



**WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT**  
**Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**

*Monday, July 25, 2022*

*6:30 p.m. – Mallinckrodt Community Center “Big Room”*

**PRESENT**

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Commissioners: President Michael Murdock, Vice President Kara Kosloskus  
Julia Goebel (arrived after meeting started), Cecilia Clarke, Patrick Duffy, Allison Frazier  
and Lindsay Anderson

Staff: Executive Director Steve Wilson, Superintendent Sheila Foy, Superintendent Kristi  
Solberg and Superintendent Emily Guynn

Visitors: See Sign In Sheet

**1.0 COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS CALLED TO ORDER**

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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

**A.** Roll Call Taken

**2.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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Vice President Kosloskus acknowledged correspondence in the packet and stated that it included all items she was aware of. Commissioner Clarke noted there was an email since the packet was created from Walter Keats but noted it was more applicable to the Special Board Meeting held prior to the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

**3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT/RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

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Commissioner Kosloskus asked for a show of hands per agenda topic to see where she should break for public comment. She said the initial public comment would be for items in general, but for agenda items, please wait until she opened the floor for comment after the agenda topic had been introduced. The Attendance Sheet will become part of the permanent record.

Patrick O’Gara, 740 Laramie Avenue – Mr. O’Gara stated that between the Special Board Meeting and the start of the Committee of the Whole that he was inappropriately approached by President Murdock and threatened. He continued to say he wanted to make a note of it and register his complaint even though complaints don’t seem to get much traction with the Park District these days. He said that he has witnesses that can confirm he made it clear he did not want President Murdock to approach him or speak to him but he would not stop and continued to threaten him by saying that if he did anything further that President Murdock deemed inappropriate that the police would be called.

No further public comments were made during this portion of the meeting.

#### **4.0 ONGOING DISTRICT PROJECTS**

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##### **4.1 WALLACE BOWL RENOVATION – DEFINING PHASE**

Director Wilson provided a brief recap of the written report contained in the packet. There were no comments or discussion from the board.

##### **4.2 PICKLEBALL COURTS – DEFINING PHASE**

Director Wilson suggested that as the Committee navigates the new phases of how projects are considered, he suggested that a discussion take place that is guided by questions that will help define the project. He first asked the Committee if the Park District wanted to consider building dedicated pickleball courts on park property. Commissioner Frazier stated she was pleased that we are going through this process and if via the process it decides it is something we should not pursue, so be it, but that she is in favor of vetting the concept of dedicated pickleball courts. The remaining members of the Committee concurred they wish to consider dedicated courts. Director Wilson then turned the defining conversation to process. He stated how the prior version of the conversation started with a review of all parks as options but that this process was criticized by both the public and the various Village boards that reviewed the District's plans. This begs the question of do we do the same analysis or do something different. Commissioner Anderson asked what, if anything has changed since the prior analysis. Commissioner Murdock said that while he felt the analysis was thorough, he was surprised by the questions from the Village during their review, especially surrounding noise and light, and therefore, the District has new information that would inform a new analysis differently than before. He went on to suggest that as a part of a new analysis, getting Village feedback as the process begins will be critical in evaluating each park location. Commissioner Frazier added that as a part of the analysis she would like to learn what the best practices in other communities are with regard to pickleball. Commissioner Anderson asked to have any and all user data made available to be included in the evaluation of the topic. At this time, Commissioner Goebel joined the meeting at 6:42 pm. Commissioner Clarke noted that Wilmette is a fully developed community and because of this lack of surplus open space, she would like to consider repurposing already developed space for pickleball, as well as any creative ways to provide pickleball without having to build courts at the expense of open space. Commissioner Murdock built off Commissioner Clarke's comments by saying that we should also consider indoor options and noted that in a future year there is a placeholder to potentially add more indoor court space at Centennial and that this should be also be considered not just for tennis, but for pickleball too. Commissioner Kosloskus said, then to answer the question as asked by staff, please use the prior analysis, starting at the point where no locations are removed, and add to the analysis everything outlined in this discussion. Commissioner Frazier added cost estimates to the analysis, and staff agreed and said it would try to deliver the initial analysis at the September Committee of the Whole Meeting.

At this time, Commissioner Kosloskus opened the floor for public comment.

Walter Keats – State he feels that a pros and cons analysis needs to be conducted in regard to pickleball, not just look at it from the perspective of how you can make it happen.

Allen Golden – Offered to provide the board with an evaluation framework used in his professional career that could be used to sharpen the process the District is developing to evaluate projects.

Patrick O’Gara – Mentioned that he was the one who brought up the need for a sound analysis during the West Park pickleball discussions. He said that the District had prior experience with the topic by way of the skate park, and please involve a sound expert sooner in the process this time. He also advocated for an environmental analysis be included in the analysis as well to consider all health impacts of pickleball to nearby residents. He then referenced an email sent by Walter Keats raising injury concerns for pickleball players as another example of a more wholistic approach to evaluating the topic.

#### **4.3 GILLSON PARK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – PLANNING PHASE**

Director Wilson updated the number of responses completed at the time of the memo in the packet as compared to the memo in that was in the prior Regular Board Meeting. Commissioner Kosloskus asked if there would be a reminder push to let residents know time was running out to complete the survey and staff said there would be.

At this time, Commissioner Kosloskus opened the floor to public comment.

Allen Golden – He reiterated what he said at the prior board meeting by stating that the survey is highly flawed and therefore any conclusions drawn from the survey responses will also be flawed. He then restated his desire to have the raw data of the survey when the survey is closed. He then asked that if the email database was just those who participated in District programs or if it was the entire Village. Director Wilson explained that the database consists of people who have participated in anything with the District along with anyone who opted into the email list by clicking the icon on the center of the District’s homepage. Commissioner Kosloskus added that beyond the email database, the survey has been advertised via social media and is available on our website to anyone to take regardless of if they are in our email database. Commissioner Goebel added perspective as a professional marketer that there are laws against spamming people’s email addresses unless they opt into receiving the information, and therefore, in her opinion, the staff have done a good job in working with the village to distribute the survey along with social media, having it on the website, and emailing it to the District’s database.

#### **4.4 LANGDON SHORELINE PROJECT – PLANNING PHASE**

Director Wilson informed the Committee that he had a phone call with the engineers and have confirmed with them that they have the direction of the Board correct on how to move forward. He went on to state that the lead engineer is out of town still and therefore most likely will not be back in front of the Board until October. He went onto reiterate the direction set by the board as using the initial concept B and look at a stairs only option, path only option, a combined path and stair option, and to have all options include a place for staff to check passes, a place to store wagons and bikes, and to have the end of the path route more north than the original concept B showed. Commissioner Kosloskus referenced a communication that was in the packet inquiring about using sand bags instead of armor stone for the revetment and asked for history around that option in regard to the lakefront parks as that initial exploration predated her time on the board. Commissioner Clarke stated the main reason was they were not as long term a solution as stone.

At this time, Commissioner Kosloskus opened the floor to public comment.

Amy Boyer – She spoke about the bluff at Langdon and said the opportunity lays before the community to turn the bluff into a bird sanctuary, similar to a portion of Gillson and Elmwood dunes. She said also, Lake Forest has a resident guide on how to restore bluff slopes and it is very informative. She said then you can take out the less desirable trees and put in other more preferred vegetation.

Dean Lindsey – He said he was glad to hear the recap of what to expect next from SmithGroup because while he was there over the weekend and looking at the path and the gates across it, and people were not happy that it isn't open for use yet. He encouraged the board to consider moving to opening the beach by May of 2023 and focus on establishing access first, and do the revetment work at the end of the 2023 beach season.

Elissa Morgante – She handed out a packet and wanted to reiterate the options contained therein for natural material paths and stairs. She acknowledged that SmithGroup has spoken to why natural materials are not preferred in public applications, but all the photos in her packet are from public spaces. She would like more explanation on this topic. She also wants explanation why the excavation is as deep as it is and she also questioned the size of the stones that have been specified.

Beth Buecher – She wanted to follow up on comments made at the July meeting about how we will likely only get one chance to do this project correctly. She went on to reference an article she supplied the board about how when considering a project along the lakefront that we can't rely on solutions and approaches from the past as the environment is changing, and that new approaches and solutions, especially green solutions, need to be considered. She also spoke to how not all permits have been granted and specifically, the

MWRD permit has very specific requirements, and in her opinion, some of the solutions that have been proposed, would possibly conflict with the MWRD standards.

#### **4.5 KEAY NATURE CENTER RENOVATION – PLANNING PHASE**

Superintendent Solberg updated the Committee that the plans are currently out for bid and that an online/virtual bid opening will be conducted on September 2, 2022 and the results of those bids will be brought to the board at the September Regular Board Meeting for its consideration and possible approval.

#### **4.6 WEST PARK PADDLE IMPROVEMENTS – PLANNING PHASE**

Commissioner Kosloskus noted that it had been discussed at the Special Meeting of the Board of Park Commissioner just before the current meeting. Superintendent Solberg updates the Committee on the work being done with the lighting controls to comply with the Village's conditions. Commissioner Kosloskus asked for clarification regarding the light shields as there were questions in some of the correspondence. Director Wilson mentioned that there had been requests for cut sheets for the shields and that staff has been able to confirm that no such cut sheets are created and that cut sheets are just for the original light fixture without the shields installed. He went on to say staff had received an email from the court installer who installed the shields that confirmed the shields only have three sides and that they were installed as intended and that adding a fourth side to the shields would impact the quality of the light on the courts. Commissioner Kosloskus asked about the lights referenced in the email from a resident at North Shore Country Club. Director Wilson said he believes those fixtures are similar to the fixtures that were on the original courts at West Park and that the current light fixtures at West Park is what new courts or updated lights would be on all courts, and referenced similar if not identical fixtures at both Michigan Shores and Westmoreland Country Club. Commissioner Duffy then stated that the current fixtures have recessed lightbulbs, are LED, and considered dark sky compliant.

At this time, Commissioner Kosloskus opened the floor to public comment.

Patrick O'Gara – Stated that the picture of the lights with the shields on them speak for themselves and that the shields clearly do not meet the standards of the Village. In regard to landscaping, someone said that hard materials such as a wall is not landscaping, which is false. Anything added to the park would be considered landscaping so it does not just have to be berms and vegetation. He then stated that 4 foot arborvitae clearly won't help with sound being hit at a higher elevation and clearly won't help lighting that is as high as the lights are on the paddle courts. He then mentioned that there is no planned landscaping on the northern side of the courts and should be considered.

#### **4.7 GOLF CLUB GRILL ROOM RENOVATION – EXECUTION PHASE**

Director Wilson said that the final inspection will take place tomorrow and that the restaurant should be open come next week.

**4.8 LAKEVIEW CENTER RENOVATION – EXECUTION PHASE**

Superintendent Guynn updated the Committee that the architect and construction manager is working with staff to get the work started shortly after Labor Day.

**4.9 COMMUNITY PLAYFIELDS BATHROOM PROJECT – EXECUTION PHASE**

Superintendent Solberg told the Committee that the water lines and sanitary sewer wrapped up on Saturday, did some site cleanup, the concrete pad has been poured and exterior walls have begun, with sidewalks starting in the next two day, with a targeted completion of October 28, 2022.

**4.10 MAPLE PARK PLAYGROUND RENOVATION – EXECUTION PHASE**

Superintendent Solberg said the ribbon cutting took place, it was well attended, and thanked the marketing staff for their time and effort on designing a fun event. She said that since the park has opened there has been feedback that there is not enough play options for 2-5 year olds. She went onto say that as a staff, we don't disagree with the feedback so we are exploring some options that could fit into the space. Commissioner Murdock said that as a part of the Completion Phase for the board is to look at completed projects and see what worked, what we learned to avoid next time, and specifically said that he felt the community input was done remarkably well, but the concerns about equipment type was not said at that time, and he wondered what the takeaway from that is. Director Wilson stated that what has been learned is that while the District wants to be responsive to public input and deliver all we can, there are simply best practices we need to adhere to and having equipment options across all age groups is one of those best practices that must be followed despite public input to the contrary.

**4.11 OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT GRANT AWARD – DEFINING PHASE**

Director Wilson introduced the topic and drew the Committee's attention to a page in the packet that outlined some options within Community Playfields for specialized outdoor fitness equipment for which the District has been awarded a \$50,000 grant to install. He asked for feedback on the topic from the Committee. Commissioners stated their concerns about the equipment contains outside marketing and at the cost of \$50,000 for the life of the equipment, it did not seem like enough money, let alone the aesthetic of sponsorship imagery in public parks. In addition, the Committee does not feel there is truly a need for such equipment at this time, but could be considered again somewhere down the road. The direction from the Committee was to forgo the grant money as it is really a sponsorship deal that does not fit in Wilmette Parks.

At this time, Commissioner Kosloskus opened the floor to public comment.

Walter Keats – He stated that when ideas for Community Playfields were discussed in 2020, there was no demand for this equipment at that point so he does not understand why it is even being talked about again today.

Allen Golden – He agreed with Mr. Keats and that the topic has already been decided and should not be considered again at this time.

## **5.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

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### **5.1 ADMINISTRATION**

#### **5.11 COMPREHENSIVE & STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

Director Wilson reported that tomorrow there are a series of internal kickoff meetings to shape the engagement framework for the two plans. After that, the public will be engaged and input will be gathered.

### **5.2 FINANCE**

#### **5.21 REVIEW OF MONTHLY FINANCIALS AND CAPITAL PLAN EXPENDITURES**

Superintendent Foy explained a new format for the monthly financials and that it now has a new column for projections. She said the only major item that has had a significant change in projection for year end is capital projects. She went on to highlight how the surplus in excess of year to date operational revenue has decreased and is trending back towards the year to date budget as anticipated, and that is anticipated to continue and finish the year at about budget, but the operational year end projections will get tighter as we progress through the budget process. She explained that due to the reduction in the planned capital spending, the current year end projection is a surplus of \$1.4 million as compared to the original budget of a \$3.1 million deficit. She then walked the Committee through the capital project tracking spreadsheet and explained where the revisions took place, and specifically the planned spending at Langdon has been moved out due to the pending redesign.

#### **5.22 Discussion of 2023 Budgetary Guidelines**

Superintendent Foy drew the Committee's attention to the memo in the packet and explained the various tables contained within, and explained that the intent was to show not only the current market we operate in today, but what we have done historically compared to inflation. Director Wilson explained that as we discuss the budget guidance, the guidance is just that, and that as the budget process progresses, if there are areas that are recommended to deviate from the guidance by staff, it will be specifically highlighted for the board to understand, make decisions about, and ultimately approve. Superintendent Foy then displayed an interactive financial model that the District uses to help set the budgetary guidance. She showed that all the capital items, debt service, and tax lines have been updated for what is known. She explained that percentages for things such as utilities, supplies, employee benefits and other items that are more out

of the control of the staff due to market pricing have been applied. After all of those items are updated, the two items that are most in control of the District, are the two items staff is seeking board input on, which is User Fees in revenue, and Salaries and Wages in expenses. She said that a 5% increase had been included for User Fees, which is in line with the last couple years, but below the current rate of inflation and the inflation level at the end of 2021. She also explained that due to a need to raise part time hourly wages from \$14 to \$16, which is a 15% increase, that when that is balanced against lower increases for other employees, 9% had been included in the model. With both of these items, along with all other items, that the model shows that the target fund balance will be met for 2023, as well as into the future with an increasing target balance to reflect inflation and to better position the District to maintain its AAA credit rating as that becomes even more valuable in a higher interest rate environment. The Committee expressed their collective reluctance to make a final decision on either item without more information and directed staff to provide more detail to the members of the board so they can make a more informed decision.

### **5.3 RECREATION**

Superintendent Guynn turned the presentation over to each facility manager for their report:

Jason Stanislaw, the Centennial Recreation Complex General Manager, Reported:

- Doug Bundy has moved into a new position, Recreation Administrative Specialist, at Administrative offices, and Rochelle Kruse started today as the Operations Supervisor at Centennial;
- At the ice rink, contracts are in and hockey is getting started, learn to skate started today and as enrollment in these programs continue to increase some main sheet time has been made available for larger enrollment figures;
- Tennis had new programs start today and all is going as expected;
- Thornwood Park tennis court project has started and he showed some slides of the courts prior to the project to show the types of cracks and issues that are being addressed. Discussion ensued about the method of construction and how it benefits the longevity and playability of the courts;
- Paddle teams anticipated for this year are at 54 total teams meaning over 600 participants on those teams. With the paddle courts not being complete by the start of the season, staff is working on how to host those matches with the league. He informed the committee he is finalizing the language for signage in the facility to comply with the Village ordinance;



- Post season hours at the pool started today. That means public swim is only available on the weekends which is driven by the lifeguards not being available during the week due to school. The plan is to keep the pool in operation until October 2, 2022. He said the hours are the same as they were to the preseason, and the same as post season last year. Superintendent Frazier asked about the plunge slides being replaced and what they will be replaced with. Director Wilson said the project was put into the capital plans years ago that has moved forward, and the intent was to replace the slides with more diving boards, but that no project has been finalized and that will be done during the upcoming budget process. Commissioner Murdock asked about the pool liner and Superintendent Solberg said we are very pleased with it, received good feedback, and are looking to possibly do the same with the activity pool next year;
- On August 13<sup>th</sup> the first event for the 50 year anniversary was held, called the Keep Your Day Job Festival, which showcased local Wilmette bands and drew a crowd of more than 300. The positive feedback and initial success has led staff to plan to do the event annually moving forward.

Lakefront General Manager, Ben Wozney, Reported:

- The west end of the sailing beach has been cleaned out and can possibly make room for more catamarans;
- Post season operations have begun which means no more swimming beach staff other than the weekend, and swim at your own risk signs have been posted. Sailing beach operations continue until the close in October;
- Preparation for the project at Lakeview Center, the team from Parks and Planning and Lakefront staff have been organizing and moving items out of the facility so work can begin soon. Staff has already begun planning the programs we could offer once the project is complete;
- Throughout the year, the plan to manage the property, and in particular South Beach, worked out very well. The addition of buoys and staff in chairs spread across the beach made a positive difference;
- SUP Yoga will continue;
- Beach Bash was held quite successfully with a large crowd and all had a fun time;

- The Evanston Symphony Orchestra played at Wallace Bowl as a part of the Sesquicentennial celebrations and was very well attended;
- Upcoming events yet this year are the Gillson Campout and the North Shore Triathlon.

Timothy Johnson, the Community Recreation Center General Manager, Reported:

- Showed slides and described the projects to replace CRC rooftop units, resurfacing the entire parking lot, and resurfacing the wooden floors at CRC. He thanked the staff at West Park, the staff of the CRC, and the public for all their help and cooperation during the project which went a long way to making them successful;
- Showed slides and described of the upcoming reconfiguration and update to the Center Fitness club. He explained that the new flooring and the moving of equipment to new locations will allow for the free weight area to have more space which reflects the trends in fitness, as well as the requests from patrons of the Center Fitness Club;
- At Mallinckrodt, the goal was to add more programming at the facility for more age groups than have been served previously. To do this, specialty camps such as jewelry and sewing were hosted and were very successful.

Mary Liz Jayne, the Community Recreation Center Program Supervisor, Reported:

- All camps officially ended on the 19<sup>th</sup> earlier this month;
- She highlighted the communications that were used this year and was successful and therefore will be used again going forward for camps;
- Survey has been sent out regarding summer camps and those results will be presented at the next Committee of the Whole meeting and then planning will begin for next summer;
- School year programs kickoff tomorrow with preschool beginning on the 29<sup>th</sup>;
  - Full Day Preschool is the largest segment of enrollment for Early Childhood programs with four classrooms;
  - Care (after school) and Morning Care (before Care) have begun with the morning session having a higher enrollment as compared to last year. Morning Care has been

consolidated to one location to reduce the number of staff and bussing of the children is taking place between the schools and the parks staff;

- Campus Clubs is at Centennial, McKenzie and Romona with the school locations being selected based on survey results that identified more of a need for childcare until 6 pm at these locations;
- After School Clubs will be held at Harper and Central School starting next week;
- Center for the Arts had fall programming starting today with upcoming performances and workshops later this Fall;
- Fall Soccer enrollment has increased over the last couple weeks and is over 1,100 kids on teams;
- Men's basketball is back after being unable to take place due to restrictions from the school on outside programming.

Steve Wilson, the Executive Director, Reported:

- He stated that Adam Kwiatkoski, General Manager at the Golf Course could not attend so he would be giving his report;
- Rounds and Revenue are both up for July as compared to budget and prior year with that trend continuing in August;
- Events throughout the month included
  - WGA Club Championships
  - OGC Lawn Days
  - The Go Cup
  - Charity Outing – Rebuilding Together
  - Al Mclean Junior Tournament for the 61<sup>st</sup> year
  - Evanston Chamber Golf Outing
- Five local high schools held their tryouts at the course

Nick Marfise, Golf Course Superintendent, Reported:

- He started by saying last month he said that no day is a slow day at the golf course and then showed photos of horses loose on the course from a nearby house;
  - Unfortunately the horses did walk on the 18<sup>th</sup> green making some minor damage in the form of hoof prints;
- He showed photos of the new benches on the course
- He showed photos of some disease in the fairway that has since been treated with fungicide, and then covered with sand to allow for the new grass to grow more easily;

- Showed photos and explained the process of “re-squaring” the tee boxes by putting out lines that show where to mow with the tee mowers;
- Showed photos of where some sod work is taking place along the cart path where there is high traffic and the seed did not take;
- He highlighted a staff member who performed well this year and explained that it is the time of year, like other operations in the District, where staff levels are decreasing but the work will continue.

## **6.0 ADJOURNMENT**

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There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Clarke moved and Commissioner Murdock seconded a motion to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 9:19 p.m.

By a unanimous voice vote; **Motion Carried.**

Minutes Approved on October 17, 2022.