

**PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
JUNE 12, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. President Bernstein.

ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Staff Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Gogola; Director Peters; Director Voss; Director Baird; Assistant Director Acevedo; Manager Kutscheid; Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speakers: None

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Karen Marcus Foley

1746 Sunset Road, Highland Park

I am here this evening to voice my concerns about the placement of the basketball/futsal court on the outer western edge of Sunset Woods Park next to the tennis courts, which are directly across from my property. My partner, David Buzard, and my neighbor Amber, both voiced their objections to the proposed placement at last month's Board Meeting, which unfortunately, I was unable to attend. You may recall seeing an email from me prior to the meeting that outlined my concerns. There hasn't been a single day since I moved into my home back in June 2017 that I haven't spent some time sitting in my living room to admire the beautiful green space that is practically my front yard. I'm wondering if any of you have made a recent visit to the park to physically see the space where the basketball/futsal court is going to be placed. If you have perhaps you have noticed the regular pick-up soccer games, perhaps you have noticed the community out playing with or training their dogs, or perhaps on any given summer day you may have noticed the excited youth arriving to play baseball along with younger siblings in toe who love to play and picnic in the green space where you are planning to put a cement basketball/futsal court. Sunset Park is the jewel of Highland Park and the green space that it affords the community is invaluable. Replacing beautiful green space that is already actively used with a sports court would be a travesty and one that I'm confident will be a source of major disappointment and displeasure for many members of the community. A basketball court already exists in the park. Why not revamp that existing court and save the green space? How can OSLAD stipulate the court must be moved to meet the requirements for grant funding? Is eliminating green space which is already serving the public really the right thing to do? I respectfully request that you reconsider the proposed

plan placement of the basketball court and maintain the beautiful green space that is appreciated and valued by many. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amber Hedge

1756 Sunset Road, Highland Park

I'm also voicing my discontent about putting a basketball court in the green space by the tennis courts. I wanted to add from the last that, I don't know if you know this, but this space is used for gatherings. When Highland Park marched for George Floyd in support of Black Lives Matter. That space is where they gathered at the end of March. When Highland Park marched for the Women's March. That is the place where they gathered. This is the place where the Park District places all the lovely fire engines for Touch Truck, this is the place where they hold movies in the Park, I believe Encanto will be played in August. This is the place where Karen mentioned pick-up soccer games, catch, frisbee, and all manner of things, are played. I would disagree with the fact that this space is underutilized. It is a gathering place and very important for the Highland Park community. Thank you. See you next month.

President Bernstein invited members of the public who provided public comment to stay for the meeting since staff will be providing an update on the improvements occurring at Sunset Woods Park.

PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF THE 2023 ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Peters reported that on May 14, 2024, Martha Trotter, from the accounting firm Sikich LLP, presented to the Park Board Finance Committee a draft version of the Park District of Highland Park's audited financial statements for 2023. Sikich LLP issued an unqualified or clean opinion for the report.

In accordance with state statute, the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report must be approved by the Park Board of Commissioners and filed with Lake County by June 30, 2024. The 2023 Annual Financial Report will be filed with the State of Illinois Comptroller's office.

Director Peters introduced Martha Trotter, Sikich LLP, to present the Park District's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2022

The District continues to present a report that meets the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) standards, and as a result, has been awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Sikich anticipates the District will continue to trend in that direction based on the report that has been prepared this year and will be issued in June.

Independent Auditors Report

Sikich LLP provided an unqualified opinion, which is considered to be a clean opinion, the highest level of assurance they can provide on the financial statements.

Management’s Discussion and Analysis

This is prepared by Park District staff, which provides a great deal of context for the financial highlights.

Statement of Net Position

This provides the basic financial statements presented on a full accrual basis of accounting, which includes the District’s long-term assets and long-term liability balances. The total net position is \$79.1 million.

Balance Sheet

This is presented on a modified accrual basis of accounting, excluding long-term items. The General Fund has \$3.6 million. Additionally, \$1.5 million was transferred from the General Fund to support capital.

Required Supplementary Information

Budgeted vs. actual performance is detailed in this section.

Statistical

Outlines 10 years of historical data, including tax collections and levies and includes basic financial statements for major and non-major funds.

President Bernstein reported this is the second time he heard this presentation, and he met with the Director Peters to go through the 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report in detail. This document along with the Park District budget is a road map of District operations. He commended the Finance Department for a job well done.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, seconded by Vice President Freeman to approve the 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report of the Park District of Highland Park.

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

President Bernstein requested that Item VIII. Construction Project Updates: D. Sunset Woods Park Improvements projects move to the VI. Presentation Item since there are members from the public attending interested in hearing about this project.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATES

D. Sunset Woods Park Improvements project

Manager Kutscheid reported that Lamar Johnson Collaborative (LJC) has taken the concept plans from the community meetings and the 2021 master plan to develop the rain gardens, game area, and multi-use sports court. He shared renderings of the multi-use sports court, the skate park, and the wheel-friendly plaza, noting the heavy planting and landscaping around both areas.

Commissioner Ruttenberg would like to know why the multi-use sports court is being relocated.

Executive Director Romes reported that a driving factor from the 2021 master plan for Sunset Woods Park is to create spaces that are more accessible and inclusive. Relocating the basketball court and replacing it with a multi-use sports court improves accessibility and offers more inclusive play with several recreational options.

2024 PARK AVENUE BEACH ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS BID RESULTS

Director Smith reported that on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, the Park District of Highland Park received two (2) sealed bids for materials and labor to complete the 2024 Park Avenue Beach Access Improvements. These improvements focus on the north beach area and include improved pedestrian access, an ADA-compliant boardwalk along the beach, reconfiguring and rehabilitation of the vehicular parking lot, and landscaping. The low bidder is Copenhagen Construction, Inc. This contractor has favorable references.

There is \$612,000 in capital funds for this project, plus \$400,000 in Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant funds. The total base bid from Copenhagen Construction is \$1,307,749. Unfortunately, this does not include any of the bid alternates, so staff have been working with Copenhagen Construction, Inc. to try and reduce project costs. Staff presented two (2) cost reduction options. Both options are still over budget, so staff will discuss these options in detail with the Finance Committee on June 18, 2024. Staff will be seeking consensus from the Finance Committee to request bid approval and alternates at the June 26, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Park Board of Commissioners.

INDEPENDENCE DAY EVENTS UPDATE

Director Baird and Manager Nichols reviewed the Independence Day event timeline. The day begins at 10:00 a.m. with the Remembrance Ceremony hosted by the City of Highland Park. The Parade hosted by the City of Highland Park begins at 1:00 p.m. at Laurel Avenue and First Street. Fourth Fest concludes the day's events which is hosted by the Park District of Highland Park. Fourth Fest is from 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. at Sunset Woods Park.

Staff reviewed the Fourth Fest stage entertainment, children's activities (inflatables, games, reptile show, petting zoo, and face painting), food truck menus, and the event map.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATES

A. Lot 3 Pickleball and Padel Facility project

Director Baird reviewed the base plan and indoor renderings. Renderings included an overhead view of the indoor space, pickleball and padel courts, front counter, concession, bar and seating area, restrooms, and staff offices. Staff are finalizing the interior layout and design elements with Woodhouse

Tinucci Architects (WTA) and scope with Gewalt Hamilton Associates (GHA) for sewer and water. The Week of June 17, the existing dome will be removed. He reviewed the project timeline, noting that the permit package submittal is this month, foundation remediation occurring in July, the bid package submittal in August, construction initiates in September, and the anticipated grand opening in the Winter of 2025.

Director Gogola provided a funding update. To date, \$2,400,000 has been donated or provided through sponsorship. She reported public fundraising is estimated to begin September 15, 2024.

Director Gogola reviewed the brand image, which was presented and supported by Mr. Saslow and staff. While the facility will be upscale and have a club feel, it will not be intimidating. Instead, the facility will be welcoming and inclusive, fun and casual atmosphere that is customer-focused. Staff anticipates the facility will have a regional draw, for active adults, teams, and youth with a high-quality playing experience.

Staff are recommending naming the facility Club Pickle and Padel. Mr. Saslow supports the name. Staff is seeking consensus from the Park Board of Commissioners to lay the proposed name down for 60 days at the June 26 Regular Meeting.

President Bernstein recommends the Park Board of Commissioners sit on the proposed name and further discuss it at the June 18 Finance Committee Meeting.

B. Recreation Center of Highland Park Construction updates

Deputy Director Carr reported staff are trying to align the locker room renovations with the construction occurring at the adjacent facility, the Highland Park Senior Center, to address shared improvements, such as plumbing and ventilation. The architect and contractor hired by the City of Highland Park can complete the District's locker room renovations. The Park District of Highland Park would reimburse the City of Highland Park for the costs. Staff will review the general pricing cost estimates for tile/flooring, lighting fixtures, shower, toilet, plumbing and drains, electrical, and vanity renovations at the June 18 Finance Committee Meeting.

C. Jeff Fox Baseball Field Improvements project

Manager Kutscheid reported that heavy rains and flooding have delayed the project. Thankfully, since the weather has improved and it's been warm and sunny this past week, work will commence on Saturday. Staff estimated construction will be completed in mid-July allowing opening for play in late August.

E. The Preserve of Highland Park Compton Avenue Trail Connection Update

Manager Kutscheid shared the project timeline, noting that construction began last month and should be completed in mid-July.

E. New Facility and Site Improvements at West Ridge Park

Manager Schwartz reported that the Park District hosted two neighborhood meetings regarding the new facility and site improvements at West Ridge Park. Over 120 residents attended each meeting. Overall, there were very few concerns expressed by community members regarding the project. The Park Board of Commissioners will receive copies of the comment cards submitted by community members.

REVIEW OF VOUCHERS

The Park Board of Commissioners reviewed the vouchers and there were no questions.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

None.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Ruttenberg, 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; Section 2(c)6: the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District; Section 2(c)8: security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property;

Roll Call:

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

Nay: None

Absent: Commissioner Kaplan

Abstain: None

Motion Carried

The meeting adjourned into Closed Session at 8:26 p.m.

The meeting reconvened into Open Session at 9:02 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; Section 2(c)6: the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the District;

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Section 2(c)8: security procedures and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property.

No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman and approved by a unanimous vote. The Board Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary