

**MINUTES OF A THE FACILITY AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
HELD ON MARCH 13 2024, 5:05 P.M.**

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

**Absent:** None

**Also, Present:** Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith, Director Gogola, Director Peters, Director Baird, Assistant Director Reyes, Assistant Director Acevedo, Manager Ochs, Supervisor Sanchez, Supervisor Geoffrion; Coordinator Hejnowski

**Guest Speaker:** None

Commissioner Kaplan joined the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

**Additions to the Agenda**

None.

**Proposed Renaming of the Recreation Center of Highland Park**

Director Gogola reminded the Committee that the Park District of Highland Park has several sub brands, some examples include the Recreation Center of Highland Park, Heller Nature Center, and Deer Creek Racquet Club. Director Gogola reviewed the creative briefings to develop the new proposed name for the Recreation Center of Highland Park. Creative briefs include the image the District wants to convey, promote our competitive advantage, connect with our target market, recommended preferred styles, symbols, colors, and imagery.

The proposed name is “Park Fitness”. Park reminds users it’s owned by the Park District, it’s located next to the Preserve of Highland Park, the property is on Park Avenue, and Park connotes open, active, welcoming, caring, and healthy. Fitness is the condition of being physically fit and healthy, fitness contributes to emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing, and fitness is a common term used by similar competitors. Park Fitness encompasses what we do, personal training, strength training, group exercise, open gym, pickleball, learn-to-swim, lap swim, basketball, yoga, Pilates reformer training.

The renaming was proposed since the building has been dealing with an identity crisis being on a shared site: The Recreation Center of Highland Park, the Highland Park Senior Center, and the Preserve of Highland Park. The proposed name will better promote the brand and all the amenities and programs the facility has to offer.

Commissioner Bernstein would like the rename to clearly identify that the facility is a public place. He wants the community and non-residents to know the building is owned by taxpayers, unlike the store front competitors. He would also like to know if the focus is fitness or a community center. If the idea for this facility to be predominantly a fitness facility, he understands the renaming.

Commissioner Kaplan supports the proposed rename.

Commissioner Ruttenberg suggests, before the District renames the building, staff and the Park Board need to know what the City is naming the Senior Center.

Commissioner Ruttenberg, Vice President Freeman, and President Grossberg would like Park District to be in the rename, or signage needs to make it clear that the building is a public facility owned and operated by Park District.

There will be a Facility and Recreation Committee in April to revisit and address questions.

### **Dance and Theater Presentation**

Manager Nichols provided a five-year comparison of dance program financials, dance program offerings, and enrollment figures.

In 2019, dance program revenues was under \$10,000. In 2023 revenues surpassed \$30,000. Staff are projecting those revenues to surpass \$40,000.

She commended the District's dance Instructor for developing such a successful program and provided an overview of the 3-year dance programming plans.

Manager Nichols provided a five-year comparison of theater program financials, dance program offerings, and enrollment figures.

In 2020, theater programs decreased. Revenues and enrollment is back to pre-covid years.

She provided an overview of the 3-year theater programming plans to continue to grow the program and increase enrollment.

Vice President Freeman recommends the Park District should incorporate what the local elementary and middle schools offer to help grow the program.

Commissioner Ruttenberg would like staff to consider the theater program when designing multi-use spaces at the new community center at West Ridge Park.

### **School Demographic Trends and Participation**

Manager Nichols provided a five-year comparison of youth enrichment program financials, program offerings, and enrollment figures, including a gender breakdown.

In 2019, youth enrichment program revenues were a little over \$9,000. Last year, revenues aligned with pre-covid years. Staff are projecting revenues to steadily increase over the next three years to \$13,000.

### **Sunset Valley Club House Project Update**

Manager Ochs reported that Madden Restaurant Concepts LLC, would like to rename the clubhouse restaurant to Lagos Tequila Grill.

He provided an overview of the clubhouse improvements schedule. Phase 1 improvements include expanding the bar, installing an outdoor walk-in-fridge, installing new flooring, installing new lighting,

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and new dining room décor. Phase 2 improvements include installing a cover for the existing pergola and adding an outdoor grill.

He shared construction images of the phase 1 improvements and renderings of the phase 2 improvements.

Commissioner Ruttenberg and Commissioner Kaplan would like the menu to include children's options.

Commissioner Ruttenberg and President Grossberg do not like tequila in the proposed name.

There will be a Facility and Recreation Committee in April to revisit and address questions and review more phase 2 options.

**Lot 3 Paddle Facility Update**

Executive Director Romes reported that staff reviewed two proposals at the March 12, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting for the Lot 3 Paddle Facility. Gewalt Hamilton Associates provided a proposal for civil engineering design services for exterior utility improvements, as well as development of construction documents, bidding assistance, permit coordination and construction administration. Woodhouse Tinucci Architects provided a proposal for architectural services including design development, construction documents, permitting for the entire project, bidding and construction administration.

Additionally, he reviewed the project timeline and the estimated project costs, including sponsorship opportunities and fundraising opportunities. Between sponsorship and fundraising, staff are hoping to raise an additional \$600,000 for the project.

Lastly, Executive Director Romes reported that staff are updating the current five-year Pro-Forma.

**Other Business**

None.

**Open to the Public to Address the Board**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary