



# **PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK**

**Park District of Oak Park  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
John Hedges Administrative Center  
218 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60302**

**Thursday, March 6, 2025**

## **Minutes**

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

### **I. ROLL CALL**

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

**Absent:** Commissioner Wollmuth

**Park District Staff Present:** Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Chris Lindgren, Deputy Director of Properties & Planning; Patti Staley, Director of Horticulture; Mike Baiardo, Superintendent of Special Facilities; and Edith Wood, Executive Assistant

**Others:** Cathi Knickrehm with ESAC and Sue Boyer with FOPCON

### **II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None

### **III. PARKS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- A. Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) Update – Cathi Knickrehm from ESAC provided the Board with an update on 2024. She noted that ESAC meetings have transitioned from being monthly to every other week, with some meetings held over Zoom. This change has helped with membership retention by making it more convenient for members. The committee has also seen a reduction in membership, now down to six members. ESAC lost three members but gained one new member during this process. However, Cathi highlighted the need for younger members to join, as all current members are over the age of 50. ESAC has faced some challenges with their taskforce committees and plans to adjust their approach by allowing members to sign up for projects based on their availability. With meetings now occurring every other month, there has been a decrease in the pace and engagement of the committee. Despite this, ESAC will continue its Zero Waste Taskforce with Concerts in the Park. Additionally, ESAC has reviewed the Integrated Pest Management Policy and the Andersen Park plant list. Looking ahead, ESAC plans to seek more projects to engage in and will also review the Urban Forestry Plan. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**
- B. FOPCON Update – Sue Boyer from FOPCON provided the Board with an update on 2024. She shared that FOPCON has had a successful year in supporting its mission. Program attendance remains strong, and both volunteer participation and donations have been robust. As of November 2024, FOPCON has a full staff working with the organization. Additionally, FOPCON has formed new collaborations, including a partnership with After School Matters. The organization has also achieved success in its 2024 capital campaigns, raising over \$55,000. Sue encouraged everyone to



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visit the Conservatory to see the new improvements made. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**

- C. Oak Park Conservatory Annual Report – Patti Staley provided the Board with a summary of the Oak Park Conservatory Annual Report. She highlighted that last year, the Conservatory celebrated its 95th anniversary. The historic door at the Conservatory was also updated. Jen Suszek, the Horticulture Supervisor, has become a certified arborist and now oversees the maintenance of trees in the parks. Landscape maintenance has been transferred to the Conservatory, resulting in an increase in biodiversity. Staff have also expanded programming at the Conservatory. Additionally, plant market sales have risen by 53% in revenue. Looking ahead, staff are focusing on growing rental opportunities at the Conservatory, particularly with the addition of an outdoor tent during the warmer months. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**
- D. IPRA Environmental Report Card – Patti Staley provided the Board with a summary of the IPRA Environmental Report Card. She noted that the report card is completed every two years. Since the previous report, the Park District earned a rating of 93%, which is 3% higher than the previous score. This increase is attributed to a small rise in the number of sustainable fleet vehicles purchased by the Park District. Patti also mentioned that the Environmental Report Card seems outdated and has reached out to IPRA to inquire if there are any plans to update it. As the Report Card is a requirement for Illinois Distinguished Accreditation, the Board will vote to approve the results of the IPRA Environmental Report Card at their next meeting. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the March Regular Board Meeting.**
- E. Field Park Playground Professional Services Contract – Executive Director Arnold noted that in the 2025-2029 CIP, staff have allocated \$1,000,000 for professional services and playground improvements at Field Park. Staff previously worked with Altamanu in 2014 to assist with the Master Planning process; however, since Altamanu is closing its business, staff have reached out to Terra Engineering to complete the 2024 Master Plan. Terra will be responsible for preparing the landscape architectural and engineering construction project details. The project is expected to go out to bid in September 2025, with construction beginning in April 2026 and final completion anticipated by September 2026. Staff are recommending that the Board approve a contract with Terra Engineering for an amount not to exceed \$128,500 for the professional services. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the March Regular Board Meeting.**

### IV. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – None

### V. RECREATION AND FACILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE – None

### VI. NEW BUSINESS – None

### VII. CLOSED SESSION

At 8:16pm, a motion was made by Commissioner Wick and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to convene into closed session for the discussion of performance of a specific employee of the Park District. **The motion was passed with a roll call vote of 4:0.**





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At 8:57pm, a motion was made by Commissioner Wick and seconded by Commissioner Lentz to adjourn the Closed Session and to resume the Regular Board Meeting. **The motion was passed by a voice vote of 4:0.**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:57pm, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned. **The motion was passed with a voice vote of 4:0.**

  
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**Secretary**

**Board of Park Commissioners**

April 17, 2025  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

  
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**President**

**Board of Park Commissioners**

April 17, 2025  
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**Date**