



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

*Monday, February 26, 2024*  
*6:30 p.m. – Mallinckrodt “Big Room”*

**PRESENT**

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Commissioners: President Kara Kosloskus, Vice President Patrick Duffy, Cecilia Clarke, Allison Frazier, Julia Goebel, and Patrick Lahey

Absent: Commissioner Mike Murdock [arrived late]

Secretary/Executive Director: Steve Wilson

Staff: Superintendent Sheila Foy, Superintendent Lindsay Thomas, Superintendent Dave Merrill

Visitors: Walter Keats, Kathryn Calkins, Tanja Chevalier, Mary Shea, Adam Sars, F. Wilson, Elissa Morgante, Kent Nusekabel

**1.0 MEETING 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 Duffy states there were a number of emails regarding camp registration.

Commissioner Clarke states there was an email regarding the sustainability plan that did not make the packet.

**3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT/RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

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Tanja Chevalier – Ms. Chevalier states that in her communications with Commissioner Murdock, he wrote that too much money has been spent on consultants to consider any changes to Gillson Park. She reminds the board it has asked aQuity Research on two separate occasions over a span of six years for in-depth research on who the Wilmette community is and what it wants. The board, however, doesn't listen to the results. It is a recurring theme. And this is also why it spends too much money on consultants. Both surveys have told you, in no uncertain terms, that the vast majority of residents want trails for hiking, walking and biking. These plans you are about to execute do not speak to the desires of the residents. But an alternative plan which has been proposed, does. This alternative plan can be the safest as well as least costly and protects all the mature trees in the park. It leaves open green space and speaks to Gillson Park's historic heritage. It is not too late to remove your proposed 5ft sidewalk along harbor drive, nor is it too late to leave middle drive alone to accommodate walkers and bikers. Each path into, out of and within this park is wider than the reduction you propose. Gillson Park is a historically significant landscape. The Wilmette Park District Board is sadly not interested in historic

preservation and has chosen firms such as Lakota Group, Gewalt Hamilton and Upland Designs directed to steer clear of this notion. Please reconsider; this is part of your legacy, too.

#### **4.0 NEW BUSINESS**

##### **4.1 PRESENTATION: LANGDON SHORELINE PROTECTION PROJECT UPDATE - SMITHGROUP**

Mark Wagstaff presents the update on Langdon to the board.

When Mark goes over the timelines, Commissioner Murdock states that the board could call a special meeting in order to get bids approved once they have come in. He also asks if Mark thinks we will have a robust bidding process and if he has confidence in the budget for this project, given the higher construction costs we encountered in the recent past. Mark answers that he believes we will have a robust field of bidders and the set budget is fair.

Vice President Duffy asks where the budget number is up to at this point in the process. Director Wilson states that the number was in the original proposal, but was removed by the board at that time, to be determined when we arrived at the actual project; this goes back several years.

Vice President Duffy asks if the staff shelter would be built by staff. Mark answers that it is included in the construction cost and will be built by the contractor.

Vice President Duffy then asks what needs to be done to the path in order to make it ADA accessible. Mark answers that right now, the loose material would not be compliant. Vice President Duffy asks where the ADA compliance comes into the path construction and Director Wilson answers that it is a path through the park and so the entire path needs to be accessible. Mark explains that one part of making a path accessible is the surface – not having loose material, not having gaps bigger than a certain size, etc. And the other part is that when you have a slope, the slope has to meet certain grade percentage requirements over a certain distance. He goes on to say that since we are making alterations to the park, it is required that we make the path through the park accessible.

When talking about the entrance and the possibility of needing to remove the oak tree closest to the pathway, Vice President Duffy asks if the pathway would need to be more permeable [in order to let water through to the tree], but also have ground that could withstand a heavy load. He asks if this is needed due to needing a truck to service the port-o-potties. Mark states that a truck would need to get in for that and other projects. He explains that when staff comes to service the area, empty trash, landscape, etc., they would need an access to the park as well.

Commissioner Frazier states her concern that she does not believe grass will grow between the pavers. Commissioner Clarke points out that there is grass that grows between bricks on the streets. Mark states that it may need to be irrigated from time to time and nothing is maintenance free.

When Mark goes over the option to move the entrance further south, he also highlights that this is the most expensive option due to moving the curb cut & gates, as well as coordination with the Village on infrastructure. Some members of the board express opposition to this plan.

Vice President Duffy asks the board if they feel like the general consensus is to leave the tree alone and leave the gravel in place on this portion of the path. Then, President Kosloskus asks if we could include the entrance renovation as an optional item on the bids so they can see what the cost would be. Therefore, they would like to receive bids on Option 1 and Option 3 on the presentation.

When Mark talks about the foundation for the hut, he states that if we aren't going to use a hut, we won't need that big of a foundation area. Vice President Duffy states that we will go with the foundation, and we have it be an option for our staff or the contractor to build the hut. All commissioners agree that we need a hut but would like to keep the option open.

#### **4.2 PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION: PROJECT PARKS AND PLAY – BERRYDUNN**

Dannielle Wilson presents from BerryDunn.

When Dannielle puts the revised vision statement on the board, Commissioner Goebel states she appreciates the brevity of the statement and thinks it captures what she hopes we can be. Commissioner Frazier agrees. No further changes are asked for at this time.

Vice President Duffy asks if there is, for example, hypothetically, a safety concern that needs to be addressed at the golf course in the next 3-5 years. How and what parts of this project fall into the Comprehensive Plan, as opposed to the Strategic Plan. Dannielle answers that this would be a change in an asset and an improvement to bricks and mortar, which would live in the Comprehensive Plan. If the team needed an expert to come in and evaluate the issue, it could be put under the Strategic Plan under "Vibrant Facilities" and it would fit under an objective there. Vice President Duffy asks how to tell what is Comprehensive and Strategic. Danielle gives an example.

Commissioner Clarke expresses that the plan does not seem to be giving the information the board hoped it would get from this process. She also expresses that she would like to know how BerryDunn came up with the strategic priorities in the plan.

[At this point, Vice President Duffy announces that Commissioner Murdock has joined the meeting at 6:57pm.]

Dannielle explains that from the first survey of the community, they were asked what they were interested in (Phase I); then BerryDunn conducted the community-wide survey; then they did an analysis of the demographics, programs and level of service; and then they provided the Environmental Scan presentation to the board. From there, commissioners had a workshop in late April of 2023, the advisory panel had a workshop and the staff had a workshop to establish strategic priorities.

President Kosloskus expresses that she hopes the presentation by BerryDunn to the community at the end of this process will have the timeline of events shown so the community can follow the development of the story. She would like someone to be able to understand, for example, that we considered the SWOT of each one of these priorities and we saw what our strengths and weaknesses were, and therefore we have documented these as our priorities/objectives.

President Kosloskus also states that she is also facing some confusion between what is comprehensive and what is strategic, as well as needing to manage 2 plans at once. Dannielle states that there is a database in the end that will merge the two plan ideas.

The Strategic Plan, as explained by Dannielle, is what we are going to do in-house to become better and explain why. For example, for Health and Wellness objectives, one focuses on our role in health and wellness for the community, and one talks about it for our employees. If you look at it from a traditional sense, the employee-based one would be in our strategic plan, and the other would live on the comprehensive side.

Commissioners engage in a conversation with Dannielle to express their confusion regarding the two plans. Dannielle summarizes for what she believes the board is asking.

President Kosloskus reiterates that her desire is for someone in 5 years to be able to pick up this document and understand/follow the plan, without sitting through these meetings and going through the process with BerryDunn. It is explained that staff will receive a database of actions to be taken.

Commissioner Goebel adds that working through strategies, objectives and tactics is complex. She believes we could streamline our strategies more and make them 1:1 with our objectives.

## **5.0 ONGOING DISTRICT PROJECTS**

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### **5.1 WALLACE BOWL RESTORATION**

Director Wilson explains that there is nothing new to report.

### **5.2 GILLSON PARK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Director Wilson explains the plans are still under review by the Village of Wilmette and the MWRD. MWRD provided initial comments back last week. This project is looking like it will begin in the fall.

### **5.4 LANGDON SHORELINE PROTECTION PROJECT – PRESENTATION FROM SMITHGROUP**

There was a presentation by SmithGroup regarding this project.

### **5.5 SOLAR PANEL PROJECT AT CRC**

Director Wilson explains that there is no new update and we still expect a fall 2024 start to the project.

## **6.0 OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

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### **6.1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

Director Wilson starts with a summary of summer camp registration. Enrollments after the first day were at 5,500, and that is before non-resident registration. The numbers we have had are overall are significantly higher than what we had pre-pandemic. We used to report overall enrollments of 6,000.

Commissioner Lahey asked if that would help us make some waitlist choices or re-staff, etc. Director Wilson states the waitlist analysis has already begun with Superintendent Merrill and his team. Last year we had a similar number of people signed up at this time, but by the time camps started we had very few people on waitlists. Commissioner Lahey states that a lot of what he is hearing from the public is that they don't know what they are going to do with their kids this summer, and we don't want to put extra stress on people.

Commissioners ask questions about the waitlists and staff takes note of these to be researched and answered at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Frazier highlights the positive things that came from the new registration system. President Kosloskus echoes those sentiments and suggests a social media post regarding same.

Director Wilson then recognizes our fitness manager, Liz Antman, for having an article published in the Parks & Rec magazine. He also recognizes Jason Stanislaw, Centennial General Manager, as he is a recipient of a significant award for USTA for his work on the USTA board.

### **6.2 OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT**

Superintendent Thomas updates the board on the Decennial Committee, Social Equity Committee, HR & Risk Management, Sustainability, and Marketing, and her report is in the packet.

### **6.3 FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

#### **6.2.1 JANUARY 2024 INCOME STATEMENT**

Superintendent Foy states this was the first month she pushed out budget variance reports to all the budgeters in the district. There were a lot of good discussions and she is planning more trainings and meetings with everyone.

Vice President Duffy asks how we are off on property taxes from year to year. Superintendent Foy explains the only thing we have collected in January has been replacement taxes. The state tells Superintendent Foy what their budget is and she allocates the budget based on what they tell her, but that information isn't always accurate. For example, we have only collected is \$48,349, even though they communicated we could expect \$65,232 in January.

### **6.2.3 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE SUMMARY**

Superintendent Foy updates the board on the Capital Expenditure summary. She explains there are already 2 projects finished in the first quarter.

### **6.3 RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Superintendent Merrill updates the board on the Rec department. He states we are in the second half of our winter season, the staff is performing well and generally things are going really well. Everyone is very excited about getting staff in place. The department is talking about putting some changes in place for the benefit of the community.

Commissioner Murdock asked to have the department put together a presentation on pickleball for this evening. Jason Stanislaw and Robby Ramdhanie put together the information and Jason presents on pickleball: past, present and future.

#### **Pickleball**

Jason Stanislaw states that our approach to pickleball up to this point has been “scatter shot.” There have been vendor-run classes out of the CRC gym and vendor-run classes on Hibbard courts. We started teaching pickleball indoors at tennis and allowed people to reserve pickleball courts, had lines painted over the tennis net at Maple and Hibbard. We also added other lines on rollaway nets at Hibbard. He announces that all pickleball is being moved under the racket sports group. Everything that was being run out of the CRC by a vendor will now be run by the tennis team. The classes will now be run in-house. They have done an analysis of how they want to run pickleball under racquet sports. They will run these programs the same way they run other racquet sports. They will make courts available for rent through the rental system, just like tennis. Anything indoors will be treated like a club activity in order to keep cohesion with our business model.

President Kosloskus asks if we are going to continue to explore indoor options for the pickleball community in the offseason. Superintendent Merrill states they are working with the school district to try and have some indoor options during the winter. Jason also explains there are some hours at the CRC gym where we could program pickleball. President Kosloskus asks Superintendent Merrill and Jason Stanislaw to continue working towards some indoor options before next winter.

#### **Centennial**

Jason Stanislaw gives an update on Centennial.

**Ice** – The Ice show is Mother’s Day weekend and will be bigger than last year.

**Tennis** – We have successfully added a whole class of USTA play on weekend evenings. The drop-in junior team is also still happening.

**Paddle** – Spring league the last two seasons has had no fee. We have decided to staff it and have a fee. There may be some folks who decide not to play, but he thinks it will be run much tighter.

## **CRC**

Tim Johnson updates the board on the CRC.

**Center for the Arts** – Interviews are in progress.

**Gymnastics** – Sara Emory was promoted from within, from a part-time position she has been in for over 10 years. We also filled her position with another internal candidate. Gymnastics did their first ever destination meet in Las Vegas.

**Operations** – Jeannette Hutchinson is our new PT 1, promoted from within. She will be a big part of our process of clearing waitlists. It's so nice to have consistent staff at the front desk.

**Rentals** - Room 106 has been completed with new flooring, new lighting, paint, baseboard replacement, cabinets, and countertops. This is now a more rentable space and we are very excited about it.

**Fitness** – Liz Antman is running her annual Transformation Challenge and this year she has 24 participants.

## **Golf**

Adam Kwiatkoski updates the board on Golf.

Adam tells the board that camp registration is complete and full with all residents, with the exception of Fourth of July week. Golf camp capacity is at its maximum.

The golf course will open for the season on Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. This will be the earliest date that the golf course has ever opened. Nick Marfise was running water on greens today. The former record for early opening was on March 8, 2012.

This season Golf will be utilizing new waitlist software. With all the demand at the golf course, this will allow people to put their time preferences into our website, and if someone cancels in that tee-time slot you will get a text and be able to book online.

## **Lakefront**

Ben Wozney gives an update on the lakefront.

**Sailing** – Sailing registration ended. We are 90% full on boat spaces and 89% full on partners. We have looked at expanding some of the sub-spots for next year, but we are mostly full.

**Lakeview** – Rentals are back up with the finished flooring. We have people trying to book into 2025. We aren't scheduling that far out yet, but that's how much popularity we are getting.

**Staffing** – We have 126 staff hired for the general staffing. We have an 82% return rate for the staff, which has been really helpful.

Ben points out that lakefront staff, Megan White and Niki Koclanes, have been working really hard on coming up with new ideas for camps, making them better, what we might be missing, behavioral problems namely in our 8-week camps. Niki developed the Pathfinders portion of Great Gillson camp.

Commissioners ask about daytime programming at Lakeview Center and how that is being developed. Ben talks about a few different options being discussed with Tim's team at the CRC. They are looking at classes like sunrise yoga and parent/tot classes.

#### **6.4 PARKS AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT – DEFERRED**

#### **7.0 ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION**

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There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner Goebel moves and Commissioner Frazier seconds a motion to adjourn to Closed Session under Section 2(c)1 of the Open Meetings Act.

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

Minutes Approved on **April 8, 2024.**