

**Park District of Oak Park  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Community Recreation Center  
229 Madison Street  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302**

**Thursday, December 4, 2025**

**Minutes**

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

**I. ROLL CALL**

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

**Park District Staff Present:** Jan Arnold, Executive Director; Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Director of Recreation; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Business Operations; Ann Marie Buczak, Director of Marketing & Community Engagement; Paula Bickel, Director of Human Resources and Risk Management; Mike Biardo, Superintendent of Special Facilities; David Ferry, Administrative Assistant, and Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant.

**Others:** Kevin Graham, Senior Landscape Architect; Jennifer Draper, Landscape Architect; and Jamil Bou-Saab, Executive Vice President, Terra Engineering LTD., Evan Michel, Township Manager, Oak Park Township.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ellen Mills - Ellen stated she is a part-time Skating Instructor at RCRC as well as an Architect. She had come before the Board a while back when RCRC was being renovated to champion the rink becoming a full-time ice rink and has worked there for over 30 years. She wanted to bring attention to the departure of Cathy Brown, coordinator for the Ice Academy and say how sad she is noting that Cathy had an extensive knowledge of the skating programs and instructions and that knowledge is now gone. Although part-time staff members, she wanted to state that the instructors are professionals in their own right and that the knowledge of the position will not be easy to fill. She met with Paula Bickel, Director of HR, prior to the Board Meeting and appreciated the information that was shared with her by Paula. She feels there is no sense of joy now when she goes into work. She finished by saying as she has been all over the nation at clinics/camps/trainings, she feels there should be better processes brought in.

**III. PARKS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- A. Barrie Park Master Plan – Kevin Graham, Senior Landscape Architect and Jennifer Draper, Landscape Architect, of Terra Engineering LTD., were there to update the Board on the review of the Barrie Park Master Plan from the community meeting held on September 10, with Commissioners Porreca, Lentz, and Wollmuth in attendance. Mr. Graham began by stating there were a lot of positive comments at the meeting. Looking back from our 10 year Master Plan update, he expanded on the following various improvements identified at the meeting: the sled hill, fitness, seating, rain garden areas, ADA crossing at the intersection, court surface updating, shading, the budget and timeline, and more. The Board noticed the need for more shade structures being requested in park renovations and were told that the PDOP attempts to use tree shading as much as possible but where trees weren't available in our parks, pavilions were built or as in this case, shade structures; the Board noted it is a nice consistency to see throughout the parks. The Board also discussed the drainage system for the sports field and were told that artificial turf would not be going in that park and with this knowledge, a sand and drainage system would be set up for the field. The possibility of lighting was also discussed, and it was confirmed that they would reach out to groups using the field to partner for lights at the time if added to the plan. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**

B. Longfellow Playground Sourcewell Purchase Approval – The Board were informed that alongside the construction contract for the Longfellow project, the PDOP had planned a direct purchase for the playground/splash pad equipment and the playground surface using Sourcewell. The cost of the playground equipment is \$435,638, the splash pad equipment is \$79,928, and playground grass is \$172,689.98 for a total of \$688,255.98. The Board questioned how Sourcewell compared to competitive bidding and it was explained that Sourcewell goes out and gets the bids on typical equipment and then they provide the lowest provider at a locked in cost, and it basically is a co-op that anyone can use. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

C. Longfellow Park Portland Loo Sole Source Purchase Approval – Executive Director Arnold informed the Board that the Portland Loo had been pulled out of the contract as it is a sole source provider for the outdoor restroom required at Longfellow and therefore it would save on markups to buy directly from the supplier. The Board questioned what makes the Portland Loo the only option and were told no other outdoor restrooms would run year-round in our weather conditions with open air vents and that it would solve a lot of problems that occur with the only running restroom year-round being inside the building. Currently there is a Portland Loo at Rehm, the only difference during winter from the insides restroom is the water outside of the Portland Loo is shut off so ice does not form and create hazards, but it has worked well and been well received. The cost of the Portland Loo single occupant public toilet is \$179,160 and the installation is included in the Hacienda contract. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

#### **IV. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

A. Draft IGA Oak Park Township - PDOP Scholarship Program  
The PDOP has an established strong working relationship with the Oak Park Township and has participated in various Intergovernmental Agreements. Annually in the past, the Park District has applied for funding from the Township to help support the Financial Assistance Program for the youth residing in Oak Park. The Township suggested an IGA to document this partnership and collaboration towards scholarship funding. One aspect of the new IGA, just as Scott Sekulich comes before our Board annually in January to update them on the scholarships, he would also attend the Township board meeting to update them as well. Evan Michel, Township Manager for the Oak Park Township, stated they appreciate the collaboration with the PDOP scholarships, and felt it was natural to move this into an IGA. The Board agreed it makes it simpler for both entities and also shows transparency for the community. Initially this IGA is for one year but could move to longer periods after this initial year is reviewed. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting**

B. 2026 Board Action Calendar – Executive Director Arnold noted that the Board Action Calendar was prepared to help staff track all of the different items that will be coming before the Board during the 2026 Calendar year. The Board was reminded that variations to the Board Action Calendar do take place, but it is a good tool to set the length of meetings by items on the agenda and to track items needing approval from the Board for accreditation. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

C. Letter to WSSRA of Appointment of Representatives – Executive Director Arnold noted that every year, WSSRA requests a letter to be made to note the Park District's appointment to the WSSRA Board of Directors. Executive Director Arnold is noted as the Regular Representative, and Commissioner Worley-Hood is noted as the alternate as was approved at the May Annual Meeting. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

D. Bi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes – Executive Director Arnold noted that in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the Board is required to review closed session minutes bi-annually to determine whether the need for confidentiality still exists on all or parts of the closed session minutes. It was

recommended that the Board continues to hold the identified closed session minutes at this time. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

- E. PACT Agreements – Executive Director Arnold noted to the Board that all of the PACT Agreements are up for renewal. These agreements were created so that other user groups and organizations would be able to use Park District facilities. The 2026 PACT applications were received and processed, with each organization contacted with their designated placement level based on the PACT (Partner, Associate, Companion, and Tenant) program. As such, it was recommended that the Board approve all of the PACT agreements provided and be fully executed. Executive Director also noted that East Avenue Lacrosse had sent in their signed contract today and will be brought up under new business this evening to add to these agreements. The Board discussed the difference between partners and tenants, and the costs associated to each group. The Board thanked David Ferry for all his work on the agreements and working with the individual groups. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**
- F. Administrative and Board Policy Manual Update – Staff review the Administrative and Board Policy Manuals on an annual basis. Changes to the best practices were made, part of which were: language on prohibited items in parks to include temporary walls and shopping carts, an updated cost recover chart, the service for refunds was updated to \$5.00 for all other programs, and language about drugs not therapeutically administered was removed and cannabis as prohibited in any park facility from IAPD language was added. A discussion took place on programs based on the new cost recovery model and it was decided this would be brought for discussion in further details at the 2026 Board Retreat. **This item will be brought before the Board at the Consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**
- G. Personnel Policy Manual Update – Staff review the Personnel Policy on an annual basis. Some changes to their best practices were made including the making of all non-union employees 40 hours and the changing of language to the family neo-natal section. There will be a one-time adjustment for the employee hours changing to 40 from 37.5. No questions were provided from the Board at this time. **This item will be brought before the Board at the Consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**
- H. Crisis Management Plan Update – Executive Director Arnold noted that as part of the standards for CAPRA accreditation and keeping in line with good practices, the Crisis Management & Communication Plan must be reviewed on an annual basis. The manual has been reviewed by staff and updates to staff job titles, along with the adjustment for just the title in many positions only being listed instead of names and titles in case of staff turnover, were made. No material changes were made. **This item will be brought before the Board at the Consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**
- I. Safety Manual Update – Staff review the Safety Manual on an annual basis. Some changes to their best practices were made. A brief discussion took place on local and federal laws regarding the distinctions between legal drugs and CDL licenses and the Board confirmed that the staff are all informed/have the knowledge and aware of the distinctions. **This item will be brought before the Board at the Consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

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

#### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. Extension of FOPCON Agreement - Executive Director Arnold informed the Board that representatives from FOPCON, staff, and Commissioner Wollmuth have held two meetings, and it has become clear that agreed upon changes will not take place in the near future. The current contract ends December 31, 2025. As plants need to begin being planted for the plant sale, they were looking for a verbal consensus to extend the current contract for an additional year ending 12/31/2026. Continued work towards a new contract will take place with a third meeting taking place in January with others following as needed. The Board agreed it was better to



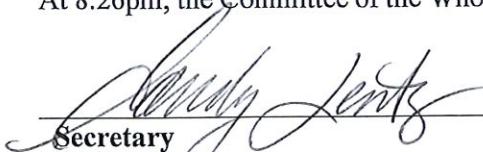
continue this way without making any hasty decisions and verbal consensus was given. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**

2. East Ave. Lacrosse PACT Addition - As mentioned earlier during the PACT discussion, East Avenue Lacrosse has sent in their signed PACT agreement and would like to renew their agreement. The Board gave consent to add it to the PACT agreements to be approved at the December Regular Board Meeting. **This item will be brought before the Board at the Consent agenda at the December Regular Board Meeting.**

**VII. CLOSED SESSION** – None

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:26pm, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned. **The motion was passed with a voice vote of 5:0.**



Judy Lentz  
Secretary  
Board of Park Commissioners

January 15, 2025

Date



Karen Brown  
President  
Board of Park Commissioners

January 15, 2025

Date