

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
SEPTEMBER 14, 2022**

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

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, President Grossberg

Absent: Commissioner Ruttenberg, Vice President Freeman

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

Guest Speakers: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

None.

APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 2022-05: AUTHORIZING AND PROVIDING FOR THE CONVEYANCE OR SALE OF SURPLUS PERSONAL PROPERTY

Director Peters reported that staff has determined that our 552 Electric Zamboni is inoperable as the batteries are corroded. Furthermore, this machine would no longer be needed once the new Zamboni arrives in 2023. Staff received consensus from the Park Board of Commissioners at the August 24 Regular Meeting to pursue offers to sell the machine to recover some costs and free up storage space for the renovations occurring at Centennial Ice Arena. The 552 Electric Zamboni was sold for \$20,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan to approve Ordinance 2022-05: Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus Personal Property.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, President Grossberg

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Ruttenberg, Vice President Freeman

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

APPROVAL OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE CENTENNIAL ICE ARENA LOCKER ROOM LICENSE AGREEMENT

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that the Park Board of Commissioners approved the Highland Park Giants License Agreement for dedicated space as a locker room at Centennial Ice Arena on March 24, 2022. After execution of the contract on April 27, 2021 the Park District received sealed project bids to renovate the facility and construct the locker room. The costs to renovate the locker rooms was determined to be higher than the good faith estimate as indicated in the approved Agreement. As a result, new terms have been negotiated between the Highland Park Giants and Park District in an effort to move this project forward. An amendment to the Agreement has been prepared for consideration of approval by the Park Board of Commissioners. As outlined in the Amendment, the Term is extended by 5 years to end on May 31, 2038 (15 years). Additionally, the approved cost obligations for the locker room have increased to \$180,054.44 which will be split equally by both parties. Per the Amendment, The Giants obligations have been updated to pay the Park District \$17,500 upon groundbreaking and \$32,527.22 upon Substantial Completion of the facility renovation. On September 1 for the following 10 years The Giants will pay \$4,000 to the Park District until the balance of the license fee is paid.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan to approve the First Amendment to the Centennial Ice Arena Locker Room License Agreement.

Roll Call:

Aye: Commissioner Bernstein, Commissioner Kaplan, President Grossberg

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Ruttenberg, Vice President Freeman

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATES

A. Park Avenue Breakwater and Boat Ramp project

Director Smith shared images of construction and mobilization which began on September 6.

B. Moraine Path Improvement project

Director Smith shared images of current progress which includes flagstone that has been removed from the path and stones being placed at the toe for stabilization.

C. Centennial Ice Arena Renovation and Site Improvements project

Director Smith reported that Ice Builders has been moving very quickly, staff are meeting with the City of Highland Park tomorrow to discuss permits for demolition. He shared images of the current progress.

D. Old Elm Trail Connection Feasibility Study

Director Smith reported that Hey and Associates has been hired to conduct the study. The study will determine the number of feasible connection routes, include public engagement, preliminary engineering and probable cost, and determine whether the necessary property rights are willing to be released. The study should be completed in the spring of 2023.

E. Millard Bluff Grading and Tree Removal project

Director Voss shared images of the bluff erosion and fallen trees at Millard. Based on a recommendation from the Beach Management Plan completed by SmithGroup, staff contracted V3 Companies to conduct a Slope Stability Analysis and provide recommended strategies for ensuring safety and long-term preservation of the bluff in keeping with its natural character and use as a passive park and beach. Staff worked with V3 Companies to develop grading plans for the areas at the top of the bluff and plans for the planting of seeds and live plugs in exposed bare soil locations identified in their report. These plans were packaged in a single bid along with tree removal plans previously discussed at the January 11, 2022 Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee Meeting.

Staff released a bid in June, included a mandatory, on-site pre-bid meeting, and received one bid on July 14, 2022. The lone bid was \$155,500 over budget and recommended by Staff to be rejected during the July 20, 2022 Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee Meeting.

Staff rereleased another bid on August 29 with an extended schedule to provide a larger timeframe for completion. Three bids were received on September 13, 2022. The total available budgeted funds for the Millard Bluff Grading and Tree Removal is \$220,000. The lowest bid was \$319,300 which exceeds the budget by \$99,300. Although the lowest bid exceeds the budget, staff are still recommending the Park Board of Commissioners approve the project.

President Grossberg would like to know if benches and memorials along the top of the bluff have been lost due to erosion.

Director Voss reported that most benches and memorials were not lost, however, some will need to be removed. Those families will be contacted to discuss relocation.

President Grossberg would like to know if the toe of the bluff needs to be repaired to stabilize the bluff.

Director Voss reported that there will always be a risk of erosion if the toe is not stabilized and protected by large boulders/stone revetment. Currently, the costs for stabilization are not budgeted.

Executive Director Romes reported that the bluff and the top of the bluff will be addressed in the repairs outlined in the bid, however, boulders/stone revetment is needed to protect the toe, which is not included, nor budgeted.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know how much of the land along the top of the bluff will be lost from slope grading.

Director Voss reported that 10-15ft of land will be lost along the top of the bluff after the slope is graded. The slope grading is recommended to reduce further erosion from water flow.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if any of the seeding can be done in-house.

Director Voss reported that seeding is included in the bid and needs to be completed by the contractor.

Staff received consensus from the Park Board of Commissioners to place this item under Unfinished Business on the September 28 Regular Meeting agenda.

F. Fink Park Athletic Field Development project

Assistant Director Maliszewski shared images of the existing baseball field compared to the rendering of the renovation project, which would convert the infield to turf, keep the natural grass outfield with updated underdrains and irrigation, a portable outfield fence, enhanced warning track, and bleachers, include an event space, spectator area, and covered dugout.

The estimated cost for this renovation is \$1 million. At the March 30 Regular Board Meeting the Park Board of Commissioners authorized the Executive Director to enter into a professional services agreement with Gewalt Hamilton Associates for engineering and professional services in the amount of \$84,900. The Athletic Boosters have raised \$32,000 towards the project. The Boosters are meeting with a possible three-figure donor over the next few weeks. An update will be provided at a future Finance Committee Meeting to discuss possibly subsidizing the project if the Boosters are unable to raise \$1 million.

Assistant Director Maliszewski reported that geotechnical investigation and topography are complete, design engineering will commence in November, permitting in December, the project will go out to bid in April of 2023, the bid will be awarded in May of 2023, construction will begin in July of 2023, substantial completion is estimated for October of 2023, with a grand opening in the spring of 2024.

OSLAD GRANT UPDATE

Manager Schwartz reported that the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant program is administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and is typically offered annually. The competitive grant program provides up to 50% funding support to develop public outdoor recreation areas. This year \$56M is available through the grant program and the maximum individual award is \$600,000. The application is due on September 30, 2022, and awards are typically announced 6-8 months

after the application period closes. If awarded, the Park District would have two years to complete the awarded project.

The grant application requires that the Park Board of Commissioners approve the proposed project and commit funds for the project if awarded.

Staff is considering elements from the approved Sunset Woods Master Plan for the proposed project OSLAD application this includes replacing, relocating, and improving the existing basketball court, adding new elements including a regulation-size basketball court and multi-sport functions such as soccer, volleyball, and more; improving the skate park; the addition of outdoor fitness/exercise equipment; and other active elements such as ping pong and bags.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if the District is bound to the elements submitted in the OSLAD Grant Application.

Manager Schwartz reported that the District is bound by the elements submitted in the OSLAD Grant Application.

Commissioner Bernstein is concerned about the multi-sport courts suggesting the amount of courts will pose a noise issue for neighbors. While he would like to increase the District's number of pickleball courts, he is not in favor of courts at this site due to noise pollution.

Commissioner Kaplan is opposed to the wheel-friendly plaza, he does not feel the current utilization at the skate park is worth it.

President Grossberg is opposed to the outdoor fitness/exercise equipment. Furthermore, he would like to know why pickleball was not considered for this site.

Executive Director Romes reported that at the September 28 Regular Meeting Manager Zullo and Head Tennis Coach Visconti will provide an update on tennis and pickleball operations and plans to align with the current trends.

Manager Schwartz reported that a final recommendation for consideration of approval from the Park Board of Commissioners will be presented at the September 28 Regular Meeting.

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION STUDY

Director Kopka reported that the greatest asset of The Park District is its employees. In an effort to attract and retain a productive workforce, it is important that employee compensation is both internally equitable and externally competitive.

The Park District maintains an Employee Compensation Plan which includes a Classification Plan and associated Compensation Pay Grades. The Park District's current Compensation Plan was designed by a third-party consultant in 2015. It is reviewed by staff and approved by the Park Board of Commissioners annually. The Classification Plan is developed based on the nature and scope of each job/position at the Park District, as opposed to each individual/person at the Park District. Each job/position is carefully evaluated to ensure an accurate job description reflects the necessary responsibilities of that job/position, as well as the minimum and desired qualifications such as knowledge, experience, and other essential

competencies. Compensation Pay Grades are developed within the Classification Plan to ensure internal equity and then compared to other Park District's and/or Municipalities to ensure they are externally competitive.

According to Park District Policy, every five years, the Park District's Compensation Plan shall be reviewed by a qualified third-party consultant. The Park District's current Compensation Plan was last reviewed by a qualified third-party consultant in 2015. At that time, the District worked with GovHRUSA to update the Park District's Classification Plan and conducted a comprehensive salary and benefits market survey analysis with a selection of comparable Park Districts and municipalities.

In early 2022, Pay Grades within the Compensation Plan were reviewed by a third-party consultant (GovHRUSA), using a 5-year benchmark study compared to other Park Districts. As a result of this study, and based on a recommendation from GovHRUSA, the Park Board approved a 10% increase to Pay Grade minimums and maximums. However, the entire Compensation Plan, including the Classification Plan, were not reviewed during that study. Therefore, On May 27, 2022, The Park District of Highland Park sent out a Request for Proposals for the *2022 Park District of Highland Park Compensation Study*. Four proposals were received. Staff evaluated the proposals and interviewed Pontifex, GovHRUSA, and JER HR Group.

Staff also requested a proposal from GovHRUSA to study and evaluate our current employee Classification Plan. After careful review, staff selected GovHRUSA to conduct both a Classification and Compensation study. A report will be presented to the Park Board in October.

Commissioner Bernstein would like to know if progress is shared with a Committee before being presented to the Park Board.

Executive Director Romes reported that information is shared with Policy Committee before being presented to the Park Board.

President Grossberg would like to know if there is a precedent to compare our salary structure to sister agencies, such as local school districts and the City of Highland Park.

Director Kopka reported that GovHRUSA recommends comparing to organizations with the most closely aligned jobs, which includes the forest preserve and neighboring park districts instead of municipalities.

President Grossberg would like Highland Park municipalities to be included when comparing.

2023 PROPOSED BUDGET TIMELINE

Director Peters reported that staff is currently working on the budget. There are two Finance Committee Meetings scheduled for October, October 6, 2022 to review the Capital Budget, and October 18, 2022 to discuss the Truth in Taxation Resolution, a Levy presentation, and review the revisions to the Capital Budget. At the November 8, 2022 Finance Committee Meeting there will be a Budget presentation, followed by a presentation to the Park Board at the November 9, 2022 Workshop Meeting. At the November 16, 2022 Regular Meeting staff will recommend that the Park Board pass the Truth in Taxation Resolution, at the December 6 Finance Committee Meeting staff will present the revisions to the Budget Presentation and review the Tax Levy Ordinance. A legal notice will be posted on December 8, 2022 regarding the Tax Levy. At the December 14, 2022 Regular Meeting there will be a Public Hearing to approve the Tax Levy and a presentation of the 2023 Budget. The Tax Levy will be filed with Lake County on December 27,

2022. A legal notice will be posted on January 19 regarding the 2023 Budget. At the January 25, 2023 Regular Meeting there will be a Public Hearing to approve the 2023 Budget. The 2023 Budget will be filed with Lake County on January 26, 2023.

The Park Board approved the proposed Budget Timeline and requested calendar invites for the upcoming meetings.

PARK DISTRICT VALUES AND STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Executive Director Romes reported that to remain an Accredited Illinois Distinguished Agency, the Park District must have an active Strategic Plan. A Strategic Plan is essential for establishing and achieving District success through the development of strategic goals and objectives for the short, mid, and long term. The District's last Strategic Plan included goals and objectives from 2016 – 2020.

Throughout the last two years, the Park District has persevered through pandemic-related challenges, all while delivering essential programs and services to the community, remaining fiscally responsible, and maintaining staff and community health and safety. As we look back at what we've accomplished, gain perspective about where we are and dream about what we want to be as an organization, it is time for us to create clarity around who we are as an organization, and what we do best by defining the Organizational Values that invigorate staff, board, and community as we continue to deliver essential programs, services, and facilities.

In doing so, The Park District is redefining our Values in an effort to create a clear focus on what drives day-to-day decision-making, inspires leadership, and holds our organization, teams, and individuals accountable. The desired outcome of redefining Park District Values is a relentless focus on values-driven leadership, values-driven culture, and values-driven strategic initiatives that are simple, compelling, and aligned with our Mission (why we exist) and our Vision (what we aspire to do). There are three phases to our process; 1. Identify Values 2. Embed Values 3. Shape Strategy.

Values:

- Welcoming: We welcome everyone, fostering supportive relationships through positive interactions that appreciate the best in others and create a sense of belonging.
- Extraordinary: We aspire to provide extraordinary experiences by thinking creatively, creating personal interactions, and delivering unique services that positively impacts lives.
- Caring: We care about our relationships with others, as well as sustaining and improving our material, financial and natural resources, through best practices that foster trust and ensure long term health, safety, and wellbeing.

President Grossberg congratulated Executive Director Romes for implementing this effort and spending time on this strategic work, knowing how intrusive the process is. He also commended staff for supporting and buying to the effort. Furthermore, he feels this is a great tool for current and future Park Board members to utilize when discussing the District's strategic plans and policies.

REVIEW OF VOUCHERS

Director Peters reported that the District cut two checks to PDRMA for health insurance.

OTHER BUSINESS

President Grossberg would like to know if the toe stabilization for the Moraine Bluff is included in the Capital Budget.

Director Smith reported it is currently an unfunded item in Tier 6.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Bernstein and seconded by Commissioner Kaplan and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary