



WILMETTE PARK DISTRICT

Committee of the Whole

Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 24, 2023
6:30 p.m. – Mallinckrodt “Big Room”

PRESENT

Commissioners: Vice President Kara Kosloskus, Patrick Duffy, Lindsay Anderson, Allison Frazier, and President Mike Murdock

Absent: Commissioners Clarke

Staff: Secretary/Executive Director Steve Wilson, Superintendent Sheila Foy, Superintendent Emily Guynn, Superintendent Kristi Solberg, Lucy Mellen, Jason Stanislaw,

Visitors: R. Kedzior, Padi Greenberg, Sheldon Greenberg, Rich Haszagh, Patrick Lahey, Piper Rothschild, Patrick O’Gara, Walter Keats, Mary Shea, Alan Golden, John Calkins, Fred Wilson, Matt Bevenour, Dave Price, Amy Boyer

1.0 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. ROLL CALL TAKEN

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Director Wilson says we have received several emails though the weekend and today in regard to Langdon and those will be in the packet for the next Board meeting.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT/RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Vice President Kosloskus explains that the board will adhere to the Policy for Public Comment, which can be found on page 2 of the packet. She explains that no actions are taken by the board in Committee meetings, and the public is welcome to email their thoughts and present their thoughts and comments at the next board meeting. Because no action will be taken tonight, public comment will not be allowed after each presentation, but rather only at the beginning of the meeting.

Amy Boyer – Thanks the board for considering the residents’ requests to build a temporary path to get Langdon open for the summer. Ms. Boyer sent an email with two photos, one from 2011 and one from today. She explains that her photos show the sand being 6 feet higher than it is right now. She wants the engineers to consider that as the sand comes back, how will the stairs look; will they be covered up, and how will the material hold up to being covered in sand. As the sand recedes, how far out will the stairs come onto the beach.

Patrick O’Gara – Mr. O’Gara states that his email is not in the packet and he will be following up to make sure it is in the next packet.

Sheldon Greenberg – Mr. Greenberg is here this evening to oppose Wilmette Park District's plan to convert two tennis courts at Community Playfields to pickleball courts. He reads his email, which was sent to the board: "I am here this evening to oppose the Wilmette Park District's plan to convert 2 tennis courts at Community Playfield (better known as Locust) into 4 pickleball courts for the following reasons: There aren't enough tennis courts available now to support the demand for outdoor tennis, especially during summer prime time. If they want to reserve courts, residents have to pay a fee, similar to reserving indoor court time. The courts are busy from morning to night with drills, camps, matches, social tennis and family tennis. All this activity calls for all six courts to be preserved. Taking away two courts would put added pressure on the Park District staff who need to schedule courts for classes and camps. The current plan leaves one court of the three court bank for tennis, which could cause problems with pickleballs rolling onto the court and vice versa. Pickleball is a more social game with players standing closer to each other. This makes more conversation, etc., which would disturb other players. Along with the noise of the pickleball hitting the paddle, this makes playing [tennis] next to pickleball very annoying. The 2 tennis courts at the rec center already have markings for 2 pickleball courts. People have already been playing pickleball there. Those markings make it difficult for tennis players to play there because the multiple lines make it confusing for players trying to keep the ball in play. So, in essence, we have already lost 2 tennis courts.

For many years Wilmette tennis players have been loyal park district customers by supporting tennis programs with membership, court time, classes, and attire purchases. They shouldn't be made to sacrifice their tennis availability for another type of recreation. Losing revenue-generating courts would affect the Park District's bottom line. And we'll all have to pay for that! There is plenty of park district space available to accommodate both: Community Playfield has plenty of green space to add new pickleball courts next to the existing tennis courts. You could convert the 2 tennis courts behind the rec center to 4 dedicated pickleball courts. Noise mitigation can be implemented by adding plantings or fencing. Consider the parking area in the southwest corner next to the ice rink at Centennial. There's plenty of room there without affecting any green space. The unique configuration of 6 courts at Community Playfield should be preserved for all the above reasons.

My family and I have been Wilmette residents for over 40 years. We have enjoyed the many spaces made available in our park system for tennis, soccer, baseball, swimming, nature, etc. There is plenty of space available to add a few pickleball courts without reducing the number of existing tennis courts.

I am in an active group of tennis enthusiasts, who despite our older ages, are still playing tennis. I play at least twice a week, all year long at several of the park district outdoor courts and at Centennial Tennis Center. Don't infringe on our pleasure of playing tennis by converting some of our tennis courts to pickleball courts and making it more difficult for us to find available tennis courts. There is plenty of space to add new pickleball courts without jeopardizing our green space.

The park district should be able to find a way to accommodate players of both sports, without asking one to make a sacrifice for the other.”

Patti Greenberg – Ms. Greenberg has been a tennis instructor in Wilmette for a very long time. She believes the six court configuration at Community Playfields is unique and allows for fantastic programming for adults, but also our camp program, which is very vibrant and would be severely affected by having the pickleball courts there as well. She also thinks that using the rec center courts is the perfect example of dedicated courts for pickleball.

Matt Bevenour – Mr. Bevenour thanks the board for serving and states his family uses Park District programs all the time. He is currently attending Chris Canning’s spin class. Mr. Bevenour’s wife is the varsity tennis coach at Regina, and the girls use the tennis courts to practice and use all 6 courts for their matches. He also belongs to the “old man’s raquetteer’s club,” and they use all the courts there, and would prefer to keep the six courts there.

Dean Lindsay – Mr. Lindsay says that Langdon neighbors are dedicated to protecting their shoreline, and a small, natural park from design overdevelopment. With asphalt paths, metal stairs and a manicured bluff, he calls this dreaded design creep – something they didn’t ask for and don’t want. Second, he appreciates the park board and staff’s efforts to ramp up a temporary ramp, to open the beach this summer. A temporary beach ramp is welcomed for immediate access, and will also allow everyone to take a moment and explore more natural, simple design landscape ideas this summer. The conflict in this story seems to be, ‘What is the right thing to do?’ and the subtitle is, ‘How much is too much?’ The three guiding principles that inspire the growing support group is: 1. We are a community blessed with a beautiful lakefront; 2. We must reconnect Langdon design plans to nature, to protect our wild and woolly beach from overdevelopment; and 3. We need to preserve our natural shoreline to enjoy it for generations to come. Lastly, Mr. Lindsay expresses he would like to keep Langdon wild and woolly. It’s the right thing to do; it’s our legacy.

Richard Huszagh – Mr. Huszagh thanks the board for their service to the community. He hopes that public comments have been helpful and continue to be helpful as the board continues the project. On the temporary access, he favors it and hopes it is possible. On the ADA issue, he believes the capital development board rules say you need one ADA access point per half mile of beach. On the permanent access, he believes there is still some time to finalize the design. He is heartened by progress that has been made so far, and that we have gotten from the SmithGroup. The main comment he has about the main walkway is he believes it would be nice, if the walkway has to be made of concrete, if it would be made out of something that doesn’t look like concrete. Stamping it with a faux brick pattern that looks like the traditional Wilmette bricks on the streets, would be cost effective, but also a very attractive way of dealing with that. For the stairs, Mr. Huszagh recommends moving the junction point from the walkway further south. He doesn’t think it needs to bifurcate the beach to the north. He doesn’t believe there is a real issue for

the amount of access distance for people getting to the beach. It would be fewer stairs to climb, have a smaller aesthetic impact on the overall feeling of the beach, and he has seen the drawings tentatively show the stairs further to the north, but he thinks it could be considered moving it further to the south. He does think we need to consider having the bottom sections of those stairs removable. His concern is serious storms demolishing the stairs, or the sand burying the stairs when the beach level goes up, or when the beach level goes down the stairs would be dangling. For the stair materials he favors something that looks more like wood, natural materials, and perhaps a dark metal for the railings, as opposed to chrome or aluminum, which would be out of character. The last thought he had was, it is good to have a landing for people to stop on the path, and if there were a bench on the upside of the slope where people could rest, and people who don't want to go all the way down could look over the beach. He believes that would be an attractive addition. He believes this could also be integrated with where we put railings on the stairs.

Alan Golden – Mr. Golden noticed there is a presentation in the packet tonight which includes a lot of statistics. On page 15, he sites that it says “Statistically Valid Survey,” which he states is a very big term with meaning. He states that the term means that we see a confidence interval and a margin of error on all of the statistics that are generated. Mr. Golden emphasizes that he would like to see the raw data from this survey. It is our survey and he would like to be able to see and analyze the raw data himself. Without a margin of error and a confidence interval, Mr. Golden states, it is not statistically valid.

Elissa Morgante – Ms. Morgante thanks the board for putting a plan in motion for a temporary path to Langdon. She is very appreciative of the path. She also says she appreciates the comment about one half mile for ADA access. She says that by putting in the temporary path and allowing access to Langdon, because the lake level has gone down so dramatically, that this really is a wonderful opportunity to “hit the pause button” and see if there are other, more sensitive, design solutions for the beach access. We know we need something more permanent than just a path that is going to be put back in, but we really would like to see something that is more poetic, more sustainable, and works with the landscape that exists at Langdon, as opposed to changing that vibe that is there. And, as previously said, it will live on for decades and decades and be enjoyed and will not undermine the quality and experience of going to Langdon.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 PROJECT PARKS AND PLAY - BERRYDUNN PRESENTATION

There are three associates from BerryDunn to present the slides seen in the packet.

Commissioner Duffy asks two questions:

1) In survey theme 8, Residents express strong interest/willingness to pay for an indoor pool and/or acquisition of open space/park amenities. Then you jump over to “least support,” it says “fenced in dog park,” and yet, prior to that, in numerous questions it talks about people wanting a dog park. He asks what the contradiction indicates.

Dannielle Wilson answers that this is where we start to look at data across the whole survey and ask those same types of questions. Yes, there was interest. What that question is starting to dig into is, to what extent are people really interested in this. So this is telling us that people are interested, but are not willing to pay as much for the dog park as they are for the indoor pool.

2) For clarification: Survey theme 3, Wilmette Park District facilities are widely used and highly valued. Under satisfaction, users give an average satisfaction rating of 7.9. My question is 7.9 out of what. Dannielle Wilson answers it is out of 10. And everything over 5 is favorable.

Commissioner Frazier asks what the second phase of Community Engagement looks like. Dannielle Wilson answers that we get to design it. We get to look at what we have and decide what we need feedback on.

Commissioner Murdock asks about the reference about “Nearly 9 out of 10 residents have a favorable opinion,” how does that compare to other park districts? Dannielle Wilson defers to aQuity. Jeff from aQuity states that this number is very much in line with other agencies in the area. It is well above the state benchmark.

Vice President Kosloskus asks about the timeline for the aQuity presentation from BerryDunn. Director Wilson answers that we will likely see it next month and he will work with the board to see whether it will be the regular board meeting or Committee of the Whole meeting.

4.2 CURRENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES – STAFF PRESENTATION

Lucy Mellon, the Sustainability Coordinator for Wilmette, presents the slides shown in the packet, outlining the current sustainability practices of the Wilmette Park District.

Commissioner Kosloskus expresses appreciation for all the work Lucy Mellon has been doing.

5.0 ONGOING DISTRICT PROJECTS

Director Wilson refers to the memo in the packet. He states because of all the presentations for the evening, the projects for which there are updates, there are written updates in his report in the packet.

LANGDON SHORELINE PROTECTION PROJECT

Mark Wagstaff from SmithGroup presents the slides in the packet. The slides cover the temporary path plan, as well as the permanent path plan.

Commissioner Duffy asks about the areas being replanted. Mark Wagstaff from SmithGroup answers that the areas being replanted are either being reconstructed or

have construction happening on them, so therefore they have to be replanted. Commissioner Duffy reiterates to everyone that we must replant the areas where there will be construction; we are not re-landscaping the whole bluff. Mark from SmithGroup confirms and clarifies that the plants that are currently there will largely remain.

Commissioner Frazier asks about the permanent path, as the presentation included staircase images, but not the path. The permanent path is set to be about 6 feet wide. Commissioner Frazier asks if there is going to be a railing at the steeper grade (15%). Mark answers that they could carry the railing further down to provide support at the steeper grade.

6.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT

Projects updates are provided in writing in the packet, with the exception of the West Park Paddle Improvements, which is a fast moving project that will have an oral update during the meeting, in addition to what is written in the packet.

WEST PARK PADDLE IMPROVEMENTS – WRITTEN UPDATE

In addition to the written update, Superintendent Solberg updates the board on the status of the West Park paddle improvements. She states we don't have the building permit for the project yet. We have the civil permit, allowing the grounds to be worked on, and crews have been on site working on the storm sewers and the sanitary sewers, as they are underneath the proposed courts. We have to move the water main and sewer system so they are accessible going forward. The water will be shut off around May 1st. The sewer work is incorporated within the construction fence, but also where the berm will be on the east end of the playground. They are using an excavator now to dig up the site and we are reusing the spoil piles for the berm pile. The deck on the south end of the hut has been completely removed. We shut down the hut today because there is no gas. The gas was shut down because they have to relocate the gas line with the addition. The hut will remain closed until work is completed. There are two temporary toilets for use near the hut.

6.2 FINANCE DEPARTMENT

6.21 MARCH 2023 INCOME STATEMENT – TOTAL DISTRICT

Superintendent Foy updates the board on the budget. The taxes came in earlier than planned. There is a rebate from Comed that we received and will get every year moving forward; Superintendent Foy will make sure that is in the budget for next year. In addition, we sold \$65,000 worth of surplus equipment, for which we had no budget. With respect to expenses, we just have differences between timing and budget. In Capital Improvements, we have 13 completed projects, when we

expected only 4 to be completed by this time in the year. So things are going really well.

6.3 RECREATION DEPARTMENT

RECREATION DEPARTMENT FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT

Superintendent Guynn explains that we saw an increase in enrollment and facility visits. We are seeing correlation between our data and BerryDunn's data. A waitlist management process is highlighted. Through this new process we have been able to move 460 participants off the waitlist, which translates to approximately \$113,000 in revenue, in the first quarter, just by actively managing the waitlist.

Commissioner Duffy asks about a couple of numbers on the quarterly report: After school clubs and campus clubs, was the number of clubs increased? Superintendent Guynn explains that it was a little bit of both. For after school clubs, we offered a few more options per day. The CARE, School Days Off, Holiday Breaks – we have expanded opportunities. The School Days Off programs are being offered to CARE participants, as well as the general population this year. In years past, it was only offered to CARE program participants. The increase is based on staff availability. We are able to share facilities to house some of these programs. The key component is the part-time staff instructor availability and hiring. Commissioner Duffy inquires about the ease of finding staff, if it is getting easier. Superintendent Guynn explains that we are seeing some challenges hiring for programming during the school year. But also, because of challenges of finding part-time staff, we are becoming more flexible in hiring staff (i.e., hiring someone for only 2 days per week, which will create the need to find someone for 3 days per week, etc.). We hire over 560 summer/seasonal employees, so every summer has its hiring challenges.

Commissioner Kosloskus asks for clarification about activity, memberships and facility reservations. Memberships and facility reservation both talked about drop-ins, dailies and short-terms. She asks Superintendent Guynn for clarification on those categories. Superintendent Guynn explains that it is how the data is being used. Memberships for Center Fitness, for example, if we have daily passes and they come 15 times, it's counted as individual visits. If they come 30 times, it's counted as a monthly membership. If you are an annual member, it's counted once. We are using this data to figure out how the facility is being utilized and what our total membership count is.

Commissioner Kosloskus asks specifically about Gymnastics. Gymnastics enrollment was down, but in other reports we have seen, we are seeing that Gymnastics programming is increasing. Is that just how we are counting visits? Superintendent Guynn explains that this number represents the drop-in visits to open gym, not activity enrollment.

GOLF

Nick Marfise gives the board an update on Golf. We had a lot of rain through the winter and that kept everything hydrated. There were a few weather events, one in particular, where we experienced a bit of flooding, which has since drained. The wind knocked down an oak tree. All of the bunkers washed away. He explains, it takes a good amount of labor to put the bunkers back.

For Capital Projects, we have money in the budget for buying new course amenities. Those will be slowly rolling in due to order time. We also had our maintenance barn painted.

Commissioner Kosloskus asks about the drainage equipment, if, when the work is done, will the equipment be sold. Nick tells the board that the equipment will be utilized for other golf course projects as well, beyond drainage. Drainage is also an ongoing project on a piece of land that is over 100 acres, so we will have use for the equipment in the long term.

6.4 PARKS AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Superintendent Solberg updates us on the Parks department. A new Parks Planning person has joined the department, Alissa Paquette. For parks that don't yet have a landscape plan, Alissa will be adding those plans.

The pool will be open to the public on May 19th. The sailing beach will be open May 6th. Swimming at the beach will be open on Memorial Day.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Duffy moved and Commissioner Murdock seconded a motion to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting.

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

Minutes Approved on **May 8, 2023.**