

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 30, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. President Bernstein.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Peters; Director Voss; Director Baird; Assistant Director Soto; Manager Schwartz; Manager Sassorossi; Manager Nichols; Supervisor Geoffrion; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON AGENDA

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Vice President Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Grossberg to approve the Minutes September 04, 2024 Special Meeting, Minutes September 11, 2024 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting, Minutes September 11, 2024 Workshop Meeting, Minutes September 18, 2024 Policy Committee Meeting, Minutes September 18, 2024 Finance Committee Meeting, Minutes September 25, 2024 Regular Meeting, Ordinance 2024-10 Authorizing and Providing for the Conveyance or Sale of Surplus Personal Property, and Bills and Payroll in the amount of \$4,321,365.11

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain: Commissioner Ruttenberg abstained from Item F: Minutes of the September 25, 2024 Regular Meeting.

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 September 30, 2024. Actual revenues are much higher than budgeted due to property taxes coming in earlier than projected, she anticipates actual vs. budgeted revenues will equalize by October 31, 2024. Actual expenses are slightly less than budgeted.

Conclusion

The following Park District programs and facilities are performing better than budget: centennial ice arena exceeded budget by \$170,000, recreation center exceeded the budget by \$176,000, golf exceeded budget by \$550,000, tennis exceeded the budget by \$186,000, and interest income exceeded budget by \$615,000. Payroll expenses are \$350,000 less than budgeted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Foundation

Vice President Freeman reported that the Parks Foundation is busy planning for the 2025 Gala and other Q1 Fundraising Events. The Parks Foundation received a \$10,000 grant award from the Highland Park Community Foundation.

B. Board Committee Updates

At the October 22 Finance Committee Meeting, staff presented the updated agreement terms between the Park District and the Homeowners Association for the Rory David Deutsch Tot Lot and the proposed playground and site improvements.

Staff provided a tax levy recommendation and the impacts for an individual taxpayer.

Staff reviewed the five-year health insurance cost trends at the District and management’s strategy to address rising costs while continuing to offer employees a quality health benefits structure.

At the October 23 Policy Committee Meeting, the Human Resources Department is revising the current Employee Handbook. Staff reviewed proposed revisions to policies impacting the military leave and bereavement leave, payroll and recording of hours worked, and employee conduct.

At the October 23 Facility and Recreation Committee Meeting, staff shared images of construction progress for the new Club Pickle and Padel facility and site and presented the phased marketing approach to promote the new facility and membership since the grand opening has been delayed.

C. Hidden Creek AquaPark End of Season Report

Manager Harnett reviewed the 2024 Hours of Operation (Pre-Season, Regular Season, and Post Season, and Rentals) and the Parks Foundation (Duck Derby raised \$775 for the scholarship fund) and PDHP events at the aquapark (Swiftly Splash).

He provided a comparison of 2022 – 2024 aquapark attendance, and revenues from daily admissions, memberships, and rentals. He is pleased to report there were over 43,000 visits to the aquapark in 2024

compared to 27,000 in 2022. As a result, revenues are trending significantly higher in 2024 than the previous years.

He provided a comparison of expenses from 2022 – 2024. Unfortunately, the aquapark is still operating at a deficit. It's costly to operate, staff, and maintain the aquapark, however the deficit has significantly decreased from 2022 which was over a \$200,000 deficit. Today, the aquapark is operating at a little over a \$48,000 deficit.

Lastly, he provided a staffing update and recruitment efforts for 2025 to retain and capture new staff.

D. Directors Report

Executive Director Romes provided a construction project update for the locker room renovation at the Recreation Center of Highland Park and the Parking Lot Improvements. He is pleased to report that the locker rooms are substantially complete and re-opened to the public on Monday October 21, on time and on budget. There are several punch list items that staff are working with the construction company on. Those will occur over the next two weeks and will not have any impact to operations to complete.

Parking lot paving for Phase II is scheduled to be completed today. Striping of the West lot will be on Friday, with the completion of phase II and opening of the west lot scheduled for Saturday November 2. Several items to address drainage and ponding of water on the east lot are already occurring and will continue through the end of next week but will not have impacts to operations.

He reminded the Park Board of Commissioners that the Recreation Center of Highland Park will be closed tomorrow, October 31, and Friday, November 01, so that ComEd can reroute the main electrical line to the building. This work is needed to accommodate the new east entrance of the senior center, which is scheduled to be completed next Spring.

He also highlighted recent and upcoming events.

Last Sunday, Oct 27, Centennial Ice Arena and the Highland Park Giants Hockey Team hosted the Cooper Roberts Benefit Hockey Game. More than two years ago, Cooper Roberts was paralyzed following the Highland Park Fourth of July shooting.

Cooper is a member of the Chicago Hornets sled hockey team, where players use a sled and two sticks to get around on the ice. The sport follows the same rules as regular hockey, but it's modified for players with physical disabilities.

The Hornets played Highland Park Giants hockey team in a benefit game at CIA last Sunday, Oct 27, and Copper scored the first goal! It was a sold-out event with over 400 attendees. All proceeds from the event went to the Hornets sled hockey team.

CBS, NBC and WGN all covered the event.

Regular Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2024

Pumpkin Smash is this Friday, Nov. 1 from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. at Hidden Creek AquaPark. Bring your pumpkins and enjoy a day of smashing, composting, and learning about sustainable practices that benefit our planet.

Dia De Los Muertos is this Saturday, Nov. 2 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Recreation Center of Highland Park. Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future and Bridging Our Communities! Live music by Mariachi Sirenas, Dance performances by Ballet Folklorico Tayahu, Enjoy Activities and crafts, and Sugar Skull Face Painting.

Garrett’s Skate is Tuesday, Nov. 5 from 11:45 – 1:00 p.m. at Centennial Ice Arena. Aspiring hockey players (ages 4+) are invited to skate with members of the Highland Park Giants Hockey Team. Skaters are encouraged to bring their own hockey sticks; no other equipment is required. Skate rentals will be available at no cost, limited hockey sticks will also be available to borrow. Skating instructors will provide free 20-minute lessons.

Tae Bo Takeover with Billy Blanks is Friday, Nov 08 from 12:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Recreation Center of Highland Park. Billy Blanks, celebrity, creator of Tae Bo Nation and World Champion Martial Artist will be instructing *Tae Bo Power Hour (Ages 14+)* and *Cobra Kai Bo (Ages 8+)*.

Lastly, the Turkey Open is Saturday, Nov. 16 from 10:00 – 2:00 p.m. at Sunset Valley Golf Club. Two Player Scramble. Includes an 18-hole round (with cart), continental breakfast, and lunch (Chili, Hot Dog, or Bratwurst). Turkey Prize for Winning Teams. Raffle for pro shop giveaways.

E. Board Comments

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Vice president Freeman, seconded by Commissioner Grossberg 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 Labrador, Commissioner Ruttenberg, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Freeman, President Bernstein

Nay: None

Absent: None

Abstain:

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 6:47 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened into Open Session at 7:11 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 Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary