



WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT Minutes of Regular Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners

*Monday, March 8, 2021
Virtual Meeting via "Zoom"*

Present

Commissioners: President Gordon Anderson, Vice President Julia Goebel, Bryan Abbott, Cecilia Clarke, Mike Murdock, Todd Shissler, Amy Wolfe
Secretary/Executive Director: Steve Wilson

Staff: Emily Guynn, Kristi Solberg, Sheila Foy, Marlon Rodas, Lindsay Thomas

Visitors: Walter Keats, Alan Golden, Rick Prohov, Mary Shea, Van Economou, Derek Casteel, Kara Kosloskus, Andrew Levy, Allison Frazier, Peggy G., Mark Schumacher, Rich DeLeo, Mike Doyle, Gary Knight, Patrick Duffy, Richard Pinner, Brij Shah

Absent

None

I. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m.

A. Roll call taken. It was noted that Commissioner Goebel had yet to join the meeting and will do so later and the time will be noted.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. February 8, 2021 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Clarke moved and Commissioner Shissler seconded a motion to approve the minutes for the February 8, 2021 regular meeting.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Wolfe, and Anderson. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, Goebel; **motion carried.**

B. February 8, 2021 Closed Session

Commissioner Murdock moved and Commissioner Shissler seconded a motion to approve the minutes for the February 8, 2021 closed session.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Wolfe, and Anderson. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, Goebel; **motion carried.**

III. Communications and Correspondence

President Anderson acknowledged that the packet contained emails in regard to disc golf with the majority were opposed to it being added to Gillson Park. He then acknowledged the Mallinckrodt Dog Park emails received just prior to the meeting

and Director Wilson stated that emails on that topic will be in the Parks and Recreation Committee packet for their next meeting. He then acknowledged a letter regarding accessibility at the beach house and parking lot and noted that Director Wilson responded to the emailer.

IV. Gillson Park Comprehensive Plan

Director Wilson introduced Scott Freres from Lakota Group and Andy Tinucci from Woodhouse Tinucci Architects who have an update for the board regarding the meetings held the past month. Scott gave the board a brief update outlining the progress on the engagement phase of their planning efforts. He stated that the team held a Virtual Open House a couple weeks ago and had over 200 people signed up for the meeting. He also said they also conducted focus group sessions over the past month with various groups. He went on to explain that as surveys, question and answer information, and some information boards put together, they will be put in facilities and online for the public to stay informed. He said that all of the input will be used to form the basis for the proposed items they return with in the next step of planning. He then turned the discussion over to Andy Tinucci to walk the board through some of the information taken away from their engagement process. Andy walked the board through some slides that summarized the feedback gained during the Virtual Open House such as the online poll results, a words cloud of common terms used, and quotes heard during the engagement process. He said that the feedback has been great because the residents know exactly what they love about Gillson and they look forward to drilling down on the feedback to help guide their planning process. Scott then informed the board about the timeline of the process and said that the initial engagement process is winding down and that the envisioning phase is beginning with the initial concepts to be delivered likely in late April. As the envisioning progresses, the ideas will be brought back to the community in May or June.

V. Public Comment/Recognition of Visitors

President Anderson addressed the audience and asked if anyone was interested in addressing the Board.

Director Wilson facilitated public comment. The Attendance Record will become part of the permanent record.

Alan Golden – Thanked the board for the presentation about Gillson. He mentioned he noticed that there were only 5 sailors at one of the sessions. He suggested that more people be contacted for input. Director Wilson said that the meeting was not intended to be an open meeting for all sailors as it was a focus group. Mr. Golden said he appreciated the information.

Rick Prohov – He stated he found the report from Lakota interesting and wanted to know why the District did not follow the same process for Community Playfields. He went on to state he has asked multiple times since July for information

regarding the irrigation system at Community Playfields and has not received anything yet which he has now submitted a Freedom of Information Request for which he assumes will be what is discussed in the Closed Session meeting tonight. He further stated that he has filed a complaint against Director Wilson because as far as he can tell is that the irrigation system was undertaken without a public review or board approval. He said he will wait to hear what is stated after the closed session.

Mary Shea – She appreciated that Lakota Group mentioned that Gillson is located in a residential neighborhood. She went onto express her concern about the discussion surrounding disc golf at Gillson and reminded the board that the prior version of disc golf in Gillson was not a successful endeavor. She mentioned that parking and traffic are of concern and adding another activity would make it worse. She also stated that disc golf with flying projectiles would prevent other uses of the park space.

Van Economou – He said he would like to echo Mr. Prohov's statements about a lack of transparency and specifically pointed out that there was an error in the meeting number on tonight's agenda and feels it is reflective of how staff is treating the residents.

Derek Casteel – He thanked Rick Prohov for all of his work in regard to the changes at Community Playfields. He said that Mr. Prohov has been speaking with board members one on one and on the phone. He said that the tone of the conversation with the park board and the residents around the park was negative and the best way to make it better would be more transparency. He said that the new irrigation system was a surprise nonetheless and that there seems to be no public record of an approval. He also said that one, if not more, board members had no knowledge of the irrigation project until it was at least underway and he feels that it is unfathomable that a park district employee can undertake a \$750,000 project without board approval. He asked when the board became aware of the project.

Richard Pinner – Last September he wrote to the District, and he spoke about it last October, about the need for restrooms and since then there have been many meetings discussing the topic. The irrigation system did not have such a discussion and why was it not handled the same way. He felt that the original irrigation system was to be installed above the underground tank, but ultimately it was expanded to cover the entire park and conveniently located to justify and dictate the location of restrooms that had clearly been anticipated since before the intergovernmental agreement had been signed. He said that he believes that the District has missed the mark on this project especially when compared to the ongoing lakefront planning. He feels that this has not been a public and open process and asked if the board is accountable for the failure or is it staff.

Brij Shah – He echoed what Richard Pinner and Derek Casteel said. He said he feels there needs to be more transparency.

VI. Approval of Voucher List

Commissioner Clarke moved and Commissioner Murdock seconded a motion to approve the Voucher List in the amount of \$1,008,385.80 a copy of which is to be attached to and become a permanent part of the minutes of this meeting. Prior to the vote, President Anderson pointed out the new format of the report and how much nicer it is to review. Commissioner Murdock asked about a cost for Alan Graham and associates and if it was for a placement fee when we hired the paddle professional and staff said that it is for contracted instructional services.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Anderson, and Wolfe. Voting No, none. Absent, Goebel; **motion carried.**

VII. Executive Director's Report

Director Wilson reported on the following topics:

- Gillson Comprehensive Plan – He stated that videos of meetings, question and answer documents for the questions asked during the Open House, as well as a survey and all materials regarding Gillson Park will be placed on the District's website as well as placed in facilities for people to review.
- Social Equity Policy – He stated that the policy is under the Financial Planning and Policy Committee report as it has been reviewed and recommended by the Committee. He further explained that this is the second step in a multi-step plan that will also include a review of all prior policies for any language that should be altered to make them more inclusive.
- Marketing Presentation – He stated that later in the meeting the Marketing and Communications Manager will present how we currently do our marketing and communications. He said that the presentation was born out of comments and questions asked by current board members as well as candidates.
- Summer Operations – He said that the summer planning is underway for the beach, golf, pool and camps. He said that in the next week the Camp brochure will be online and registration will happen later in the month.

Commissioner Goebel joined the meeting at 8:27 pm.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Lakefront Committee:

Commissioner Abbott reported on the following topics:

- He said that the Committee did not meet but the board did meet as a Committee of the Whole to discuss lakefront topics. Specifically, the meeting focused on a discussion with the SmithGroup who have supplied the District with a proposal to do shoreline protection work at Langdon Park. He provided a background about lake levels and why such work is under consideration. He said that SmithGroup spoke to what their services would

entail and what the fees they propose are derived from. He said that the consensus was that the proposal is one that should be approved when it comes to the board.

B. Parks & Recreation Committee:

Commissioner Murdock reported on the following topics:

- He stated that the Committee did not meet this month. He said the next meeting is later this month and that the Committee will be looking at disc golf as that has been referred to the Committee by President Anderson. He said the Committee will be looking at all the bathroom locations that have been discussed and making a recommendation on where bathrooms should be located if bathrooms are deemed appropriate. He asked Director Wilson about the progress on an agreement with D39 in regard to the washrooms at the junior high. Director Wilson said that the conversations with the schools has been fruitful and that the Park District will begin drafting an agreement. He asked the board if they have any information they would like gathered or any thoughts they wished to share before the committee meets more. Commissioner Abbott asked if we are building new bathrooms or using existing bathrooms. Commissioner Murdock stated there are existing bathrooms. Commissioner Clarke asked if there has been any more discussion about the availability of the washrooms as prior information indicated the school would not want them used while school is in session. Director Wilson stated that his understanding is that they school only is talking about a regular school day, but the details have not been discussed enough to say with certainty. Commissioner Clarke asked how the bathrooms would be designed. Director Wilson stated that typically we would engage a design professional to create designs for the board and public to review. Commissioner Goebel asked if we know about the configuration of the washrooms in regard to gender and number of fixtures. Director Wilson said that it currently is two gender but to make the washrooms ADA compliant, they may need to be made combined into a single unisex washroom. Commissioner Anderson stated that he said these washrooms will be in place for a long time if approved, and he said that cost should not be the primary driver of where the bathrooms are placed and the utility of the location should be the primary consideration. He said that in his opinion, the pump station should be put underground and if that can happen when a bathroom goes in, we should consider it. Commissioner Murdock said another item that will be discussed at the next meeting is a fitness path made of a softer material. He said the plans presented previously will be considered. He spoke about some of the path options and some of the issues that must be considered including impact on trees and proximity to the fields. He said his personal feeling is that the more simple options on the north part of the park should be pursued first and consideration on the south should be held off for the future and asked the board for board input. Commissioner Wolfe stated that she would like the portion on the south part of the park to still be considered to achieve a one mile loop. Commissioner Goebel stated that a one mile loop would be most desirable. Commissioner Shissler stated his agreement

with both Commissioners Wolfe and Goebel. Commissioner Murdock said that the next item that will be discussed is dog park locations which has been narrowed down to Mallinckrodt and Howard Parks. He said that questions about configurations at both locations are being looked at by staff and new ideas will be presented. He stated his personal dislike for the initial location in Mallinckrodt and asked the Commissioners for their input on this topic as well. Commissioner Clarke asked if it is possible to make a smaller option in Mallinckrodt Park, maybe on the western edge of the property? Commissioner Murdock said we will look into that for the meeting. Commissioner Shissler stated he liked the Howard Park option. Commissioner Abbott agreed with Commissioner Shissler and said the idea to put a dog park in the middle of Mallinckrodt was a nonstarter with him and that Howard Park should be the focus. He stated he favors the addition of a dog park and has spent some time observing the activity at the dog beach and thinks this would be a nice addition to the community. Commissioner Goebel said that it is clear there is an obvious desire for a dog park in the middle part of Wilmette and it is known that Howard Park is a place that people with dogs already gather. Commissioner Anderson said he wants staff to closely consider the parking situation in the planning efforts when considering Howard Park. Commissioner Murdock concluded by saying the Committee is planning to also discuss other topics such as solar panels, Keay Nature Center, pickle ball, and garden plots.

C. Golf Operations Committee:

Commissioner Wolfe reported on the following topics:

- The committee met on February 22nd and that at the time snow was still on the ground and people were enjoying the cross country ski trails. In addition to that, the staff was doing winter maintenance in advance of the season. She mentioned that two vacant positions were in the process of being filled. Lastly, the golf financials were reviewed and since it is still winter, not much has happened as of yet. She mentioned that at the time of the meeting, the golf cart path project has not resumed due to the snow.

D. Financial Planning & Policy Committee:

Commissioner Goebel reported on the following topics:

- The committee met in February and reviewed the year end financials for 2020. She said that the majority of the meeting was spent discussing the Social Equity Policy and asked Director Wilson to provide background on the policy for the board. He said that the process to develop the policy was a lengthy, but good process that involved first researching similar policies locally, then the state level, then nationally. Drafts were made, reviewed by the administration first, adjusted based on input, and then reviewed with the entire staff and made further adjustments based on that feedback. Individual meetings were had with members of staff who were not comfortable speaking in a group setting and those conversations were very positive and helped shape the policy further. He went onto state the policy while somewhat aspirational, it is an aspiration we should all strive for and

hopefully will set the stage for positive discussions to take place that will allow for continuous improvement. He thanked all the staff and board who have been involved in the development of the policy. Commissioner Goebel moved to approve the policy as recommended by the Financial Planning and Policy Committee and Commissioner Abbott seconded the motion.

By a roll call vote, voting *Yes*, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Goebel, Murdock, Shissler, Anderson, and Wolfe. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, none; **motion carried**.

IX. Unfinished Business

None

X. New Business

A. Marketing and Communications Presentation

Marlon Rodas, Communications and Marketing Manager, started by thanking his staff for all their efforts during the pandemic. He then gave an overview of the demographics of Wilmette and how the District communicates with them. When emails are sent, Constant Contact is the product that is used and presented the statistics of the number and nature of emails sent throughout the year and also shared that over 22,000 emails are on the distribution list. He also spoke to some target marketing where segments of the population are targeted such as members of the tennis facility. He then outlined the digital and social media the District employs. He said that Facebook is the primary social media outlet used by the District as that is where most of the household decision makers can be found. He spoke about the use of other outlets like Nextdoor, Instagram, and Patch. He then showed the analytics of the various social media platforms. He then reviewed the District's website and some of the traffic including the use of the online brochures. He then showed the various print marketing the District uses such as flyers, banners, brochures and posters in facilities and around town in kiosks. Commissioner Clarke asked about whether or not the District could be included in the Village's e-news emails and staff said they do at times and most recently included the information about the Gillson Virtual Open House. Commissioner Anderson asked about how the District uses the information from the registration software and Marlon said that we use it for identifying trends and gathering how we want to execute target marketing to various user groups. The board thanked the staff for the presentation and for all the work they do.

XI. Adjourn to Closed Session

A. Commissioner Anderson moved and Commissioner Abbott seconded a motion to adjourn to Closed Session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel of the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the District or against legal counsel to determine its validity, and to discuss the minutes of meetings lawfully closed, whether for the purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the

minutes, in accordance with Sections 2(c)1 and 2(c)21 of the Open Meetings Act

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Wolfe, Goebel, and Anderson. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, none; **motion carried.**

XII. Reconvene Regular Board Meeting

Commissioner Shissler moved and Commissioner Wolfe seconded a motion to reconvene the regular meeting at 10:34 p.m.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Wolfe, Goebel, and Anderson. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, none; **motion carried.**

Commissioner Anderson said that if Mr. Prohov and Mr. Economou are still in the meeting, the board had a spirited discussion and a response will be forthcoming to the complaint submitted by Mr. Prohov when it is ready and reviewed by the board.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Wolfe, Goebel, and Anderson. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, none; **motion carried.**

XIII. Adjournment

There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Anderson moved and Commissioner Shissler seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:37 p.m.

By a roll call vote, voting Yes, Commissioners: Abbott, Clarke, Murdock, Shissler, Wolfe, Goebel, and Anderson. Voting *No*, none. *Absent*, none; **motion carried.**

Minutes Approved on: April 12, 2021