



**Park District of Oak Park
Regular Park Board Meeting
John Hedges Administrative Center
218 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302**

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:31pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Lentz, Wollmuth, and Worley-Hood

Absent: Commissioner Wick and President Porreca

Park District Staff Present: Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Chris Lindgren, Deputy Director of Properties & Planning; Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Director of Recreation; Paula Bickel, Director of Human Resources & Risk Management; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Ann Marie Buczek, Director of Marketing and Community Engagement; and Edith Wood, Executive Assistant.

Others: Michael Kies – Presenter for American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA); Georgia Keleher with the Senior Citizens' Center Oak Park River Forest; Roger Oney, park district staff and SEIU member, and community members: Scott Drews, Joy Michel, Sandeep Sood, John Michel, Charlotte Connor, Patrick Connor, Erin Connor, Krista Kaplan, John Van Aalst, Wei Qiu, Val Desiderio, Michael Desiderio, Stephanie Didwania, Kyle Tobolik, and Lola Tobolik.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 5:0

III. PRESENTATION OF THE GOLD MEDAL FINALIST AWARD

Michael presented the Gold Medal Finalist Award to the Park District of Oak Park, stating that the Park District, along with the Board and staff, was a remarkable organization. As a Gold Medal Finalist, the Park District was one of four districts in the United States in Class IV (with populations between 30,000 and 75,000) chosen as finalists for the Gold Medal Award. It is an honor to be a finalist and to be recognized as one of the top four Park Districts for our city's size in the United States.

IV. VISITOR/PUBLIC

Scott Drews: Scott attended the October Community Meeting to discuss the Field Center Master Plan. He believes the best solution would be to replace the current Field Center building in order to preserve the greenspace at the northwest portion of Field Park. Scott encouraged the Board and staff to explore other potential locations for the new building.

Joy Michel: Joy attended the last Board meeting to hear the discussion on the Field Center Master Plan but felt that there was no mention of the community's concerns regarding the preservation of the berm or the need for a traffic study in the area. She expressed concern that removing the fence at the park would



create a safety hazard for children. Additionally, she pointed out that the park area would be smaller with the new building, as it would mostly be used for athletic fields. Joy also shared with the Board pictures she found from the Oak Park Public Library, showing past generations who have used the berm at Field Park.

Sandeep Sood: Sandeep, a resident of Woodbine Street near Field Park, noted that it appears none of the concerns expressed by the community have been shared with the engineers working on the design of the new building. He expressed concerns about potential traffic issues and recommended that the Park District conduct a traffic study. Additionally, Sandeep emphasized that if sustainability is a core mission of the Park District, the greenspace on the northwest corner of the park should be preserved. He also questioned why the Park District is not considering extending construction on the existing building.

John Michel: John noted that he reached out to the Oak Park Fire Department to inquire whether the alley west of Field Park could pose any issues for emergency response. He received a response indicating that fire trucks are the same width as garbage trucks and, as such, have no trouble driving down the alley in case of an emergency. Additionally, fire trucks are equipped with a 600-foot hose, allowing them to walk over to the location of the current Field Center building without disruption to reach the emergency. John also expressed that he would have preferred if the Park District had conducted a focus group with community members to gather input on the design of the new building.

Charlotte Connor: Charlotte, 12 years old, noted that she has been visiting Field Park since she was 2. She enjoys going to the park with her family, often running down the hill and using it as a sledding hill. Charlotte expressed concern that changes to the park will impact the community, as the new building will block parents' views of their children from the comfort of their homes. She mentioned that she has no issue with the current location of the building.

Patrick Connor: Patrick, Charlotte's younger brother, noted that he also enjoys playing on the hill, as there are no other parks with a hill like it. He expressed that removing the hill would take away the fun.

Erin Connor: Erin, Patrick and Charlotte's mom, noted that the kids adore the greenspace and would like that area to be preserved. The park currently offers clear sightlines from their home, and having the nature area nearby is a bonus. Erin appreciates that the greenspace is close to their home, as it allows the kids to play independently, giving them a sense of freedom. She would prefer modernizing the current building rather than constructing an entirely new one. Erin also mentioned having seen cars run stop signs in the neighborhood and expressed concerns that relocating the building could worsen traffic issues.

Krista Kaplan: Krista urged the Board not to overlook the community's feedback on the design.

John Van Aalst: John noted that during his walks around the neighborhood, he enjoys stopping at Field Park to appreciate the beauty of the berm. He also expressed concerns about potential traffic issues in the neighborhood.

Wei Qiu: Wei noted that he has many fond memories with his children at the berm at Field Park and believes it would be a shame to lose it. He suggested renovating the current Field Center instead of constructing a new building, citing both safety and cost concerns.



Val Desiderio: Val, a lifelong Oak Park resident and a former Mann School student, expressed her agreement that the Park District should preserve the greenspace at Field Park. She also noted that with child pickup at Mann already being busy, the new building could create additional issues. Additionally, Val pointed out that the design of the new building does not match the aesthetic of the neighborhood.

Michael Desiderio: Michael noted the strong passion from neighbors for the berm at Field Park and emphasized the strong sense of connectivity within the community. He expressed that community members want to be heard and urged the Board to consider their input.

Roger Oney: Roger, a member of SEIU, thanked the Board and the bargaining team for their work on the new agreement. He noted that the agreement offers great benefits for both the Park District and its staff, which will positively impact new employees. Roger expressed his satisfaction with the results, stating that he feels respected and valued as an employee.

Stephanie Didwania: Stephanie, whose son attends Mann School, strongly opposed the demolition of the hill for the new building. She highlighted that the northwest portion of the park currently provides unstructured play for kids, which is why she understands why the neighborhood feels strongly about preserving the hill.

Kyle Tobolik: Kyle noted that it is frustrating for kids when adults make decisions about the parks, especially since the kids are the ones who actively use them. He mentioned that the current layout of the park promotes exercise but expressed concern that the proposed play area could pose a safety risk, particularly with the potential for foul balls hitting children, especially near the small play area.

Lola Tobolik: Lola noted that her friends and neighbors are active users of the park and appreciate the nature area in the northwest portion. She also expressed her disagreement with the proposal to place the new building in this area.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Wollmuth and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to approve the Cash and Investment Summary and Warrants and Bills for the month of November 2024; approval of the Minutes from the Committee of the Whole Meeting (November 7, 2024), Fall Park Tour (November 9, 2024), and Regular Board Meeting (November 21, 2024); approval of Disposal Ordinance 2024-12-13; approval of the 2025 Board Action Calendar; approval of the Letter to WSSRA of Appointment of Representatives; approval to continue to hold the identified closed session minutes; approval of the PACT Agreements for Fenwick High School, SEOPCO, Troop 20, Ascencion, St. Giles, and Windmills; approval of OPPL IGA for PDOP Passes Reservations (Clubhouse / Ice Rink / Pool); approval of Personnel Policy Manual; approval of Administrative and Board Policy Manual; approval of Safety Manual; and, approval of 2025 Non-Union Salary Ranges. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 3:0.**

VII. STAFF REPORTS

A. Executive Director's Report – In addition to the Executive Director's Report (which is included in the Board Packet), Executive Director Arnold noted that Rehm Pool construction is moving forward, as concrete has been poured for two walls and the weather looks favorable for continued progress. The Park District received the OSLAD grant for Longfellow, which will go toward the development of



pickleball courts and a splash pad. The Santa Trolley program has been expanded due to high demand, and there is still a waitlist.

B. Updates and Information – Written report included in the Board Packet.

C. Revenue/Expense Status Reports – No questions asked.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Recreation and Facility Program Committee

1. Senior Citizens' Center Oak Park River Forest (SCCOPRF) Update – Georgia Keleher from the SCCOPRF provided an update to the Board. The SCCOPRF has partnered with the Park District since 2019, and during that time, senior programs have quadrupled. The program has also expanded to include out-of-town residents, allowing more people to participate. Georgia also reviewed the programs offered through Active Adults. Additionally, Commissioner Lentz received the Ulyssean Award in 2024 for her support of the community. The Board was pleased to hear the updates from Georgia.
2. Annual Highlights/Accomplishments – Executive Director Arnold provided the Board with an overview of the Park District's highlights and accomplishments over the past year, including updates on facilities, programming, and staff. Additionally, an overview of the awards and grants received was presented.

B. Administration and Finance Committee

1. 2024 Strategic Plan Update – Executive Director Arnold and Mitch Bowlin noted that all strategic goals for 2024 have been accomplished. Additionally, it was mentioned that staff are still waiting to receive a draft of the Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan (CSMP) report from 110%.
2. 2025-2029 Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan Update – As previously noted, staff are waiting to receive the draft version of the CSMP report for review. Staff recommend continuing the Regular Board meeting to the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 16, 2025, to review the CSMP report and seek approval.
3. Renewed Articles of Agreement between PDOP and SEIU Approval – Executive Director Arnold noted that The Articles of Agreement between the Park District of Oak Park and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 73 expired on March 31, 2024. Staff and representatives of SEIU negotiated new terms to renew the existing provisions of the collective bargaining unit agreement. The Board was happy to hear that an agreement has been reached. A motion was made by Commissioner Wollmuth, and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to approve the Renewed Articles of Agreement between the PDOP and SEIU effective April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2028. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 3:0.**

C. Parks and Planning Committee

1. PDOP Climate Action Plan Update – Executive Director Arnold noted that one of the goals for 2025 is to incorporate a Climate Action Plan. The Park District currently has a Sustainability Plan, which will be replaced by the Climate Action Plan to establish more actionable goals. The Board was pleased to hear about the plan.



- 2. HVAC Service Contract Approval – Executive Director Arnold noted that the current three-year HVAC service contract that covers most of the Park District facilities expires on December 31. Staff went out to bid on November 6 and two pre-bid walkthroughs were held on November 19 and November 29. On December 3, three bids were received. The lowest bid was received by Comprehensive Construction Solutions (CCS), LLC for a total annual cost of \$15,600. A motion was made by Commissioner Wollmuth, and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to approve a one-year maintenance contract with an option for a second and third year based on performance, for an annual cost of \$15,600 with CCS. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 3:0.**

VIII. NEW BUSINESS – None

IX. COMMISSIONER’S COMMENTS

Commissioner Worley-Hood: Commissioner Worley-Hood attended the Santa Trolley with his family and was pleased to see that the program had reached capacity.

Commissioner Lentz: Commissioner Lentz expressed her appreciation for the kids who gave their public comments to the Board today.

Commissioner Wollmuth: He attended the Fitzgerald event at Cheney Mansion with his wife, which was a great event. He also attended both the FOPCON and IGOV meetings. Commissioner Wollmuth also wished the Board and staff a Happy Holidays.

X. CLOSED SESSION – None

XI. CONTINUE THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING, JANUARY 16, 2025


At 8:47pm, a motion was made by Commissioner Wollmuth and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to continue the Regular Board meeting to the Committee of the Whole meeting on January 16, 2025. **The motion was passed by a voice vote of 3:0.**



 Secretary
 Board of Park Commissioners

January 30, 2025

 Date



 President
 Board of Park Commissioners

January 30, 2025

 Date