



PARK DISTRICT
of OAK PARK

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

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Lentz, Wick, Wollmuth, Worley-Hood, and President Porreca

Park District Staff Present: Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Ann Marie Buczek, Director of Marketing and Community Engagement; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Chris Lindgren, Deputy Director of Properties & Planning; Mike Baiardo, Superintendent of Special Facilities; Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Director of Recreation; Bill Hamilton, Superintendent of Parks & Facilities; and Edith Wood, Executive Assistant.

Others: Caitlyn R. Culbertson, Park District attorney, and community members: Val Desiderio, John Van Aalst, Jeff Schneider, Michael Desiderio, John Michel, Krista Kaplan, Gary Kaplan, David Gullo, Scott Drews, Erin Connor, Joy Michel, Lauren Johnson, and Daniel Gallagher.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

III. VISITOR/PUBLIC

Community Residents – Val Desiderio, John Van Aalst, Jeff Schneider, Michael Desiderio, John Michel, Krista Kaplan, Gary Kaplan, David Gullo, Scott Drews, Erin Connor, Joy Michel, Lauren Johnson, and Daniel Gallagher: These community members expressed their disagreement with the proposed location for the new Field Center Building. They raised concerns about various items including safety, increased traffic, disruption to the green space on the northwest corner of Field Park, and the removal of sightlines. Additionally, they wished that more community input had been considered by the Board.

Lauren Johnson: Lauren expressed her support for the proposal for the new Field Center Building and encouraged other residents to get involved in Park District committees to become more engaged and learn about the Park District's initiatives.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Wick and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to approve the Cash and Investment Summary and Warrants and Bills for the month of December 2024; approval of the Minutes from the Committee of the Whole Meeting (December 5, 2024), Regular Board Meeting (December 19, 2024), and Continued Regular Board Meeting (January 16, 2025); and approval of Disposal Ordinance 2025-01-24. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 5:0.**



V. 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 the Rehm Pool renovations are progressing, and the delay caused by IDPH will be reviewed at the next Board meeting. The Day Camp brochure is out now. While the ice rinks have melted, there is hope for better weather, especially for Winter Fest in March. Additionally, staff recently held an employee recognition event, where 24 staff members were honored for their years of service.
- B. **Updates and Information** – Written report included in the Board Packet.
- C. **Revenue/Expense Status Reports** – No questions asked.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Parks and Planning Committee

1. Field Center Park Master Plan Approval – Executive Director Arnold reviewed the history of the need for the replacement of the Field Center, the process for selecting the Architect as well as reviewing feedback received from the community and information regarding each of those ten areas. Director Arnold made a recommendation to shift the center slightly to the east, creating a more north/south axis and reducing the impact on the berm. It also improves sightlines on the west side. Staff mentioned that the Village conducted a traffic study in May 2024, during peak times when school and softball/baseball activities were in session and found that traffic in the area remains low. The Board discussed their thoughts on the proposed plan. A motion was made by Commissioner Worley-Hood and seconded by Commissioner Wollmuth to approve Option Site 2 of the Field Master Plan and move forward with the bidding and construction of the new Field Center. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 4:1.**
2. Austin Gardens Master Plan Update – Executive Director Arnold review the Master Plan meeting that was held on Wednesday, November 6, 2024. The meeting was held virtual with approximately 25 in attendance. Staff reviewed with the community changes since the last master plan which included the new Austin Gardens Environmental Education Center (AGEEC), upgraded lighting to LED, and added interoperative signage. Residents asked for better policing of the dogs off leash and some concerns with individuals who are experiencing homelessness sleeping in the park. They loved the increased use of the park, the young people enjoying the park and asked for additional educational opportunities at the AGEEC.

B. Administration and Finance Committee

1. Festival Theater Lighting Approval – Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board that Festival Theatre (FT) launched a capital campaign focused on enhancing sustainability through the installation of new LED lighting and the implementation of a reusable stage system. FT requested funding support from the Board for the lighting upgrade. Executive Director Arnold explained that the Austin Gardens Trust was established to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the park while also supporting the arts. As such, staff believe funding this request aligns with the Trust's objectives and supports the Park District's sustainability goals. A motion was made by Commissioner Wick, seconded by Commissioner Lentz, to approve Executive Director Arnold to collaborate with Festival Theatre to purchase the identified lighting package and use \$101,111.61 from the Austin Gardens Trust account to fund this project. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 5:0**



PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK

2. 2025 Tax Year Levy – Abatement Resolution for 2024 Levy Adjustment – Executive Director Arnold and Mitch Bowlin noted that, since 2022, Cook County has been automatically increasing tax levies to recapture losses from assessment appeals refunds. The District has the option to abate this levy increase. The 2025 budget did not account for this additional levy. Since the levy is not part of the current budget and does not affect future PTELL calculations, staff recommend abating the levy and not collecting additional taxes from residents. A motion was made by Commissioner Wick, seconded by Commissioner Worley-Hood, to approve the 2024 Tax Levy Abatement Resolution 2025-01-01 for the 2024 Tax Year. **The motion was passed by a roll call vote of 5:0**
3. 2024 Performance Measures Year in Review – Mitch Bowlin provided the Board with an update on the Park District's 2024 Performance Measures. He noted that only one goal was not accomplished, while all other goals have been successfully completed. Additionally, all fund balances are on target. The Board was pleased to hear the updates given.
4. 2024 Program Scholarship and CDM Report – Mitch Bowlin provided the Board with an overview of the 2024 Program Scholarship and CDM Report. He noted that, based on the 2024 numbers, staff will be exploring ways to secure additional funds for the program. Staff identified a significant increase in the usage of scholarships and CDM in 2024. A total of \$140,450 in scholarship funds was used for 2,795 activities and memberships, compared to \$95,449.40 in 2023 for 1,360 activities and memberships. Additionally, an increase in CDM discounts was observed, with \$162,240 in 2024 compared to \$89,773 in 2023. In 2024, 472 households were approved for scholarships, up from 316 households in 2023. The growth in the financial assistance program was attributed to increased marketing efforts. The Board was pleased to hear about the significant amount of financial assistance provided to the community.

C. Recreation and Facility Program Committee – None

VII. NEW BUSINESS – None

VIII. COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Commissioner Worley-Hood: No comments were provided by Commissioner Worley-Hood.

Commissioner Wick: Commissioner Wick expressed his amazement at the updates provided by staff. He shared that he attended his final IPRA/IAPD conference, noting that it was a fantastic event and a great opportunity to network. Commissioner Wick also presented the Master Board Member awards to Commissioner Worley-Hood and Commissioner Wollmuth which were received in this year's Annual Meeting.

Commissioner Lentz: Commissioner Lentz agreed that the IPRA/IAPD conference is always a great event. She also expressed how proud she is to be a part of this Board.

Commissioner Wollmuth: Commissioner Wollmuth noted that he missed the conference but plans to attend next year. He attended the FOPCON meeting but missed the last IGOV meeting.

President Porreca: President Porreca thanked staff for their diligence in making adjustments to the Field Center plans. She also expressed how much she enjoyed her conversation with the Board. During the



PARK DISTRICT
of OAK PARK

conference, she attended her friend's architecture lecture and noted how the lecture resonated with her and the ongoing discussion about the Field Center.

IX. CLOSED SESSION – None

X. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:44pm, a motion was made by Commissioner Wick and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting. **The motion was passed by a voice vote of 5:0.**



Secretary
Board of Park Commissioners

February 20, 2025

Date



President
Board of Park Commissioners

February 20, 2025

Date