



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

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Lentz, Onayemi, and Worley-Hood.

Absent: Commissioner Wollmuth 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; Maureen McCarthy, Deputy Director of Recreation; Bill Hamilton, Superintendent of Properties & Planning; Cara Bryan, Data Insights Analyst; Nelson Acevedo; Director of Parks and Facilities; Roger Oney, Parks and Facilities Supervisor; and Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant.

Others: Georgia Keleher, President SCCOPRF, and a resident.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – Nick Binotti, Oak Park Resident - began by telling the Board that he was here due to a serious ethics breach that took place with the D200 school Board and the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation on a contentious project. As he has found out that the Park District has also worked with the Good Heart Work Smart Foundation he wanted to warn the District that in light of this serious breach that we should put on hold any workings with them and do a full accounting and a thorough analysis for assurances that an ethics breach won't happen again. He has been to all the entities and has encouraged them to talk through these dealings so that we hold democratic votes in our meetings and fears this breach will get buried but he wants to make sure it never goes away or is swept under the rug and then becomes a full-blown problem.

III. RECREATION AND FACILITY PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- A. Senior Citizens' Center Oak Park River Forest (SCCOPRF) Update – Georgia Keleher, President SCCOPRF, wanted to share the happenings that took place in 2025. She began by informing the Board that the SCCOPRF was the oldest senior services in Illinois and that their group was incorporated in 1958. They joined with Oak Park in 2019, and their mission has stayed steadfast and that they're not just about keeping busy, it is about lifelong learning pursuits and their programming reflect that. They currently have 500 paid memberships up from 100 when they merged in 2019. Funding for equipment, supplies and underwriting of the tuition comes from the Economy Shop and the Ulyssean Award Dinner where Tina Birnbaum and Paula



Waldron were honored. The Board agreed the Ulyssean Award Dinner was a lovely event and were happy to hear of the SCCOPRF progress.

III. PARKS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

- A. Field Park Project Owner Purchased Equipment – Executive Director Arnold noted as we just did with the Longfellow project, the PDOP pulls out some of our purchases partly to get items ordered quickly but also to save on markups. Sourcewell publicly bids items just for this purpose and meets the Districts procurement requirements. The purchases from Sourcewell are for Landscape Structures playground equipment and splash pad equipment, Forever Lawn’s playground grass, and Landscape Forms for a total of \$401,027.07. The Board asked questions regarding the grass and was reminded that the rubberized surface did not hold up well with use and weather conditions, but the grass is currently used at Rehm, Barrie, Scoville, and Andersen parks and it does not have the balls in it like the sports fields and is handicap accessible. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the February Regular Board Meeting.**

- B. Field Park Legal Bid Update – The PDOP went out to bid on January 7 with a mandatory walk-through on January 20 with five addendums added. Seven bids were opened on February 4, 2026, with Hacienda being lowest, responsive responsible bid. The bid tabulation sheet will be included in the Regular Board Meeting Packet along with the recommendation for Hacienda. Discussion took place on the other bids received. Hacienda’s bid along with the Sourcewell purchases is slightly over the budgeted amount, but the contract includes the hauling of contaminated material off site which we do not expect to use so it is believed we can make the budgeted amount. The installation of the Sourcewell purchases is also included in the contract. The Board asked about Hacienda’s work, and it was confirmed they completed the Andersen updates and recently were hired for the Longfellow project and the PDOP are happy with the work they have received from them. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the February Regular Board Meeting.**

- C. Shared Mower Replacement PDOP|D97 – Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board of the IGA with D97 and our Capital Improvement Plan for the PDOP to maintain D97’s sports fields and that shared costs for a replacement mower taking place at the 10 year period, is now. Through our joint purchasing, a Toro Ground Master 7200 Traction Unit was found for \$31,369.92 with D97 paying \$15,648.96. Additionally, the PDOP will purchase a snow removal kit for \$26,260.98 as the mowers get a ton of use during the winter clearing snow throughout the parks. The Board confirmed if it was gas or electric and was told it would be gas powered. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the February Regular Board Meeting.**

- D. Professional Services Agreement Pleasant Home ADA Restroom – Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board that when the Park District separated with the Pleasant Home Foundation one of the commitments made was if any large scale projects took place a task force would be created. Laura Thompson, former Executive Director for the Foundation assembled the task force with architects Frank Heitzman, Doug Gilbert, Commissioner Chris Wollmuth, along Bill Hamilton and me. We met twice on site on and verified options were very limited on where to locate the ADA restroom. Once the location by the lift into the home using the indoor basement stairs



access position was confirmed, three architects were met with at the site to discuss the project. Daniel Roush was the preferred architect. Upon discussions on Daniel’s proposal, we are recommending his proposal to design the ADA restroom for an amount not to exceed \$40,000. The Board discussed the timeline of work starting in January 2027. The Board also confirmed the need for this project and the cost of it, and all agreed that to make the home welcoming for all, it would need to be built. **This item will be brought before the Board on the regular agenda at the February Regular Board Meeting.**

IV. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

- A. Park District Citizen Committee Approval - Mekhala Merchant – Executive Director Arnold noted the importance of the PDCC and that it is comprised of 13 residents and staff. Currently there are only 11 members on the committee. Mekhala Merchant has expressed interest in joining the PDCC. Mekhala attended the January PDCC meeting and expressed her desire to learn more, engage, and be more active with the community. **This item will be brought before the Board on the consent agenda at the February Regular Board Meeting.**

- B. 2025 Performance Measures Year in Review – Mitch Bowlin provided the Board with a recap of the Park District’s 2025 Performance Measures and introduced Cara Bryan who will be presenting these reports moving forward. All nine of the strategic goals had been met but a number of the budget goals were still in the process due to the audit not being complete as well as the Rehm pool project extended construction completion. Specific programming and staff goals were shown to the Board. The Board was impressed with the detail and the growth from the Covid years.

VI. NEW BUSINESS – None

VII. CLOSED SESSION – None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:44pm, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned. **The motion was passed with a voice vote of 3:0.**



 Secretary
 Board of Park Commissioners



 President
 Board of Park Commissioners

March 19, 2026

 Date

March 19, 2026

 Date

