



**Park District of Oak Park
Committee of the Whole
Held as Zoom Meeting**

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

I. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Porreca, Wick, Wollmuth, Worley-Hood, and President Lentz attended virtually.

Park District Staff present: Jan Arnold, Executive Director, attended in person; and Chris Lindgren, Superintendent of Parks and Planning; Mitch Bowlin, Director of Finance; Maureen McCarthy, Superintendent of Recreation; Scott Sekulich, Customer Service Manager; and Karen Gruszka, Executive Assistant attended virtually.

Others Present: None

II. Public Comment: None

IV. Recreation and Facility Program Committee

A. 2021 PACT Agreements

Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board that we do an annual agreement for Festival Theatre which allows them the utilization to hold their Shakespeare plays in Austin Gardens. A youth program is also run through Festival Theatre but no dates have been able to be set with the pandemic. They did receive their annual Park District contribution of \$6,000 in 2020 but it was not able to be used, therefore, there will be no contribution in 2021. Commissioner Lentz stated that they will be doing only one play this summer which they hope will help with weather and pandemic issues but their Community Appreciation Night will still be held. **This will come before the Board under the consent agenda at the January Regular Board Meeting.**

B. Annual Scholarship Report

The Park District has a scholarship program to reach people that normally would not be able to afford programs otherwise. In 2020, the childcare discount program was launched for participants in our day-care and after school programs. Scott Sekulich, Customer Service Manager, began by stating the scholarship numbers were down since our programs and facilities were closed last year but scholarship patrons were able to use \$18,752.66. He was very excited to let the Board know that he is working with Amilia and testing the ability for scholarship participants to register on-line; in the past the recipient could only register in person, which will make it easier on the front-end and the back-end with customer service. Commissioner Wollmuth asked if he thought it would expand the numbers and Scott thought it would as it would be less complicated for the scholarship recipients. Commissioner Lentz asked if a lot of patrons were bumping up against the \$300 limit. Scott responded that not this year but in the past, prior to the childcare discount, there were a few with after school care. Commissioner Wollmuth asked if we should revisit the amounts and Executive Director Arnold responded that with the two programs now she does not think so. Commissioner Wollmuth then asked if we are planning on tracking the higher end usage of the scholarship families and

individual users which was confirmed is already taking place. Commissioner Worley-Hood asked if those limits could be a barrier and Scott confirmed for a few families possibly. Executive Director Arnold commented that we will continue to monitor the tiers, usage, and amount of money used and reminded them that the Parks Foundation raises funds for the Scholarships as well. Commissioner Wick asked if the unused funds would be rolled over to this year and Executive Director Arnold answered that they are not and would go into the lost revenue for 2020 and that a new budget is set annually and to remember this was an exceptional year with those funds left in the budget. Commissioner Wick also asked about the spikes with youth and seniors if they are tied together? Scott said there is more intergenerational programs we are offering. Executive Director Arnold added that our Active Adult Membership that we offer includes a lot of free programs so that many seniors have no need for the scholarship with the membership. Commissioner Worley-Hood asked about scholarships with WSSRA. Executive Director Arnold stated that WSSRA has scholarships that they award to families in need and if a WSSRA participant is in an inclusion program with the District and needs aid those funds are covered by the Park District. **No action is needed on this item.**

V. Parks and Planning Committee

A. Rehm Park Bid Recommendation

Executive Director Arnold stated the improvements were delayed from last year to this year and include the playground, pavilion, restroom, table tennis, and baggoss games. The project was in our budget and CIP for \$1.1M in which \$400,000 of that is coming from OSLAD. Chris Lindgren did a great job of negotiating with Integral Construction, the lowest responsive responsible bidder, and was able to bring their bid within our budget including a 5% contingency and final design payment. This is a new firm that has not worked with the District before and had good references when checked. Commissioner Wollmuth said that he was pleased when looking at their summaries that they have worked with projects upwards of \$10M which is great for our project and was pleased that all the bids were fairly close to the budgeted amount. Commissioner Lentz asked if the park will remain open during the construction which begins April 1, and will be complete by September 1, and if the trains would be available. Executive Director Arnold said that the playground and trains will be closed during construction. Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board that this project had a lot of community input and will have a lot of ADA features in it and she believes the community will really enjoy these aspects. Commissioner Lentz stated that it is great that the community knows that we hear their input. **This will come before the Board under the regular agenda at the January Regular Board Meeting.**

B. Pleasant Home Geothermal Professional Services Contract

Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board that \$400,000 was put in the budget to address the HVAC at Pleasant Home and we had received a \$414,000 grant from the IDNR grant program to add to the monies in the CIP. Coming before the Board for approval today, was the start of the design work so that plans/bid documentation would be ready to go out to bid in the summer with a November 1, start date to be completed by April 1. The low responsive responsible bidder, Mark Nussbaum, has worked with the District before with the Austin Gardens and Carroll Center projects as well as the Unity Temple and Historical Society in Oak Park. Chris stated that Mark has extensive experience with a national historic landmarks so they have great confidence he will not disturb the building footprint negatively. Commissioner Worley-Hood stated the historic preservation specialists in the Pleasant Home Foundation were very thrilled with Mark Nussbaum's involvement in the project and were set at ease with his expertise with historical properties. Chris added that going geothermal will not only not raise the energy bills at Pleasant Home but the District will most likely see a slight savings from what their costs are now. **This will come before the Board under the regular agenda at the January Regular Board Meeting.**

III. Administration and Finance Committee

A. Gift to Pleasant Home

Executive Director Arnold reminded the Board that if the community wanted to gift something to the District, the Board must approve it and then informed them that we had been contacted by resident

Mary Wagner and she would like to donate their McKinley chair to Pleasant Home. They acquired this chair through an auction and it is original to the home. This chair will match the one that is already there and the pair could be displayed with the furnishings on the second floor. The chair does require repair and the Pleasant Home Foundation could look to fundraise for. Commissioner Wick asked if we could get out a thank you and about the gift and let the community know and was informed that it could be put out in our press release. **This will come before the Board under the consent agenda at the January Regular Board Meeting.**

B. PCI Contract

Executive Director Arnold stated that staff are looking to move forward with PCI to take over the District's social media, email strategy, and website. It would be very similar to when our IT needs were moved to Noventech and will allow the District to maximize a variety of expertise. PCI has worked with the Park District for over ten years as our Crisis Management team and two of their staff who will be on the PDOP's team live locally. There will be a full-time PDOP staff member on site who will take care of the brochure, signage, and other in-house needs. This is a 12-month agreement and will go into effect on March 1. Commissioner Wollmuth asked if postcards would still be done in-house and Executive Arnold answered that we would design the print part and PCI would work on the marketing/message component. PCI also will help with the new website RFP and do a complete analysis of our website which will be redone in 2022. Commissioner Wollmuth then confirmed how the bi-weekly meetings will be handled and was told that Maureen McCarthy and the full-time staff member would attend with the PCI contacts. Commissioner Worley-Hood asked about social equity in their organization and was informed that the three person team for the District incorporated social equity. **This will come before the Board under the regular agenda at the January Regular Board Meeting.**

C. Community Mental Health Board Lease Agreement Update

Executive Director Arnold updated the Board on the ongoing lease agreement negotiations. She wanted to remind the Board that it is a 35-year lease which came about by looking at their current rent and dividing it by the \$1M they would be putting towards the lease/CRC. Commissioner Worley-Hood commented that the length was a very common lease for entities. Commissioner Wick added that our lease with the VOP for Stevenson is a 99-year lease. Executive Director Arnold went on to say that this is a great partnership and will give the community a needed asset in the facility. The payments from the Mental Health Board are aligned with the timeline for construction and their need to be out of the building where they currently are located. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**

D. Illinois Park and Recreation Conference January 28-30 Update

The Board was reminded of the upcoming virtual conference; a number of staff and three commissioners will be attending. Staff will be taking advantage of CEUs included with the sessions which will be a savings to the District with staff being able to acquire what they need all at that time. **No action is needed by the Board on this item.**

VI. New Business

1. IGOV Forum Discussion

Commissioner Porreca informed the Board that IGOV was running a Candidate Forum for the candidates that are on the ballots for all the entities which will be taking place on Saturday, January 23. The Forum will inform the candidates what it is like to be on a Board. Each agency will be doing a brief presentation that will be covering the same three questions: 1) the agency's objectives, 2) committees and volunteer opportunities for the candidates if they end up not running/not winning their candidacy, and 3) our collaborations. Commissioner Wick stated that our Board was a good example of volunteering, as every single Board member had served on a PDOP committee prior to becoming a Board member. The Board discussed the importance of what was discussed at their Board Retreat (cost efficiencies, collaborations, equity, fundraising for the CRC, programming, and the Park District's continued focus on sustainability which is a direct cost savings) and the sharing of that information. Commissioner Porreca stated she liked collaboration and equity to be focused on.

Commissioner Lentz agreed as an example when Covid hit, we were able to collaborate with D97 and other agencies to help mitigate some of the impacts of it on people in our community. Executive Director Arnold added the examples of how we partnered with Courageous Bakery and Beyond Hunger to drive people to their businesses. The Board also discussed how we use an equity lens at the Park District through our Equity Policy as well as our Social Equity Committee of staff members to look at possible barriers in the District and how we move forward to the best of our ability with equity in mind. Commissioner Wick said the candidates are really looking forward to the forum and we hope to get at least 20 of the candidates who are fresh to this process.

VII. Executive Session - None

VIII. Adjournment

At 8:38p.m. Commissioner Wick motioned and Commissioner Porreca seconded that the Committee of the Whole Meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried in a roll call vote.**



Secretary
Board of Park Commissioners

February 18, 2021
Date



President
Board of Park Commissioners

February 18, 2021
Date