



**Wilmette Park District
Committee of the Whole
Board of Park Commissioners**

*January 20, 2026
6:30 pm – Mallinckrodt*

AGENDA

1.0 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE CALLED TO ORDER

1.1 ROLL CALL

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT/RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

4.0 OLD BUSINESS

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 2025 LAKEFRONT REPORT – MEGAN WHITE

5.2 BIG TREE LANE UPDATE

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

If you are a person with a disability and need special accommodations to participate in and/or attend a Wilmette Park District meeting, please notify the Director's Office at 847-256-6100.

Wilmette Park District

Policy for Public Comment

The Board of Park Commissioners, in its regular or special meetings, is a deliberative body assembled to make decisions on new and pending matters affecting the District. Park Board and Committee meetings are meetings held in public, not a public meeting. The Board invites both oral and written communications from its residents.

To facilitate the conduct of Board/Committee meetings, the following procedures will be followed:

1. A section of each meeting will be set aside for public comment and will be noted on the agenda as "Recognition of Visitors."
2. During the "Recognition of Visitors" agenda item, audience members wishing to comment should raise their hands and will be permitted to speak once they are recognized by the President/Chairperson.
3. When recognized by the President/Chairperson, each audience member should identify themselves and limit speaking to no more than three (3) minutes, unless additional time is granted by the President/Chairperson. Each audience member will be permitted to speak only once. The President's/Chairperson's denial of or limitation on any request for an extension of time may be overruled by a majority of those Commissioners/Committee members present.
4. Questions are to be directed to the entire Board/Committee. Audience members are reminded that questions often require Board/Committee member or staff investigation or inquiry to obtain additional information before responding. As such, Board/Committee members may choose not to immediately respond to comments, and the issue instead may be referred to staff for additional consideration, or a Board/Committee member may pursue the issue at a future Board/Committee meeting. Lack of an immediate response to a question raised during public comment should not be interpreted as anything other than a commitment by the Board/Committee to take the issue under advisement for consideration and follow up or possible future action.
5. Park Board/Committee members may, by addressing the President/Chairperson, interrupt a presenter to obtain clarification and/or further information.
6. Personnel matters will not be addressed during "Recognition of Visitors."
7. During presentation and discussion of agenda items, the President/Chairperson will not recognize speakers in the audience unless the Board/Committee desires additional information from an audience member.
8. When addressing the Board/Committee, all persons permitted to speak shall confine their remarks to the matter at hand and avoid personal attacks, the impugning of motives, and merely contentious statements. If any person indulges in such remarks or otherwise engages in conduct injurious to the civil discourse of the Board/Committee and the meeting, the President/Chairperson may immediately terminate the opportunity to speak. This decision is at the discretion of the President/Chairperson or upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Park Board commissioners/Committee members present.
9. Any person, except a member of the Board, who engages in disorderly conduct during a meeting, may be ejected from the meeting upon motion passed by a majority of the Board/Committee members present.

Approved February 13, 2023

Wilmette Park District
Policy for Written Communications and Correspondence from the Public

The Wilmette Park District welcomes communications from its residents in all formats. When the communication is via email, and the intent of the resident is to have the communication included in the materials for the next public meeting, the below information outlines the process for inclusion in public meeting materials:

1. Any written communication or correspondence, including any attachments, that members of the public would like included in a Board or Committee meeting packet must be submitted to the following email address: publiccomment@wilpark.org.
2. The written communication will be included in the next public meeting, either Board/Committee meeting, unless specified otherwise by the resident.
3. All written communications submitted for inclusion in a Board/Committee packet shall pertain to public business of the Park District. Any communications unrelated to public business or that contain obscene, indecent, or profane language or imagery will not be included in Board/Committee packets.
4. The written communication must be received not less than two (2) business days prior to a meeting to be included in that particular packet. Written communications received after that time will be included in the next Board/Committee meeting packet.
5. When members of the public communicate directly with one or more members of the Board of Park Commissioners or staff using their individual Park District email addresses, the email will be included in the next Board/Committee packet if forwarded to publiccomment@wilpark.org per the time constraints outlined above.

Approved June 12, 2023

Michelle Parson

From: Chris Lindgren
Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2026 12:51 PM
To: Stacey Woleben
Cc: Public Comment; Michelle Parson; Patrick Lahey
Subject: Re: [External] Flashing lights at Sheridan Road/Crosswalk by Gillson entrance

Hi Stacey and Matt,

Thank you for reaching out and for sharing your experience regarding the pedestrian crossing at the Gillson Park entrance at Sheridan Road and Michigan Avenue. We appreciate you taking the time to raise this important safety concern.

Because Sheridan Road is a Village street, any changes to the crosswalk infrastructure—such as the addition of flashing pedestrian lights—fall under the Village of Wilmette’s Engineering Department and their established processes for evaluating pedestrian safety improvements. I have reached out to the Engineering Department to learn more about their current plans and priorities, both town-wide and for this specific location.

The Village’s Walking and Biking in Wilmette plan identifies schools and parks as higher-priority areas for pedestrian safety improvements, and the Park District will always advocate for added safety in and around our parks. You may find additional information about the Village’s approach at the following link:

<https://wilmette.gov/267/Walking-Biking-in-Wilmette>.

I would also recommend contacting the Village Engineer directly, as they oversee these requests. In the meantime, I will follow up with you once I hear back from the Engineering Department so I can provide an update from our end.

Please feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any questions, and thank you again for contacting the Wilmette Park District and for your continued engagement in keeping our community safe.

Best,



Chris Lindgren
Executive Director, Wilmette Park District

 (847) 256-9617 |  clindgren@wilpark.org

 www.wilmettepark.org

 [1200 Wilmette Ave, Wilmette, IL 60091](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1200+Wilmette+Ave,+Wilmette,+IL+60091)

From: Stacey Woleben <staceywoleben@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2026 8:36 AM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@wilpark.org>

Subject: [External] Flashing lights at Sheridan Road/Crosswalk by Gillson entrance

Dear Wilmette Park District Board,

We have been Wilmette residents for almost 15 years, and we walk across Sheridan Road at the Gillson Park entrance every day. While we appreciate the pedestrian crosswalk that is there, we'd graciously like to request that a flashing lights button be added to the crosswalk. Cars rarely see the crosswalk and pedestrians, and it feels quite dangerous. It seems that pressing a flashing light button would make a world of difference for both the pedestrians and drivers.

Thank you very much for your consideration,
Matt and Stacey Woleben



Michelle Parson

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Matt and Stacey Woleben



Lakefront Annual Report 2025 Season





Swimming Beaches

Langdon—The construction portion of the shoreline protection project extended past Memorial Day weekend preventing sales or checks of season passes through the beginning weeks of the season. Throughout the season, debris was pulled from the water that became unearthed through storms and everyday use.

South Beach—It operated as a paid beach for the second year at a lower cost than the Main and Langdon beaches. Daily pass visits to this area saw a decrease from the summer of 2024.



	Season Passes	Resident/Non-Resident	Revenue
2019	9,531		\$283,690
2020	13,455	8,688/4,767	\$692,684
2021	16,339	11,537/4,802	\$751,620
2022	13,313	10,758/2,555	\$572,777
2023	12,054	10,259/1,795	\$587,260
2024	9,209	7,823/1,386	\$488,105
2025	11,854	10,341/1513	\$620,920

	Guest Book Daily Passes	Revenue
2022	700	\$6,300
2023	2,250	\$22,160
2024	3,192	\$28,508
2025	1,620	\$15,510

Main Beach

Resident = \$11 Non-Resident = \$17

	Daily Passes	Resident/ Non-Resident	Revenue	Season Pass Visits	Total Visits
2022	21,054	3,305/17,749	\$295,980	37,998	59,052
2023	25,319	4,192/21,127	\$379,804	41,756	67,075
2024	28,835	5,792/23,043	\$455,443	35,401	64,236
2025	29,356	6,158/23,198	\$462,104	35,119	64,475

Langdon Beach

Resident = \$11 Non-Resident = \$17

	Daily Passes	Resident/ Non-Resident	Revenue	Season Pass Visits	Total Visits
2024	666	328/338	\$9,354	2,093	2,759
2025	503	234/269	\$7,147	2,181	2,684

South Beach

Resident = \$5 Non-Resident = \$10

	Daily Passes	Resident/ Non-Resident	Revenue	Season Pass Visits	Total Visits
2024	31,133	8,114/23,019	\$270,760	4,027	35,160
2025	22,217	4,726/17,491	\$198,540	4,299	26,516



Discount Days

Discount days were instituted this summer which provided sporadic days throughout the summer at a single discount rate, regardless of residency. Main beach access was \$6 and South Beach was \$3 for each of the dates listed below.

	Main Daily Passes	South Daily Passes
June 10	154	77
June 24	246	185
July 8	133	34
July 22	492	241
August 5	404	318
	1,429	855

Beach Bound Library Pass

In partnership with Explore More Illinois we offered free beach passes through Wilmette and neighboring townships libraries. Each check-out from a location allowed up to 6 guests access to the main swimming beach. The total amount of individuals who gained access over the summer was 286.

	Check-outs
Wilmette	141
Evanston	25
Glenview	84
Skokie	42
Niles	54
Morton Grove	47

The Cove

The Cove used to be home to the WPD Aquatics Camp but has been underutilized the last couple years since that camp moved to the main beach area. This summer it became a multi use space for SUP rack spaces, trail-in launches and no cost beach access. The water was not open for swimming as there were no lifeguards but it provided a space similar to that of the former South Beach. Total visitors at the cove for the season was approximately 4,555.

Sailing Beach

The Wilmette Sailing Beach is comprised of 5 different vessel types. We were able to add 30 SUP spaces to the Cove this summer. Those who had vessels in the cove spaces had regular access to the sailing beach.

Revenue numbers below are inclusive of winter storage payments.

	Total Vessel Spaces	Season Passes	Total Visits	Revenue
2022	748	3,304	12,447	\$597,293
2023	748	3,166	13,437	\$590,862
2024	765	3,238	14,229	\$610,906
2025	795	3,494	12,817	\$618,803



	Vessel Spaces	Spots That Opened	Removed from Waitlist	Current Waitlist
Catamaran	188	5	20	282
Monohull	292	25	60	495
S.U.P	275	50	104	853
Laser II	20	3	6	126
Windsurfer	20	4	15	140

Gillson Beach Parking

Lakefront season parking decals allow passholders to park in the swimming beach lot as well as on Overlook Drive. Daily parking passes are available on a limited bases depending on the day of the week and are only valid for the main parking lot.

Staff monitors weather, events on property, school calendars and other items to determine the available number of parking passes each day. There are days where beach attendance is expected to be high and no daily parking passes are available. At other times staff will put out additional day parking passes later in the day if attendance has died down. The goal is to facilitate some visitor parking but to maintain spaces to allow for parking decal passholders.

We see a surge of incoming cars on Sunday afternoons around 1-3pm. At these times, and typically on holiday weekends, the lot becomes full, and we restrict access to avoid congestion. This only occurred a handful of times which was down from last summer season.

Season Parking Decals

Resident \$38

Non-Resident \$203

	Issued	Resident/Non-Resident	Revenue
2022	5,359	4,638/1,292	\$368,806
2023	5,276	4,446/830	\$357,378
2024	6,197	5,337/860	\$363,721
2025	6,099	5,353/746	\$344,252

Daily Parking Passes

Resident

Mon-Fri \$17

Sat-Sun \$21

Non-Resident

Mon-Fri \$21

Sat-Sun \$26

	Issued	Resident/Non-Resident	Revenue
2022	3,184	338/2,828	\$61,832
2023	3,953	428/3,525	\$81,544
2024	4,799	703/4,096	\$106,198
2025	6,145	838/5,307	\$137,457

Lakefront Operated Camps

Great Gillson

Great Gillson Camp is the lakefront’s full day general recreation camp. There was a slight increase this year because the half day pathfinders camp was not an offering for the older age range campers in 2025.

	Camper Weeks	Revenue
2022	1012	\$227,677
2023	1094	\$281,559
2024	720	\$189,747
2025	822	\$222,264

Aquatics Camp

This two-week camp teaches safety on the water while campers enjoy kayaking, SUP, swimming, and of course banana boat rides.

	Camper Weeks	Revenue
2022	932	\$119,915
2023	770	\$95,062
2024	480	\$140,030
2025	442	\$125,117

Sailing Camp

Sailing Camp offers two-week sessions for both beginner and intermediate young sailors. Campers learn sailing terminology, knots, points of sail and on the water instruction and sessions end with a special pirate themed day.

	Camper Weeks	Revenue
2022	260	\$22,880
2023	330	\$41,305
2024	162	\$46,590
2025	160	\$47,755

Lakefront Operated Camps

Jr. Lifeguard Camp

Jr. Lifeguard Camp is run by lakefront Lifeguard staff. Campers work on skills such as CPR, swimming, rescue board and assist/save techniques.

	Camper Weeks	Revenue
2022	106	\$14,236
2023	128	\$15,747
2024	116	\$16,410
2025	60	\$9,476



SUP/Kayak Camp

This is one of our vendor run camps operated by Northwest Passage. Campers learn Kayaking and SUP skills on Lake Michigan as well as the Skokie Lagoons.

	Camper Weeks	Revenue
2022	161	\$23,877
2023	136	\$18,350
2024	147	\$21,525
2025	140	\$21,375

Dog Beach

The fenceline separating the dog beach from the remainder of the cove was extended this year due to low water levels. Concerns were raised from trail-in users about dogs going around it still so an additional buoy line was extended out into the water to help prevent that.

Resident = \$49 for the 1st dog, \$10 for each additional dog

Non-Resident = \$247 for the 1st dog, \$83 for each additional dog

	Permits Issued	Resident/Non-Resident	Revenue
2022	875	643/232	\$67,613
2023	749	600/149	\$52,212
2024	699	576/123	\$48,392
2025	638	534/104	\$43,208

SUP & Kayak Trail-In Permits

The trail-in permit location was adjusted this year as an additional amenity at the cove. The piers on either side provided a small protected area for users to acclimate to their vessels before moving further out into the lake. Motor boats coming out of the harbor were not a danger as they were required to set out straight from the mouth and travel west to a buoy before turning north. A kayak/SUP cart was provided at gate 4 entrance to aid patrons in getting their vessels down to the cove, but it was not utilized all summer. The fees for the 2025 season permit was evaluated and decreased \$77 for residents and \$141 for non residents, from the prior year, to encourage sales and use of the new cove area.

Resident \$100

Non-Resident \$125

	Permits Issued	Resident/Non-Resident	Revenue
2022	136	123/13	\$25,378
2023	70	64/6	\$14,735
2024	120	104/16	\$21,740
2025	110	98/12	\$11,837

Picnic Areas

Non-Resident Fees \$25

Wilmette residents can reserve free of charge as early as mid-January for summer months. All picnic areas and the shelter can be reserved in three-hour increments so most reservations span multiple time slots.

	Resident	Non-Resident	Revenue
2022	513	204	\$2,853
2023	349	347	\$8,975
2024	319	267	\$6,838
2025	221	288	\$7,125

Pavilion/Shelter

Non-Resident Fees \$90

	Resident	Non-Resident	Revenue
2022	170	13	\$505
2023	138	8	\$631
2024	132	10	\$870
2025	108	10	\$900



Lakeview Center

The Lakeview Center has hosted a wide variety of events this year and has seen an increase in interest and revenue with a full year of rentals in comparison to 2024 that was a partial year due to construction.

A full space package that was created has garnered much interest and has increased the number of small weddings hosted on property.

	Rentals	Revenue
2022	25	\$13,757
2023	18	\$12,825
2024	57	\$55,910
2025	89	\$109,804

Fat Shallot Concessions

This is the 5th year the Fat Shallot has been contracted to provide concession services. Along with their rent there is a small portion of profit shares from the 2 special events they hosted.

	Revenue
2022	\$12,572
2023	\$10,386
2024	\$10,161
2025	\$11,786

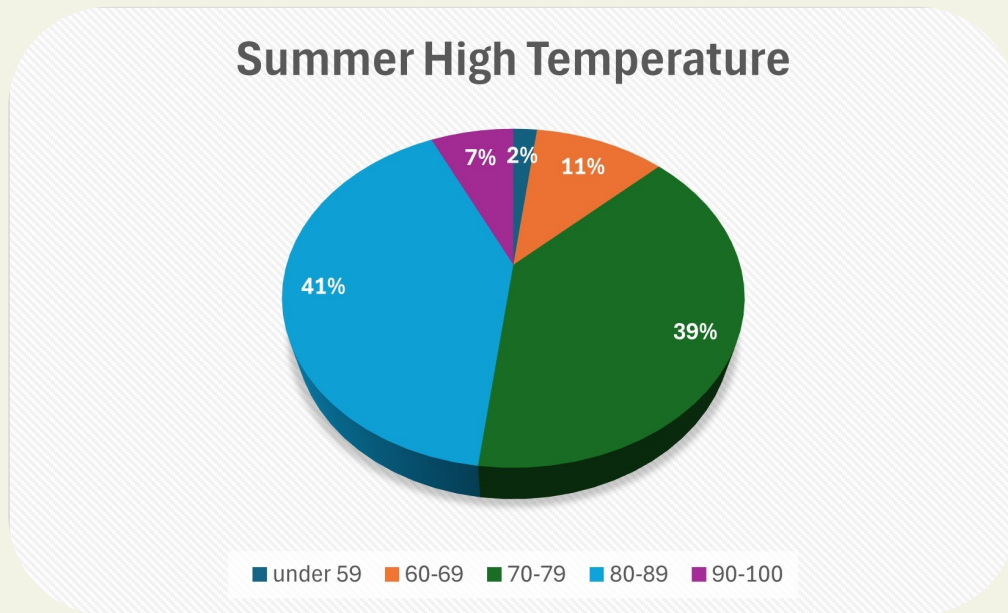


Campfire Sauna and Social



A contract with Campfire Sauna and Social began post Labor Day this year. Initially located on Overlook it was relocated to the main parking lot to allow for more space around the unit and for no parking restrictions for patrons. Revenue for the Sept-Dec portion of the contract is \$1,000.

Summer Stats



Seasonal Staff

231 total operations and camp staff
60% returner rate

Police Calls

Emergency Calls = 8

5 medical, extended missing person, break in, physical altercation with staff

Non-Emergency Calls = 4

Driving on sidewalk by beach house after hours

Group drinking and became argumentative, trespassed

Phone found in restroom

Group yelling and getting too close to staff

Park District Security Contacts With Visitors

Security staff took note of the number of individuals they connected with in regards to different topics. Here is a small snapshot of the top areas.

Alcohol = 2,163

Fence Jumpers/No Pass = 1,031

Dogs = 328

Non Compliance = 420



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 16, 2026
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Chris Lindgren, Executive Director
Re: Big Tree Lane Update



Statement

The Wilmette Park District purchased the property located at 3220 Big Tree Lane, formerly known as the Beth Hillel Congregation, on August 28, 2024. The acquisition was funded with the District's Debt Service Extension Base (DSEB). This debt is supported with property taxes and will be fully paid off on December 1, 2031.

Since acquisition, the property has remained leased, with current leases in place through 2027. These agreements include provisions that allow for extensions should it be mutually beneficial to the District and the tenants.

The District's 2024 Comprehensive Master Plan and accompanying community survey identified gaps in programming and levels of service across the system. Consistent with that planning framework, the District intends to undertake a deliberate and inclusive planning and engagement process to determine the long-term future of the Big Tree Lane site. The District is committed to transparency throughout this process and to ensuring that any future use of the site is informed by meaningful public input and aligned with community needs.

Discussion

The purpose of the January 20, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting is to provide the Board and community with a high-level update on the District's current position regarding the Big Tree Lane property and to outline the initial framework for how future planning and engagement will occur.

As part of the publicly held Capital Budget discussions in fall 2025, the Board and staff reviewed and approved the inclusion of funding to support a comprehensive master planning effort related to the Big Tree Lane site over multiple budget years. That discussion also included a broader review of infrastructure and programming needs at the Centennial Recreation Complex and the Community Recreation Center—the District's two largest facilities serving the greatest number of residents.

Evaluating the current and future needs of these core facilities will help inform both the public engagement process and any planning scenarios considered for Big Tree Lane, ensuring that the site complements—not duplicates or competes with—existing community hubs.

Planning / RFP Process

Staff are developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for professional services to support:

- Master planning for the Big Tree Lane site; and
- Facility programming and infrastructure assessment at Centennial Recreation Complex and the Community Recreation Center.

The RFP will be structured to clearly define the scope of work, expectations for public engagement, deliverables, and the phased nature of the planning effort. This process will guide how the District's budgeted master planning funds are spent and ensure that the selected consultant provides both technical expertise and strong facilitation of community input.

Once a consultant is selected, the specific steps, sequencing, and pacing of the work will be defined within the scope of services and contract, allowing the District to proceed deliberately and transparently.

Community Engagement

Robust community engagement is a critical component of this effort and will be a central focus of the planning process. Outreach will be conducted collaboratively through the selected consultant and the District's internal communications and marketing resources to maximize reach and accessibility.

Engagement strategies are expected to include, but are not limited to:

- Public meetings and open houses
- Focus groups and stakeholder discussions
- Surveys and digital engagement tools
- Social media and direct communications, including mailers

Public engagement will not be limited to a single phase and will continue throughout the planning process to ensure that community feedback meaningfully informs outcomes.

Long-Term Planning Considerations

While no decisions have been made regarding the ultimate use of the Big Tree Lane site, the planning process may eventually include consideration of the following steps, if and when appropriate:

- Development of master plan concepts for review
- Refinement and potential adoption of a master plan
- Evaluation of financing options
- Selection of design and project teams
- Design development and regulatory review
- Construction and occupancy

Advancing through these steps will be contingent on clear vision, community support, and Board direction.

Closing

The goal is to proceed thoughtfully to confirm needs, build community understanding and support, and move forward with confidence when appropriate.