

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MAY 25, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 p.m. President Grossberg

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Kopka; Assistant Director Maliszewski; Assistant Director Murrin; Manager Johnson; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, seconded by Commissioner Bernstein to approve the Minutes from the April 13, 2022 Workshop Meeting, the Minutes from the April 13 Facility & Recreation Committee Meeting, the Minutes from the April 20 Lakefront, Parks, & Natural Areas Committee Meeting, the Minutes from the April 27, 2022 Regular Board Meeting, the Executive Director's Annual Salary, the Hidden Creek AquaPark Concrete Deck Replacement Engineering Services Agreement, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$1,741,040.65

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

FINANCIAL FORECASTS AND TREASURER’S REPORT

Operations (General and Recreation Funds) Budget vs. Actual

Director Peters reported that as of April 30, 2022, actual revenues are exceeding budgeted revenue by \$630,000 and actual expenses are \$743,000 less than budgeted for a year-to-date net difference of \$1.3 million. When compared to the pre-COVID years (2017-2019), the District is a little bit behind \$700,000.

Conclusion

In April of 2022 Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budgeted, \$400,000 of the operating surplus is due to timing differences, and the Park District has a \$1 million surplus thanks to \$90,000 from West Ridge Center which is primarily due to early childhood programming revenues, \$64,000 from Centennial Ice Arena since both gymnastics and ice programming surpassed budgeted enrollment figures by 100 participants each, \$305,000 from Tennis which is due to the 400 additional participants, \$27,000 from Aquatics, \$9,000 from Recreation, and Park District received \$151,000 more than budgeted in replacement taxes. Lastly, there is a \$344,000 savings in salaries and wages due to open positions, as well as correlating insurance and retirement. Overall, the Park District is in a very favorable position at the end of April.

Commissioner Bernstein would like a recommendation from staff as to how often the charts should be reviewed at the Finance Committee Meeting.

Director Peters recommended that the charts be reviewed quarterly.

President Grossberg would like to know how the staff shortages have impacted operations.

Executive Director Romes reported that the areas where the District is struggling the most due to staffing shortages are parks and facilities maintenance. While recreation has had a lot of turnovers, he feels the District is doing well from a staffing standpoint.

President Grossberg would like an explanation of replacement taxes.

Director Peters reported that replacement taxes are based on income tax filings from local businesses. When the pandemic first hit in 2020, the District budgeted far less. As businesses are returning to normal, they are required to pay more in income taxes. It’s a sign that our local economy is improving.

President Grossberg is pleased that staff budgeted conservatively and is pleased to hear that the local economy is improving.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation

Executive Director Romes reported that the Parks Foundation met on May 17 to discuss upcoming events they will be supporting, which include Fourth Fest, Ravinia Farmers Market, a Pickleball Tournament, and the Champions Banquet this fall.

B. Summer Programming and staffing Update for the Lakefront and AquaPark

Manager Acevedo is pleased to report that the aquatics department is 97% staffed, and she has two new full-time supervisors, Shelby Mephram and Eric Gonzalez.

Hidden Creek AquaPark

Judy's Pizza is partnering with the District to serve concession at Hidden Creek AquaPark and they will be operating seven days a week. As for pool passes, to date, the District has sold 1,200 passes, which is comparable to 2021 sales of 1,001. Pre-COVID the District sold 983, so she is pleased to see the spike in sales and has individuals and families utilize the aquapark.

Rosewood Beach

Judy's Pizza will also be operating concessions Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. As for parking decals and beach passes, to date, the District has sold 3,179 parking decals and 14,364 beach access passes.

Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility

Manager Pierce reported that the boating season began Friday, May 27. She is pleased to report that staff added three catamaran storage spaces, a second Stand Up Paddle (SUP) rack and relocated both racks to the beach instead of the south pad, and daily launch passes (\$45 Monday – Thursday, and \$75 Friday – Sunday). Daily launch passes must be purchased at the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

As for utilization of the site, to date, there are 205 members (149 Res/56 NR), 94 storage holders (74 Res/29 NR), 18 launch-only holders (16 Res/2 NR), and 93 parking pass holders not counting the boaters (59 Res/34 NR). She is pleased to report we are trending or exceeding 2021 sales figures.

Commissioner Rutenberg would like to know if daily launch passes could be purchased at Park Avenue.

Executive Director Romes reported that passes can only be purchased at the Recreation Center of Highland Park, however, the plan is to sell passes on site in 2023.

Commissioner Rutenberg would like to know if daily passes could be purchased online.

Executive Director Romes reported that daily passes cannot be purchased online.

Commissioner Bernstein requested signage at the site indicating that daily launch passes must be made in person at the Recreation Center of Highland Park.

Executive Director Romes reported that marketing will develop additional signage for the site.

Commissioner Bernstein would like what procedures are in place for pool pass membership sales for the holiday weekend.

Manager Acevedo reported that she will be working the front desk along with extra staff to manage pool membership sales and the fast pass lane will be available for current members, so they do not have to wait in line to enter the aquapark.

Commissioner Ruttenberg recommended that all the signs be replaced at Park Avenue to make the site more welcoming.

Manager Pierce reported that several signs have been replaced to ensure the site is more welcoming.

Vice President Freeman commended staff for finding seasonal aquatic staff so the aquapark and lakefront properties will be open and safe to use this summer. Furthermore, she is ecstatic that staff was able to secure a vendor for concessions at the aquapark and Rosewood Beach.

President Grossberg would like an update on the number of members in the Loyalty Program.

Manager Pierce reported that the monetary goal was met, however she will follow up with the number of members.

Commissioner Ruttenberg reported that the gate was a great investment along with the launch of the application, as it reduces staffing.

C. Director's Report

Executive Director Romes reported that our first in-person ParkSchool Graduation for Mighty Oaks is this evening.

Vice President Grossberg would like to know how many graduates there were.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported there were around 60 children.

Executive Director Romes provided summer camp figures reporting that Pre-Camp is June 13 – 17, this includes Adventure Camp and Mini Crew. The official season is June 20 – August. After Camp is August 8 -12, this includes Mini Crew, Outdoor Adventure, and Tennis.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the District was able to hire enough counselors.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that the District is still filling positions for nature camps. Overall, staff are ready for the 2022 season.

Executive Director Romes shared a list of upcoming events which includes the Community Grand Opening Celebration for the Preserve of Highland Park on Saturday, June 4, a Father's Day Mini Golf Tournament on Sunday, June 19, and the World's Largest Swim Lessons at Hidden Creek AquaPark on Thursday, June 23. This is a global drowning prevention event launched by the World Waterpark Association in 2010. The event includes a 30-minute lesson, water safety information, followed by an hour of family free swim. Free with a suggested donation to support the Parks Foundation of Highland Park FYI scholarship program.

Lastly, Executive Director Romes reported that on behalf of the Park District Staff and Board I want to express our deepest condolences to the victims and families of yesterday's shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, TX. This recent event, and others like it, are an unfortunate, but important reminder of the responsibility we have as public service providers to ensure proper safety and security protocols are in place at all our facilities. I spoke with a few Park Board Members today regarding our protocols and want to ensure the community and park board that we have very similar protocols as our sister governments including NSSD112, and we regularly conduct internal and third-party audits of our protocols, as well as work closely with our Risk Management Association to review our Emergency Action Plans, Emergency Response Plans, and Communication Plans. Furthermore, we work regularly with the City Police and Fire to ensure the safety of our community. Again, I just want to reiterate our commitment to safety and diligent safety protocols.

D. Board Comments

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Vice President freeman and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary