most of us parents like myself, were forced to move our daughters to the Deerfield Park District’s program. The cages will only be used during after-school hours because little boys under 5 years of age will not be using them during the day. Do you know what would be used in the morning, noon, and evening? A studio rink. Do you know how many kids could skate on that ice at any given time? Certainly, way more than the 3 boys in the batting cages, which we all know won’t be used simultaneously very often. While you are measuring the batting cages, which is so early in the planning process, can’t you also evaluate the cost of

reactivating the studio rink? While I appreciate your effort to start a girl's flag football league in the fall, as many other sports facilities in town, however, do you know what those sports facilities don't have and never will? An ice arena. Where you can continue to help our girls figure skating and ice hockey program. I cannot tell you the kind of energy we had at Centennial this past weekend for the ice show. It was palpable. We were completely sold out for both nights. Way before it was even open to the public to purchase tickets. At least for now with gymnastics, we have young boys and girls running around the lobby excited about their classes and watching skaters. The happy energy will be gone, and the room will be occupied by just a few, if any at all, and there will be this incredible space that our community will be missing out on that you could have prioritized and transformed earlier. You are not just stifling the culture at Centennial; you are killing it. I ask for your consideration. The moment you are ready, we are ready to start fundraising.

David Buzard

2046 St Johns Ave, Highland Park

My name is David Buzard, and I live at 2046 Saint John's Avenue here in Highland Park. I speak on my personal behalf and also for Mrs. Karen Marcus Foley, who lives at 1746 Sunset Road. I would like to address the Board concerning the proposed construction over a portion of the welcoming, caring, and extraordinary open space known as Sunset Woods Park. Specifically, I wish to lodge my objection- shared by many, including Mrs. Foley and others - to a proposed elimination of a significant open green space in Sunset Park.

What is being proposed is not merely "converting the current basketball courts into multi-use courts," as is stated in the minutes of this Board's April 10th meeting, but also to re-locate those courts from their current, in-obtrusive location, and to place them at the very front of the Park, along Sunset Road.

This is to be accomplished by pouring concrete over a significant area of open green space, and, worse, tearing down at least two thriving trees. This proposal would eliminate a key open green space, thus adversely affecting the environment, and destroy the aesthetics of the park. Under this proposal, the view of the Park travelling north on Sunset Road from Central Avenue would simply be a line of sports facilities, not a beautiful, verdant community park!

Moreover, the current joyful sound of youth and adults playing pick-up games of soccer on this green space, or of children and adults playing frisbee, or catch with their dogs, over this open green space, will be replaced by the constant "boom, boom, boom, boom, boom" of basketballs bouncing off concrete, directly in front of these residents' homes! "The jewel of Highland Park," as Sunset Woods Park is now called, would be squandered.

This proposal was first revealed to the community at an April 1st community meeting whose purpose - according to the minutes of this Board's April 10th meeting - was "to get feedback and recommendations" from the community about the proposal. I, Mrs. Foley, several of her neighbors, and many other members of the community attended this meeting and expressed our strong objection to the relocation of the basketball courts to Sunset Road. The next community meeting, on May 2nd, was - according to the minutes of this Board's April 10th meeting - "to review proposed concepts." Mrs. Foley attended this second community meeting and was presented with the same proposed re-location of the basketball courts to Sunset Road, the decision not to revise the location apparently made irrespective, and in disregard, of the many objections to the site made by the community at the April 1st meeting.

She was told, however, in justification of the decision, that the basketball courts must be moved because the terms of the grant funding the project require it. This grant, apparently, is from "OSLAND" - meaning it is an "Open Space Land Acquisition and Development" grant. Ladies and gentlemen of the Board, I respectfully submit to you that Sunset Woods Park is not, nor does it contain any, open land space in need of development. Indeed, to kill thriving trees and to pave-over the existing open green vista and entryway to Sunset Park, would violate the Park District's own values of creating welcoming, caring, and extraordinary open spaces.

I thank you for your consideration and urge you to reject the proposed relocation of the basketball courts to Sunset Road.

Amber Hegde
1756 Sunset Road, Highland Park

I live directly across from the proposed multisport court. I have been at every planning meeting for this park improvement proposal and opposed the multisport court. This is the only flat green space in Sunset Park that is used by soccer players, kickball players, sunbathers, frisbee players, dog trainers, and random games of catch. The proposal is to replace this valued community space with a multisport court, by doing this all the aforementioned activities will cease. It is in the best interests of the community environment and funding to leave the existing basketball court in place. The court can be refurbished with a desired combo basketball, soccer goals, and fencing. Such that all members can use available spaces and not make basketball and soccer mutually exclusive. There is ample space in the existing area for the revamp of the skate park and the addition of the wheel-friendly plaza. In addition to eliminating visibility issues, I would recommend adding solar power lights and cameras to deter the spray can decoration of this brick wall. I think that the area back there is an amazing opportunity to create a family-friendly ball activity area which could include a revamped basketball court, ping pong tables, tether ball, and four squares. I thank the board for your attention, and I hope you take our opinions into consideration.

Director Smith reported that staff will review the updated design for improvements to the South portion of Sunset Woods Park at the June 12, 2024 Workshop Meeting of the park Board of Commissioners. The plan is for the bid to be released in late July.

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE #2024-06 AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUE OF NOT TO EXCEED \$6,445,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION LIMITED TAX PARK BONDS, SERIES 2024, OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, FOR THE PAYMENT OF LAND FOR PARKS, FOR THE BUILDING, MAINTAINING, IMPROVING AND PROTECTING OF THE SAME AND THE EXISTING LAND AND FACILITIES OF SAID PARK DISTRICT AND FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE EXPENSES INCIDENT THERETO, PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF A DIRECT ANNUAL TAX TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL AND INTERST ON SAID BONDS, AND AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF SAID BONDS TO THE PURCHASER THEREOF

The needs of the District require the expenditure of not less than the sum of \$6,445,000 for the payment of land condemned or purchased for parks, for the building, maintaining, improving, and protecting of the same and the existing land and facilities of the District and for the payment of the expenses incident thereto (Project). Pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of the Bond Issue Notification Act of the State of Illinois (BINA), as amended, the President of the Board, on the 11th day of April, 2024, executed an order calling a public hearing for the 24th day of April, 2024, concerning the intent of the Board to sell bonds in the amount of \$7,000,000 for the Project.

Notice of the Hearing was given (i) by publication at least one not less than seven (7) nor more than thirty (30) days before the date of the Hearing in the Highland Park News, the same being a newspaper of general circulation in the District, and (ii) by posting at least 48 hours before the Hearing a copy of said notice at the principal office of the Board, which notice was continuously available for public review during the entire 48hour period preceding the Hearing.

The Hearing was held on the 24th day of April, 2024, and at the Hearing, the Board explained the reasons for the proposed bond issue and permitted persons desiring to be heard an opportunity to present written or oral testimony within reasonable time limits.

The bonds shall be sold in June.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan to let the Board find and determine that it is authorized at this time to issue bonds to the amount of \$7,000,000 for the Project and the Board deem it advisable, necessary and for the best interests of the District that not to exceed \$6,445,000 of the bonds so authorized be issued at this time and to approve Ordinance 2024-06.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan, seconded by Vice President Freeman to approve the Minutes April 10, 2024 Facility & Recreation Committee Meeting, the Minutes April 10, 2024 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes April 16, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting, the Minutes April 24, 2024 Lakefront, Parks, & Natural Areas Committee Meeting, the Minutes April 24, 2024 Regular Meeting, the Minutes May 08, 2024 Workshop Meeting, the 2024 Recreation Center Pool Ceiling Painting Bid, the 2024 Roof Improvements Project Bid, the 2024 Deer Creek Racquet Club Parking Lot Improvements Bid, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$2,072,165.26

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Commissioner Ruttenberg

Motion Carried

FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURER’S REPORT

Operations (General and Recreation Funds) Budget vs. Actual

Director Peters shared the end-of-year projections and actual figures as of April 30, 2024. She is pleased to report that actual revenues exceeded budgeted revenues by almost \$1.1 million. Actual expenses were less than budgeted by \$800,000, for a year-to-date surplus of almost \$2 million.

Conclusion

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: recreation memberships and personal training exceeded the budget by \$60,000, golf exceeded budget by \$118,000, tennis exceeded the budget by \$170,000, early childhood enrichment exceeded the budget by \$153,000, and interest income exceeded budget by \$119,000.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Approval of the 2024 Cuniff Park 2-5 Playground Resurfacing-Fence Improvements Project Bid

Director Smith reported that on Thursday May 9, 2024, the Park District of Highland Park received one (1) sealed bid for materials and labor to complete the 2024 Cuniff Park 2-5 Playground Resurfacing – Fence Project. These improvements include removing the existing poured in place rubber surface and fence. The rubber surface to be replaced with areas of new poured in place surfacing, concrete plaza, and grass planting. The fence will be replaced with new fencing.

Absolute Home Improvement and Cleaning Services, Inc. has favorable references and has experience working with the Park District of Highland Park.

There is \$225,000 budgeted in capital funds for this project. Staff and the Finance Committee recommend authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Absolute Home Improvement and Cleaning Services, Inc. in the amount of \$234,585, which is \$12,585 over budget.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaplan, seconded by Commissioner Ruttenberg to approve the Base Bid from Absolute Home Improvement and Cleaning Services, Inc. for the 2024 Cuniff Park 2-5 Playground Resurfacing – Fence Project and to authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement in the amount of \$234,585.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

B. Approval of the L6 Technology IT Support Services Proposal

Director Smith reported the Park District currently has a one-year contract with L6 Technology to maintain the District’s phone system and firewalls. Staff recommend ending this contract and entering into a three-year contract for support of all Park District’s IT systems. This expanded scope would include all cybersecurity aspects, internet and Wi-Fi, servers, application support, and network monitoring, as well as technology planning, project implementation, and vendor management. Together with District staff, L6 Technology would help design and implement a multi-year plan to modernize and simplify technology. This would reduce overall IT expenses and allow the District to take advantage of newer, more efficient technologies.

The current limited scope, one-year contract is \$1,700 per month (\$20,400 per year). The proposed expanded scope, three-year contract is \$7,000 per month (\$84,000 per year). Entering into the proposed contract would exceed the 2024 funds budgeted for IT Support Services. However, it is anticipated that this change would result in savings in IT expenses District-wide over the term of the contract.

Their proposal is \$49,000 and there is \$28,068 available in the 2024 Budget for IT Support Services. While the 2024 costs are over budget, there are anticipated savings over the 3-year contract term.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg, seconded by Vice President Freeman to approve the L6 Technology IT Support Services Proposal and to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a three-year agreement in the total amount of \$252,000.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation

Vice President Freeman reported that the Parks Foundation met to discuss the future of the board and different fundraising tactics to help support capital projects. There are two open seats and three interested candidates.

B. Board Committee Updates

Executive Director Romes reported that at the May 1, 2024 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting Architects Holabird and Root presented three (3) schematic designs for the New Recreation Facility and Site Improvements at West Ridge Park. Staff received consensus from the Committee to use Building Option F to submit an application for design and review.

At the May 13, 2024 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting Architects Holabird and Root reviewed the design and review application for the New Recreation Facility and Site Improvements at West Ridge Park. The Facility and Recreation Committee was pleased with the rendering and schematic design which will be submitted in the application.

At the May 14, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting Sikich, LLP presented a draft of the Park District's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Staff reviewed the bid results for the 2024 Recreation Center Pool Ceiling Painting project, 2024 Cunniff Park 2-5 Playground Resurfacing-Fence Improvements project, 2024 Roof Improvements projects, and the 2024 Deer Creek Racquet Club Parking Lot Improvements project.

Staff reviewed a services proposal with L6 Technology It Support.

Staff shared a fundraising update for the Jeff Fox Baseball Field Campaign.

The City of Highland Park is currently renovating the Highland Park Senior Center. The Park District and City of Highland Park planned to renovate the shared parking lot in 2025. The Park District received an estimated cost from the City of Highland Park for the shared project, and the estimate was significantly higher than anticipated.

Unrelated to Committee Meeting Updates, Executive Director Romes reported that last week, we reached a consensus on a refined schematic design for a new recreation facility and site improvements at West

Ridge Park. The schematic design plans are within the District's budget and prioritize recreation programs that support community needs and interest. The schematic design for the new recreation facility and site improvements at West Ridge Park will be shared with the community at two upcoming meetings. Feel free to share with your networks.

Neighbor Meeting

Thursday, May 23 @5pm at West Ridge Center

Community Open House

Thursday May 30 Anytime between 5-7pm at West Ridge Center

Project information is posted on the Park District website here: <https://www.pdhp.org/project/west-ridge-park-building-and-site-planning/>

C. Female Athletic Trends Participation Report

Assistant Director Reyes presented a 5-year athletic trends analysis, comparing female and male participation figures. The Park District of Highland Park defines athletics as programs that have physical movement causing an increase heart rate. Programs were broken down by Early Childhood 0-5, Youth 6-8, Pre-Teen 8-13, and Teen 14-18. Overall, female participation is up in dance, swim school, baseball, basketball, skating, gymnastics, and tennis.

D. Directors Report

Executive Director Romes shared Memorial Day operational hours for Lakefront Properties and Hidden Creek AquaPark.

Upcoming Special Events include Cicada Celebration, Sat. June 1 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Heller Nature Center, Cops and Bobbers Fishing Sat., June 8 from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. at the Preserve, Free Park Pop-Up Series, Sat., June 15 from 11 – 12:00 p.m. at Larry Fink Park (near playground), World's Largest Swim Lessons, Thu. June 20 from 6 – 8:00 p.m. at Hidden Creek AquaPark, International Day of Yoga Summer Solstice, Fri., June 21 from 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. at Rosewood Interpretive Center, the Duck Derby, Sat., June 29 at 3:00 p.m. at Hidden Creek AquaPark.

Lastly, 2025 Travel Baseball Tryouts, June 29 – 30 from 9 – 3:00 p.m. at Danny Cunniff Park

E. Board Comments

President Bernstein requested an update on the locker rooms at Hidden Creek AquaPark.

Director Baird reported that the locker rooms were renovated at the AquaPark.

President Bernstein requested a joint meeting between the Park Board of Commissioners and the Parks Foundation in the Fall.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg, seconded by vice President Freeman 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 Kaplan, Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Freeman, President Bernstein

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain:

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 7:28 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 7:52 p.m.

ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION IF ANY

President Bernstein reported that the Park Board of Commissioners 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.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary