



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, October 2, 2025

Minutes

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

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Lentz, Wollmuth, Worley-Hood, and President Porreca. Commissioner Onayemi was absent.

Park District Staff Present: Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Bill Hamilton, Superintendent of Properties & Planning; Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Director of Recreation; Ann Marie Buczek, Director of Marketing & Community Engagement; Roger Oney, Supervisor Parks and Facilities; and Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant.

Other: Peter Andersen, Festival Theatre; Sam Elsner, OPYB/S; and Stephanie Horner, AYSO.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

III. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

- A. Audit Engagement Letter – Executive Director Arnold informed the Board that we were looking for approval for a contract extension with Lauterbach and Amen (L&A) as the auditor for the Park District's 2025-2027 fiscal years. The cost would be an additional \$400 for 2025 and \$600 each for 2026 and 2027. The Board asked if we were within guidelines for not going out to bid and staying with (L&A) and they were informed that the last time the PDOP went out to bid there were only a few firms bidding as many were not familiar with municipalities. Mitch Bowlin noted that partners reviewing us have rotated as well as staff for fresh audits within the agency each year and with that, they are well within agency standards. The Board agreed that the audits were going well and were pleased with the L&A rotation of staff. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the October Regular Board Meeting.**
- B. 2026 Committee & Board Meeting Calendar – Executive Director Arnold noted that dates have been proposed for the 2026 Committee and Board meetings. Staff investigated the major holidays, as well avoiding scheduling meetings around conferences, budgets, and the Board Retreat. **This item will be brought before the Board on the Consent Agenda at the October Regular Board Meeting.**



IV. PARK AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

- A. Cheney Mansion Geo-Thermal Bid Update – The Board was reminded the wells were completed earlier this year and now we are going out to bid for the mechanical components to get geo thermal into Cheney Mansion with the bid opening on October 9. Bill Hamilton, Superintendent of Properties and Planning informed the Board that it was good to see companies that they knew at the mandatory bid meeting and that they are working with Mark Nussbaum during this process. The Board discussed whether the PDOP had to worry about landmark status approval and were told no and that they would be using local carpenters to do the restoration work. **This item will be brought before the Board on the Regular Agenda at the October Regular Board Meeting.**

V. RECREATION AND FACILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE – None

- A. Festival Theater Update – Peter Andersen with Festival Theater along with their Board President Martha Moylan, provided the Board with an update. Peter noted that over the past 50 years, Festival Theatre has had over 93 productions, brought in over 1,900 artists, and over 100,000 patrons to the park with unique zip codes of 42%. Working with past groups who have given donations and grants, they have found that all are increasing the amounts, and some have doubled donations from 2022-2025. They believe this is a result of the quality of talent they are now getting by focusing on paying competitive wages to the artists. They have continued with their adult education partnership, held their first summer camp and had thirteen apprenticeships this year and next year, they will be doing Hamlet. Festival Theatre was honored with a Jeff Equity Special Award celebrated for its 50th anniversary and will be attending the Best of the Best Gala with the Park District to receive the award for their successful partnership with the PDOP. Peter and Martha finished by once again thanking the Park District for the lights in Austin Garden. The Board thanked them for all they provide to Oak Park. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**
- B. Oak Park Youth Baseball and Softball (OPYB/S) Update – Sam Elsener with OPYB/S provided the Board with an update. Sam has been a representative for the organization for eight years. He shared the numbers they have for leagues from T-ball, Pinto, Mustang/Shetland, Bronco, and Pony through the Eagles travel teams. He said they also have ambassadors that attend activities to try and spread knowledge of the organization to gain interest. The Board discussed possible dips in registration in some ages and growth they are seeing in their younger teams. Sam also discussed their philosophy of keeping the house leagues alive as not every family can afford the travel teams and the time they require. They want the kids to play with their friends and school friends, which also affords them to expand their friendships going into high school. He reminded the board they are run entirely on volunteers and that they have expanded their training, back ground checks and are also piloting a mental health training. The main weakness they see is field time. People and even teams are leaving as they are getting just a few hours a week if they are lucky and parent and athletes just don't feel it is enough to grow and become competitive. Brian mentioned if lights were added to some spaces it would supply so much to the community athletes, not only baseball and softball but other sports as well. The Board thanked Sam for his work with OPYBS. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**



- A. American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) Update – Stephanie Horner, AYSO, provided the Board with an update. Stephanie informed the Board that they had about 100 more players signed up this past fall and have provided many full scholarships. They recently held an AYSO night at OPRFHS with over 400 people showing up and were told by the players for the OPRFHS that it really meant a lot to them to see the stands full and cheering for them and it was great for the AYSO players and families to see their future high school where they could be playing. Discussion took place with the Board as they were asked how AYSO could get more transparency with the high school for the use of their fields. Stephanie was informed of the matrix used in the District's contract with the high school for the calculation of the swapping of field space and was informed that it had been a learning curve, but the high school now has a dedicated person to track the use of who is using which of their fields which was not always the case. They also discussed the Irving School Field use and the PACT system. Stephanie reminded the Board of their upcoming AYSO meeting next week which Commissioner Worley-Hood said he would be attending. Stephanie congratulated the Park District on their gold medal win, and the board thanked her for coming and sharing the AYSO information this evening.

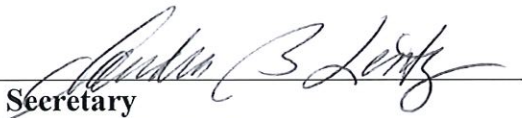
No action is needed by the Board on this item.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. CLOSED SESSION – None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:21pm, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned. **The motion was passed with a voice vote of 5:0.**


Secretary

Board of Park Commissioners

November 20, 2025

Date


President

Board of Park Commissioners

November 20, 2025

Date

