SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board of Park Commissioners

August 24, 2026
5:30 p.m. - Mallinckrodt

Present

Commissioners: President Patrick Lahey (arrives 5:45 p.m.), Vice President Julia Goebel, Julie Adrianopoli, Allison Frazier, Patrick Duffy, Cecilia Clarke and Mike Murdock

Secretary/Executive Director: Chris Lindgren

Visitors: Walter Keats, Mary Lawlor

1.0 Special Board Meeting Called to Order

Vice President Goebel calls the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

2.0 Public Comment and Recognition of Visitors

None.

3.0 Feasibility Study – Park Board Visioning Exercise with Wight & Company

Jim Thormeyer, Ania Szulc, and Bobbi Nance present from Wight & Company. Jim explains that Wight has been retained by the park district to do a study of the current recreation facilities as well as future recreation opportunities in Wilmette. Bobbi updates the board on community engagement and outreach of the project so far. Through the end of August, they have collected 844 survey postcards from the community. On the day of the Block Party, the consultants were able to talk with almost 200 different groups at the Wilmette Park District Tent, around 350 people (youth, teens and adults).

Commissioner Clarke draws attention to the term "recreational facility" and asks if Wight is focusing solely on a recreational building, rather than taking into account that the community may want passive open space. Bobbi explains that the word "facility" is being used in place of "space," where community members had the opportunity to choose between indoor and outdoor sports, walking trails, passive spaces, picnic areas, etc. Commissioner Clarke emphasizes that there is not an implicit belief that a new facility was going to be built. The questions being asked in the surveys also include maintaining or improving what the park district already has, such as picnic spaces, outdoor fields/courts, etc. The surveys are all-inclusive to the ideas available for the future of recreation. The options are being left open to gather feedback on what the community would like. Jim explains that there is not an implied direction in the study. Wight is asking what the community is lacking and what can be improved.

Commissioner Adrianopoli asks if Wight is keeping track of what is happening outside of the community but nearby. Bobbi explains that similar providers have been identified within a 10 mile

radius of the park district to see what is currently being offered and what future plans become known in surrounding communities.

Commissioner Frazier asks if people who visited the tent at the Block Party understood that the park district is trying to gather this data to apply it to existing facilities as well as a new space we are trying to gather feedback about. Bobbi says park district staff were able to talk to people in line waiting to do the activity, which helped to clarify why we were collecting opinions. In addition, there were postcards with an explanation of the recreation feasibility project on the card, as well as a link to the project page.

Ania Szulc leads the board through a visioning exercise which will provide future guidance in the project. She asks the board to think of the values the park district has that are unique and worth protecting along with what they want to see or not see throughout this process.

The board emphasizes that this process should be driven by community input. They are looking for quality spaces that are accessible and exciting for everyone in the community. Commissioner Frazier says the board wants everyone in town to know about the process and the surveys so they have an opportunity to give feedback. Bobbi says there will be all sorts of opportunities to give feedback outside of a community forum.

5.0 Adjournment

Commissioner Duffy moves and Commissioner Frazier seconds a motion to adjourn the Special Board Meeting.

By a voice vote; **motion carried.**

Minutes approved on: **October 12, 2026**