



Park District of Oak Park
Board of Commissioners
General Practices Manual

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PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

GENERAL PRACTICES MANUAL

Article 1 Purpose of Manual; Biennial Review

1.1 Purpose. This General Practices Manual, adopted unanimously by the Board of Commissioners of the Park District of Oak Park (the “District”), sets forth many basic policies and tenets to guide the Board of Commissioner (the “Board”) as it governs the District. This Manual is not intended to be comprehensive in nature; the Board maintains policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines in addition to those set forth in this Manual. Nor is this Manual intended to be rigid and binding on all matters addressed in it. Rather, the provisions of this Manual are a manifestation of the Board’s desire to establish basic standards for appropriate decision-making, protocol, and conduct in the service of the residents of the District. Through the use of this Manual, the Board hopes to ensure good, honest, and accountable representation of its constituents.

1.2 Biennial Review. It is the intention of the Board to review this Manual biennially for consistency with applicable law and the practices of the Board. This Manual may be revised in writing by majority vote of the Board.

Article 2 Statement of Mission, Vision, and Values

This is the mission of the District: “In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences through programs, parks, and facilities.” Our vision is to, “strive to exceed the needs of our diverse community with a collaborative and innovative approach.”

The District’s parks and other facilities provide quality open space and recreation opportunities for all District residents, and the Board will work persistently to maintain the availability of the District’s parks, other facilities, and programs for generations to come. The Board strives to provide an excellent parks and recreation system that is safe and deeply integrated into the distinctive Oak Park living experience. The Board believes that the system is a major contributor to the enhanced quality of life that exists in Oak Park. The Board values and respects the history of Oak Park and of the District, the District’s civic involvement, and the District’s tradition of innovation, and the Board strongly considers these factors as it plans for the future.

The Board believes strongly in the value of citizen participation in the Board’s governance of the District. The Board thus will conduct the business of the District in an open and communicative fashion, seeking feedback and advice whenever possible. The Board will reach out to all residents of the District to assure that all are served equally to the fullest extent possible with the resources of the District.

The Board believes that one key to maintaining an excellent parks and recreation system is to sustain partnerships with other agencies throughout the community who can contribute to the services provided by the District. These valuable partnerships may be with agencies within the District's boundaries or outside of them. The Board is committed to seeking out these partnerships.

In addition, the Board is committed to preserving the open spaces it owns even while offering innovative, high quality programs.

In striving for excellence, the District's values include:

Partnerships: We will work collaboratively with others in our community.

Responsible Leadership: We will create a high performing, engaged, and accountable organization.

Integrity: In all that we do, we will adhere to moral, honest, and ethical principles and work toward accessibility and inclusion.

Innovation: We will continuously try new methods and ideas, adapt services according to trends, and continuously improve processes in order to exceed the needs of our customers.

Sustainability: The District will endure through renewal, maintenance, stewardship and stability in all aspects of operation.

Article 3 Board Responsibilities and Guidelines Generally

3.1 Board of Commissioners; Term of Office. The District is governed by a Board of Commissioners comprised of five elected members, each of whom serves a four-year term. The Board believes that a five-member board is appropriate for the size of the District and that a term of service to the District of four years is in the best interests of the District.

3.2 No Compensation. The members of the Board shall serve without salary or other compensation except reimbursement of expenses as provided in this Manual.

3.3 Board Authority Pursuant to State Law. The Board functions under the authority of the Illinois Park District Code, 65 ILCS 1205/1-1 et seq. and within the framework of applicable State of Illinois and federal laws.

3.4 Actions Taken in Representative Capacity. Board members, collectively and individually, act as representatives of the residents of the District in maintaining and promoting the District's parks, other facilities, and programs. Through careful evaluation of needs, resources, and other factors, Board members make decisions that it determines best serve the community as a whole.

3.5 Collective Decision-Making. In the discharge of their duties, Board members act collectively as a Board and not as individuals. Board members always should abide by the majority vote of the Board and support the determination of that majority. Also, an individual Board member should not speak for the Board unless authorized to do so by the Board. It

would be improper and ill-advised for an individual Board member to make a public pronouncement or engage in conjecture about a Board matter that has not yet been decided, an action of the Board or any matter that has been discussed in an executive session of the Board.

3.6 Policymaking is Primary Role. The Board concerns itself primarily with questions of policy rather than with administrative matters. The District's Executive Director is charged with the administrative responsibility to implement the Board's policies.

3.7 Formulation of Policies, Rules, Regulations. The Board shall enact and maintain appropriate policies, rules, and regulations related to the operations of the District and the District's facilities, and the Board shall see that such policies, rules, and regulations are administered effectively.

3.8 Board Retreat and Goal-Setting. The Board recognizes that it is important to evaluate itself and establish goals for the Board from time to time. The Board shall conduct an annual retreat at which the Board shall undertake a self-evaluation and formulate goals for itself. All Board members are required to attend the retreat.

3.9 Executive Director is Primary Board Resource. Board members should respect the Board's commitment to implement its policies through the Executive Director and to rely on the Executive Director to handle the administrative functions of the District. Board members should request desired information from the Executive Director rather than from other employees of the District. Board members also should refer inquiries, information, complaints, and other communications made to them by residents about District matters to the Executive Director. Board members also should support the actions of the Executive Director when those actions have been directed, ratified, or otherwise supported by the Board.

3.10 Ethics and Conduct. Because each action taken by a Board member in the course of his or her duties should be motivated by the District's best interests, a Board member should be free of undue outside influences and of self-interest. A Board member should advise the Executive Director of all memberships and financial interests that a Board member has in companies or organizations that are doing business with the District. Board members will educate themselves about, and comply with, all other federal, state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances applicable to the conduct of the Park District's elected officials. Additionally, Board members must:

- On a yearly basis, file a statement of Economic Interests with the County Clerk of Cook County.
- Complete the online Freedom Of Information Act and Open Meetings Act training required by the Attorney General on its website.
- Represent all the residents of the District and avoid partisanship based on special interests.
- Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
- When the Board must decide upon an issue about which a Commissioner may have an unavoidable conflict of interest, that Commissioner must disclose the interest, and recuse him/herself from all discussion, deliberation and vote taking about the issue, as required by applicable state and federal law.

3.11 Political Advocacy. Many of the activities of the District are funded with money from County, State, and federal agencies. In addition, many of the activities of the District are affected by the laws of County, State, and federal agencies. For that reason, it is useful that the Board stay informed about pending legislation that is of interest to the District. When appropriate, the Board shall encourage its members to contact County, State, and federal elected representatives to advocate the best interests of the District.

3.12 Media Relations. The designated spokespersons for the District are the Board President and the Executive Director. Requests by the media for comments should be referred to those representatives. Under some circumstances it may be appropriate for a Board member other than the President to speak to a media representative about a matter with which that Board member has particular experience or expertise. It is never appropriate, however, for a Board member to speak to a media representative without first knowing all of the facts and circumstances about the matter of inquiry. If a Board member speaks for himself or herself, then that Board member first should be fully informed about the matter at hand and should clearly state that his or her comments are being made as a private resident and not as a representative of the District. Even then, a Board member should remember that comments made as a private resident are likely to be attributed to the District.

3.13 Fiscal Responsibilities. The Board shall establish a budget, appropriate funds, and levy taxes annually for the various operations of the District, in accordance with State law. See Article 8 of this Manual related to fiscal responsibilities.

3.14 Planning Responsibilities. The Board shall provide for the planning, improvement, financing, construction, and maintenance of the parks and other facilities, equipment, and property of the District. Among other things, the Board shall undertake the following:

- (a) Master Plans. The Board shall maintain a master plan that includes provisions for each of the District's parks and other key facilities. The Board shall endeavor to keep the master plan current and shall undertake a thorough review of the master plan at least as often as every 10 years.
- (b) Capital Projects Plan. The Board shall maintain a 5-Year Capital Projects Plan that forecasts the District's capital projects needs. The Plan should include provisions related to proposed capital improvements; park and facility maintenance and repairs; equipment replacement, maintenance, and repairs; vehicle needs; estimated costs; potential funding sources; and similar matters. The Plan should be reviewed not less often than biennially.

3.15 Intergovernmental and Civic Cooperation. The Board encourages cooperation with other agencies in the community, including governmental, public, private, and voluntary organizations that enhance the services provided to District and act consistently with the best interests and well-being of the District. The Board has created many beneficial relationships with organizations that undertake activities consistent with the best interests of the District. The Board supports the following policies:

- (a) Promotion of Cooperation. The Board encourages Board members and the Executive Director to promote intergovernmental and civic cooperation through appropriate relationships between District officials and staff and the officials and staff of other agencies.
- (b) Relationships with Particular Groups; Liaisons. The Board desires to maintain its valuable relationships with the Memorial Trust Committee, the Pleasant Home Foundation, the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory, and various sports and civic groups. Board members may be appointed to serve as liaisons between the District and some of these organizations.
- (c) School Districts 97 and 200. The Board encourages cooperation between the District and the Oak Park School Districts 97 and 200 in the development and use of facilities and equipment, when such cooperation results in efficient and effective programming that is beneficial to the District, the school district, and residents. Such cooperation may be memorialized in letters of agreement between the District and a school district.
- (d) West Suburban Special Recreation Association. The Board is committed to helping provide for the recreation needs of special populations within the District, including senior citizens and individuals with special needs or disabilities. In furtherance of that commitment, the District shall remain an active member of the West Suburban Special Recreation Association.
- (e) Council of Governments. The Executive Director and at least one Board member should attend the meetings of the Oak Park Council of Governments.

3.16 Board Committees, Task Forces. Currently there are four standing committees of the Board. See Article 6 of this Manual regarding the standing committees and other committees and task forces of the Board.

3.17 Recruiting and Training. The Board recognizes that, as good leaders, the members of the Board should be actively involved in seeking out qualified residents of the District to run for a position on the Board. In addition, Board members should take an active role training newly elected Board members. Staff should share and prepare an information packet containing essential information to be available to prospective candidates. Additionally, at least one informational session with the Executive Director and a Department Head must take place.

3.18 New Board Member Orientation. The Board shall assist with the orientation of new Board members by:

- (a) Providing assistance to the Executive Director with preparation of written materials, which shall include, among other materials, the following:
 - (1) This Manual.
 - (2) The Illinois Park District Code.
 - (3) The Commissioner Resource Manual.

- (4) The Park District Personnel Handbook.
 - (5) The Rules and Regulations Governing the Use of Park Facilities.
- (b) Arranging the opportunity for new Board members to attend the IAPD new commissioner orientation
 - (c) Providing a tour of the District's parks and other facilities.
 - (d) Arranging meetings with the Board President, the Executive Director, the Superintendents, and other staff as determined by the Executive Director, for the purpose of explaining the District's organizational structure and the planning, financial, and budget procedures of the Board.

3.19 Nepotism Prohibited. No member of a Commissioner's immediate family shall be eligible to become a paid employee of the District.

3.20 Vacancies in Office. The Board shall declare vacant the office of any Commissioner who dies, resigns, ceases to be a resident within the District, or otherwise is rendered by law as unqualified to serve as a Commissioner. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment of the Board President with the consent of the Board. Applications for appointment shall be solicited by the Board directly and by advertisement in a local newspaper of general circulation. The appointed Commissioner shall serve until his or her replacement has been elected and qualified for office in the manner provided by law.

Article 4 Board Officers

4.1 President. The Board President shall be the chief executive officer of the Board. The President shall be the presiding officer at meetings of the Board. The President shall appoint with Board approval annually, the committees and/or members and chairpersons of the standing committees of the Board. The President, with the consent of the Board, shall appoint the members of special committees created by the Board. The President shall appoint a Secretary pro tempore of the Board to serve in the absence of the Secretary. The President shall sign all ordinances passed by the Board and all such other documents and papers of the District that by law require a signature. The President shall see that policies of the Board are enforced and that orders of the Board are faithfully executed. The President's vote shall be called for on all matters before the Board in the normal voting rotation with the other Commissioners. The President shall establish an effective working relationship with the Executive Director by meeting regularly to actively communicate with the Executive Director about special issues and problems affecting the District. The President shall work with the Executive Director to prepare Board meeting agendas and schedule an annual performance evaluation of the Executive Director. The President shall effectively communicate with Board of Commissioners to ensure all members are kept abreast of important issues affecting the District and schedule an annual Board evaluation. As well as serving as the official spokesperson for the Board, the President or designee shall serve on committees, commissions, or boards representing the District and represent the Board at community and District events. The President shall also serve as the official District representative to the Illinois Association of Park Districts and any other official legislative committee that will enhance the mission and vision of the District.

4.2 Vice-President. The Board Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the President's absence or refusal or inability to act.

4.3 Secretary. The Board Secretary shall oversee the taking, completion, and recording of all minutes, ordinances, orders, and resolutions of the Board. The Secretary is responsible for the verbatim recording and minutes of all closed sessions of the Board as well as regulating the schedule of disposal of such recordings and release to the public of such minutes according to state law (5 ILCS 120/2.06). The Secretary shall be responsible for all official correspondence of the Board. If the President and Vice-President both are absent from a meeting at which a quorum of Commissioners is present, then the Secretary shall call the meeting to order and call for selection of a President pro tempore for that meeting by a majority vote of the Commissioners present. The Secretary shall be present at all meetings of the Board. The Secretary shall also serve as the Legislative liaison of the Board, keeping the in contact with legislators and keeping the Board informed of legislative issues that would interest the Board.

4.4 Treasurer. The Board Treasurer, in conjunction with the Executive Director and the Superintendent of Business Operations, report to the Board monthly all receipts and disbursements of the District and shall submit such financial statements and detailed information as may be required by the Board.

Article 5 Board Meetings

5.1 Regular Monthly Board Meetings. The regular meetings of the Board are held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the John Hedges Administrative Center, 218 Madison Street, except at otherwise posted by the Board in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

5.2 Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Board President or by any two members of the Board. Notice of such meetings stating the time and place of the meeting and the agenda for the meeting shall be provided to Board members and shall be delivered and posted as required by the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

5.3 Annual Meeting. The official "Annual Meeting" of the Board will be held on the third Thursday in April or as soon thereafter as practicable and shall include the election of the Board officers, including the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer for one year terms. See Article 4 of this Manual related to Board officers. The standing chairs of the standing committees and liaison positions of the Board members will also be established.

5.4 Meeting Attendance. Although it likely is not possible for each Board member to attend every Board meeting, Board members should strive to do so. A reoccurring pattern of missed meetings is unfair to other Board members and to the District.

5.5 Electronic Meeting Attendance. The Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1 et seq. (the "Act"), requires that the actions of public bodies be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted in open meetings, except for certain limited circumstances that permit closed meetings. The definition of "meeting" includes meetings by electronic

means, including video or audio conference, telephone, e-mail, and instant message. This Policy is intended to adopt certain rules and procedures for electronic meeting attendance via video or audio conference by members of boards, commissions, and committees of the Park District consistent with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. A member of a Public Body is qualified to attend a meeting of that Public Body electronically only if the member is physically prevented from attending the meeting by: personal illness or disability; employment purposes or the business of the public body; or a family or other emergency. The following procedures are required before a member of a Public Body is authorized to attend electronically a meeting of that Public Body:

- (a) Notice to the [Secretary]. The member must notify the Park District [Secretary] in writing at least 48 hours prior to the meeting in which the member desires to attend electronically, unless advance notice is impractical. The notice shall use the appropriate form to identify the reason the member cannot be physically present at the meeting in accordance with this Policy. If the member is unable to give the required written notice prior to the meeting, then the member shall notify the Park District [Secretary] by other means prior to the meeting and shall submit the required written notice as soon as practicable following the meeting.
- (b) Determination of Authorization of Electronic Attendance. Upon receipt of notice in accordance with Subsection IV.A, the Park District [Secretary] shall promptly forward the notice to the presiding officer of the Public Body. After establishing that a quorum of the Public Body is physically present at the meeting at which a member has requested to attend electronically, the presiding officer shall state that (i) a notice was received by a member of the Public Body in accordance with this Policy and (ii) the member will be deemed authorized to attend the meeting electronically unless a motion objecting to the member's electronic attendance is made, seconded, and approved by three-fourths of the members of the Public Body physically present at the meeting. If no such motion is made and seconded or if any such motion fails to achieve the required vote by the members of the Public Body physically present at the meeting, then the request by the member to attend the meeting electronically shall be deemed approved by the Public Body and the presiding officer shall declare the requesting member present. After such declaration by the presiding officer, the question of a member's electronic attendance may not be reconsidered.

A meeting of a Public Body at which any member has been authorized to attend electronically in accordance to Section IV of this Policy must be conducted in accordance with the following special rules, in addition to any other applicable rules and procedures of the Public Body:

- (a) Roll Call and Quorum. A quorum of the Public Body must be physically present at the meeting. Following the call of the roll, and at the conclusion of the determination of authorization of electronic attendance, the presiding officer shall identify each member who is attending the meeting electronically.

- (b) Identification and Recognition of Electronic Attendees. Any member attending electronically must identify himself or herself each time the member wishes to speak and must be recognized by the presiding officer prior to addressing matters before the Public Body.
- (c) Public Access to Meeting. The speech of a member attending electronically shall be amplified in such a manner that it shall be generally audible to members of the Public Body and the public who are physically present at the meeting. Also, any video image of a member attending electronically shall be projected in such a manner that the member's video image shall be generally visible and audible to members of the Public Body and the public who are physically present at the meeting. In addition, the votes of any member of the Public Body attending electronically shall be generally audible at the location where such meeting is being held and expressly acknowledged by the presiding officer. When a member attends a closed meeting electronically, the member's speech shall be generally audible to all members of the Public Body who are physically present at the meeting, and the audio recording of the meeting required by the Act shall incorporate the speech of the member electronically attending the closed meeting.
- (d) Minutes. The minutes of each meeting of a Public Body shall identify which of the members of the Public Body were physically present and, if applicable, which members of the Public Body attended electronically. The minutes also shall reflect the reason for a member's attendance electronically (as described in Section III of this Policy), the fact that there was no valid objection to such attendance pursuant to this Policy, and the electronic means by which the member attended the meeting.

A member attending a meeting of a Public Body electronically shall be considered present at the meeting and entitled to vote on any matter before the Public Body as if the member were physically present at the meeting, provided that the member's attendance at the meeting electronically complies with the terms of this Policy. In the event of a bona fide disaster, as defined in the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/1 et seq. ("IEMAA"), this Policy shall not apply to restrict the conduct of public business by a Public Body, provided such public business is conducted in accordance with Subsection 10(j) of the IEMAA.

5.6 Preparation of Meeting Agendas. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Board President, is responsible for preparing the agendas for all Board meetings and Board committee meetings. The Executive Director shall cause the Board and the District's General Counsel to receive appropriate agenda materials no less than three days before each meeting including such items as the meeting agenda, explanatory materials related to items on the agenda, a schedule of accounts payable set for approval, an account of the District's income and expenditures, and monthly staff reports as appropriate. The agenda for regular meetings of the Board generally shall be structured as follows; provided that the Executive Director, with the concurrence of the Board President, may revise the agenda from time to time as appropriate depending on the current business of the Board: (1) Call to Order and Roll Call; (2) Approval of Agenda; (3) Public Comments; (4) Consent Agenda; (5) Staff Reports;

(6) Old Business; (7) New Business; (8) Commissioners Comments; (9) Executive Session (if necessary); (10) Adjournment.

5.7 Executive Director's Attendance at Meetings. The Executive Director, or if the Executive Director is unable to attend then his or her designee, shall be present at all meetings of the Board.

5.8 Quorum. The Board is comprised of five Commissioners. Three Commissioners constitute a quorum of the Board.

5.9 Voting. For purposes of voting on matters that come before the Board, the roll shall be called for all matters involving the expenditure of District funds, creating a penalty or fine, creating a liability for the District, or as otherwise provided by law. In a roll call vote, the ayes, nays, and absence of the Commissioners shall be recorded. The roll shall be called in rotating order such that the voting order is different for successive roll call votes. The initiation and seconding of motions also shall be recorded.

5.10 Roberts Rules of Order. To the extent not otherwise provided in this Manual or other rules or procedures of the District, the Board may rely on the parliamentary procedures set forth in Robert's Rules of Order to resolve questions of procedure.

5.11 Open Meetings. All regular, special, and continued meetings of the Board and any committees and other Board-appointed task forces and commissions shall be noticed and conducted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. All meetings shall be open to the public except when an executive session is called in accordance with that act.

POLICY REGARDING CLOSED MEETING MINUTES AND VERBATIM RECORDS

- I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE. The Open Meetings Act requires all public bodies to keep minutes of their meetings, whether opened or closed. With the adoption of amendments to Section 2.06 of that Act, 5 ILCS 120/2.06, public bodies also must maintain a verbatim record of all closed meetings in the form of an audio or video recording. This Policy sets forth specific procedures to ensure that the Park District of Oak Park, and the committees and other subsidiary bodies of the Park District that are subject to the Open Meetings Act ("Subsidiary Bodies"), comply with the requirements for closed meetings.
- II. CLOSED MEETING MINUTES. Minutes of a closed meeting shall comply with the same requirements applicable to minutes for an open meeting. They shall include, at a minimum, the date, time, and place of the meeting; the members of the public body that are present and those that are absent; a summary of discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided; and a record of any votes taken. The Open Meetings Act exemption or exemptions applicable to the closed meeting should be identified in the minutes of the closed meeting. Minutes of closed meetings shall not be released for public inspection to the extent that there is a need to preserve confidentiality of matters stated in those minutes.

III. CLOSED MEETING VERBATIM RECORDS. A verbatim record of each closed meeting is required and shall be subject to the following requirements:

- A. Recordings. Verbatim records shall be made by audio or video recording. Each recording shall be labeled with the name of the meeting body and the date, time, and place of the meeting. A statement identifying each participant and the purposes for the closed meeting should be made at the beginning of the closed meeting.
- B. Confidentiality. All verbatim records of closed meetings are hereby declared to be confidential and not subject to release except pursuant to this Policy or as required by law.
- C. Duties of Secretary or Designee. The Secretary, or her or his designee, shall be responsible for creating the verbatim record. After a closed meeting, the verbatim record shall be delivered immediately to the Secretary for storage in a secure location within Park District headquarters. The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining, storing, and restricting access to all verbatim records.
- D. Access to Verbatim Records. No individual, nor the Park District Board, nor any Subsidiary Body shall have access to any verbatim record of any closed meeting unless approved by one of the following specific methods:
 1. Individual Access. Unless otherwise required by law, no individual, including any member of the Park District Board or any Subsidiary Body, shall have access to any verbatim record unless specifically approved by an affirmative majority vote of the Park District Board taken at an open meeting. An individual who is granted the right to access a verbatim record shall do so only at the Park District's facilities and in the presence of the Secretary or her or his designee. No verbatim record shall be copied or taken out of the Park District's facilities except as specifically allowed in this Policy or as otherwise required by law.
 2. Subsidiary Body Review. A Subsidiary Body may access a verbatim record of one of its closed meetings only by an affirmative majority vote, taken at an open meeting, of all members of that Subsidiary Body then holding office. A Subsidiary Body shall review a verbatim record only at a duly noticed closed meeting of that Subsidiary Body.
 3. Board Review. The Park District Board may access a verbatim record of one of its closed meetings or of a closed meeting of any Subsidiary Body only by an affirmative majority vote of the Board taken at an open meeting. The Board shall review a verbatim record only at a duly noticed closed meeting of the Board.
 4. Secretary. The Secretary shall have access at all times to all

verbatim records for purpose of ensuring their proper care and protection. The Secretary may review a verbatim record, however, only if authorized to do so by an affirmative majority vote of the Park District Board taken at an open meeting.

5. Court. If the Park District is directed by a court order issued in accordance with Section 2.06 of the Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/2.06, to deliver a verbatim record, then the Secretary or her or his designee shall deliver the relevant verbatim record to the court, after that record has been reviewed by the Park District's attorney.
- E. Verbatim Record Not Official Record. A verbatim record shall not be part of the official public record of any meeting. Rather, the approved minutes are to be deemed the official record of the meeting.
- F. Notification of Destruction of Verbatim Record. On a regular basis, the Secretary shall provide a written notice listing all verbatim records that are scheduled for destruction (the "Notice of Destruction"). The Notice shall be given to (1) the members of the Park District Board, (2) the members of the Subsidiary Body (if the verbatim record was created at a closed meeting of that Subsidiary Body), and (3) the Park District attorney. The Notice shall include a copy of the approved minutes for each verbatim record scheduled for destruction.
- G. Objection to Destruction.
 1. Deadline for Objection. A written objection to the destruction of a verbatim record shall be filed with the Secretary within seven days after the date of a Notice of Destruction, or at least three days before the destruction date set forth in that Notice, whichever is later.
 2. Who May Object. The Park District President or any member of the Park District Board may object to the destruction of any verbatim record of a closed meeting of the Board or of any Subsidiary Body. A member of a Subsidiary Body may object to destruction of a verbatim record only of a closed meeting of that Subsidiary Body.
- H. Destruction of Verbatim Record if No Objection. Unless a timely written objection to the destruction of a verbatim record is filed with the Secretary in accordance with Section III.G of this Policy, the Secretary shall erase or otherwise destroy each verbatim record listed in the Notice of Destruction on the date set forth in the Notice. No verbatim record shall be erased or otherwise destroyed unless the Secretary certifies that (1) the verbatim record was created at a closed meeting that was concluded at least 18 months prior to the date of destruction and (2) there exists approved minutes of that closed meeting.
- I. Procedure When Objection. The following procedure shall apply when a

timely objection to destruction is received by the Secretary:

1. Notice of Objection. The Secretary shall promptly send notice of the objection to all parties who received the Notice of Destruction.
 2. Deliberation on Objection. At a closed meeting of the Board or Subsidiary Body scheduled promptly after receipt of an objection, the Board or Subsidiary Body shall determine whether destruction of the verbatim record should be delayed. That decision shall require the vote set forth in the next Section III.I.3 of this Policy. If the required vote to delay destruction is not obtained, then the verbatim record shall be destroyed immediately by the Secretary in accordance with Section III.H of this Policy; provided, however, that no verbatim record of a Subsidiary Body shall be destroyed if either the Subsidiary Body or the Board votes to delay its destruction.
 3. Required Vote to Delay Destruction. The destruction of a verbatim record shall be delayed only if: (i) the Board, by an affirmative majority vote, or (ii) the Subsidiary Body, by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of the Subsidiary Body then holding office, authorizes delay of that destruction.
- J. Procedure When Destruction Delayed. If the destruction of a verbatim record has been delayed pursuant to Section III.I of this Policy, then the Board and/or the Subsidiary Body, if any, that voted to delay destruction shall review the verbatim record in closed meeting. After that review, the reviewing body shall determine either: (1) that the verbatim record should be destroyed, or (2) that the verbatim record may be released pursuant to Section IV of this Policy, or (3) that the destruction of the verbatim record ought to be delayed to a date certain.

No verbatim record shall be destroyed if the Board or the Subsidiary Body, if any, determines that destruction should be delayed or released pursuant to Section IV of this Policy.

If destruction of a verbatim record is delayed to a date certain, then the Secretary shall provide a new Notice of Destruction for that verbatim record in accordance with Section III.F of this Policy.

IV. REVIEW AND RELEASE OF CLOSED MEETING MINUTES AND VERBATIM RECORDS.

- A. Review of Closed Meeting Minutes. The Board and each Subsidiary Body shall review its closed meeting minutes to determine if they are eligible for release to the public. In its review, the Board or Subsidiary Body shall determine if the minutes contain information that continues to require confidential treatment. Only portions of written minutes that no longer require confidential treatment shall be released. Written minutes shall

not be released unless approved by an affirmative majority vote of the Board or Subsidiary Body taken in public session.

- B. Review of Closed Meeting Verbatim Records. Pursuant to Section III.B of this Policy, verbatim records always are *per se* confidential. Not less than twice each year, the Secretary shall provide a list to the Board and to the relevant Subsidiary Body of existing verbatim records, the review of which list by the Secretary, by the Board, and by the Subsidiary Body, if any, shall constitute review of the verbatim records. The Board or the relevant Subsidiary Body may undertake a further review a verbatim record, but only in accordance with Section III.D of this Policy. After review of the verbatim record, the Board or the Subsidiary Body shall require that the verbatim record remain confidential unless, after reviewing the verbatim record in its entirety, the verbatim record is approved for release by an affirmative majority vote of the Board or, for a verbatim record of a Subsidiary Body, by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of that Subsidiary Body then holding office. All such votes shall be taken in open session.

5.12 Executive Sessions. The Board may call executive sessions at such times and places as may be required for private discussion of personnel matters; pending, probable, or imminent litigation; land acquisition; and other matters as provided by the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

5.13 Effective Meetings. The Board recognizes that the most effective, accessible meetings are those at which items of business are handled efficiently, with the necessary and appropriate amount of discussion but without unduly lengthy or repetitive debate or prolonged speechmaking by Board members or members of public. Detailed discussions among Board members of matters coming before the Board generally should take place during the meetings of the Committee of the Whole or other standing committee. Board members should prepare themselves for meetings by reading the materials provided to them and making appropriate inquiries of the Executive Director prior to the meetings.

5.14 Public Comment. Members of the public will be allowed to speak during the “Public Comments” portion of a regular meeting of the Board, unless the business or circumstances of the Board at a particular meeting precludes public comment. The general rule shall be that an individual shall have not more than three minutes to make his or her comments and that repetitive comments are discouraged. The Board may set, on a meeting-by-meeting basis, an overall limit on the number of, and time for, public comments if necessary to facilitate the proper and orderly conduct of the meeting and the completion of the Board’s business.

5.15 Effective Communications. Processes and procedures of the District will be designed to facilitate effective communications of the Board’s policies and business decisions.

5.16 Electronic Communications
The Park District provides and maintains messaging agents and electronic facilities as

follows: internal and external electronic mail (e-mail), Internet access,. Use of these forms of communication is limited to staff, Board, and authorized volunteers. All electronic communications, as well as the equipment and stored information transmitted, received, or archived, are, and remain at all times, the property of the Park District. Accordingly, all messages and files created, sent, received, or stored within the system shall be related to District business and are, and shall remain, the property of the District. No person shall use any electronic communication anonymously or use pseudonyms to attempt to escape from prosecution of laws or regulations, or otherwise escape responsibility for their actions. Commissioners shall not have any right of personal privacy in any matter stored in, created, received, or sent over the Park District e-mail system. The District reserves the right to retrieve and review any message or file composed, sent or received. It should be noted that although a message or file is deleted or erased, it is still possible to recreate the message. Although electronic mail may allow the use of passwords for security, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. All electronic messages should therefore be limited to non-confidential matters. It is possible for messages to be retrieved and viewed by someone other than the intended recipient. Furthermore, the District may remove or change passwords, as it sees fit. All electronic mail messages sent or received by Commissioners from, or at, any source pertaining to the business of the Park District are “public records” under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. As such, all messages are available to the public to inspect and copy, subject to the explicit exceptions contained in the law. In order to ensure that such messages comply with this policy, all electronic mail messages are subject to review by authorized Park District staff or authorized Commissioners.. Commissioners are also prohibited from using electronic means to seek out personal or confidential information regarding Park District employees, contracts, finances, or other non-public matters. Harassment of any kind is prohibited. Harassment policies apply equally to all electronic media. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual or group’s race, religion, age, national origin, physical attributes, or sexual preference shall be transmitted. The safety and security of the Park District’s computer systems and resources must be considered at all times. Users may not share any passwords, nor obtain any other users password by any unauthorized means.

Backup Guidelines – For the protection of the Park District’s computer users, all data, documents, and e-mail messages will be stored on the Park District’s computer network. If the user desires to store documents on diskette, tape, local hard disks, or any other media attached to a personal computer, it is the user’s sole responsibility to make backup copies of the data, documents, or e-mail messages.

Violations – Violations of this policy may result in corrective action. If necessary, the District may advise appropriate legal officials of any violations.

Administration – The Executive Director is responsible for administering this policy. The system manager may be designated as the administrator.

Provisions Applicable to Commissioners Only – E-Mail Use and the Open Meetings Act

The Illinois Open Meetings Act defines “Meeting” as “any gathering whether in person or by video or audio conference, telephone call, electronic means (such as without limitation, electronic mail, electronic chat, and instant messaging), or other means of contemporaneous interactive communication, of a majority of a quorum of the members of a public body held for the purpose of discussing public business.” Electronic mail may be used to discuss public

business by less than a majority of a quorum, subject to the restrictions contained in this policy. Electronic mail may also be used to communicate in any other manner that does not constitute deliberation under applicable Illinois law.

The following are examples of permitted use of e-mail by Commissioners to discuss business of the Board:

E-mails between two Commissioners not copied to a third Commissioner; One e-mail from a Commissioner to all other Commissioners provided it is not responded to; E-mails between any number of Commissioners not addressing public business of the Board or any sub-body of the Board.

Article 6 Board Committees

6.1 Board Authority to Establish Standing Committees. The Board, by majority vote, may designate standing committees of the Board from time to time, and in so doing the Board shall establish the purpose and scope of authority of such committees. The Board also may establish meeting times and places for its standing committees from time to time. The Board currently maintains four standing committees—the Committee of the Whole, the Administration and Finance Committee, the Recreation and Facility Programming Committee, and the Building & Grounds/Facility Maintenance Committee.

6.2 Committee of the Whole. The Committee of the Whole of the Board, comprised of all five Board members, meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month at the Oak Park Conservatory, 615 Garfield Street. The meeting time and place may be changed by the Board from time to time, provided that notice of such change shall be given in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The Board President shall be the presiding officer of the Committee of the Whole. The agendas for meetings of the Committee of the Whole shall be prepared by the Executive Director in consultation with the Board President.

6.3 Other Standing Committees Generally. The other standing committees of the Board shall meet and discuss their business during the meetings of the Committee of the Whole. A committee may determine to meet at a separate time, provided that notice of such change shall be given in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. A committee shall be advisory to the Board only and shall not be authorized to take any final action on any matter of Board business. A committee shall make its recommendations to the Board in writing, whether by a committee report, by memorandum of the Executive Director, or by some other suitable format. The committee chairman may appoint non-Board members to serve as members of the committee. The President of the Board shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

6.4 Administration and Finance Committee. The Administration and Finance Committee shall be comprised of the Board Treasurer as chairperson, one other Board member, and such other Board members as may be appointed by the Board President with the consent of the Board. The Board President, the Executive Director, and the Superintendent of Business Operations shall be ex-officio members of this committee. This committee is charged with the consideration of and recommendations to the Board regarding issues relating to budgets, finance, strategic planning, policy, computer technology, personnel, insurance, and related matters.

6.5 Recreation and Facility Programming Committee. The Recreation and Facility Programming Committee shall be comprised of the Board Secretary as chairperson, one other Board member, and such other Board members as may be appointed by the Board President with the consent of the Board. The Board President, the Executive Director, and the Superintendent of Recreation shall be ex-officio members of this committee. This committee is charged with consideration of and recommendations to the Board regarding all relating to facility usage, recreational programming, communications, marketing, and related matters.

6.6 Building & Grounds/Facility Maintenance Committee. The Building & Grounds/Facility Maintenance Committee shall be comprised of the Board Vice-President as chairperson, one other Board member, and such other Board members as may be appointed by the Board President with the consent of the Board. The Board President, the Executive Director, and the Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds Recreation shall be ex-officio members of this committee. This committee is charged with consideration of and recommendations to the Board regarding park properties, land acquisition and development, buildings and grounds maintenance, grants, historic preservation, capital projects, and related matters.

7.0 Personnel Policies

7.1 Board Responsibility to Establish Personnel Policies. The Board shall have the responsibility of establishing policies governing District Employees. The Board may adopt and maintain a personnel handbook that establishes the terms, rules, and policies related to employment with the District.

7.2 Employment of Executive Director. The Board shall employ a properly educated and trained professional to serve as Executive Director, the chief administrative officer of the District. The duties and terms and conditions of employment of the Executive Director may be set forth by written contract between the Board and the Executive Director for a specific term. The Executive Director shall serve at the will of the Board and shall be subject to the policies and direction of the Board. The Board shall evaluate the performance of the Executive Director annually.

7.3 Executive Director Responsibilities. The Executive Director shall be the chief administrative officer of the District. The Executive Director shall be responsible for the hiring, management, discipline, termination, and other matters related to District employees. The Executive Director also shall be responsible for the efficient operation of the District consistent with Board-established policies. The Executive Director also shall serve as advisor to the Board on matters of policy formation. The Executive Director shall be charged with overseeing the preparation of the annual working budget detailing sources and amounts of revenues and expenditures for each fund levied by the District.

7.4 Qualified Employees. The Board recognizes that the District competes both with private entities and other public agencies for well-qualified, high-quality employees. The Board understands the importance of encouraging and supporting the Executive Director's ability to maintain, within reasonable financial constraints, a policy of providing a suitable salary and benefits program for the employees of the District.

7.5 Employees' Performance of Duties. No Board member shall inhibit, obstruct, or otherwise interfere with any District employee in the performance of his or her assigned duties. All inquiries relating to a District employee should be directed only to the Executive Director.

8.0 Fiscal Responsibilities

8.1 General. The Board shall exercise prudent financial judgment and practices so that the District remains financially sound. The Board shall review and approve the proposed annual budget for the District. The Board also shall regularly review reports regarding the District's financial status, including accounts payable, current status of each of the funds of the District, and similar reports.

8.2 Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the District commences on January 1 and ends on the following December 31.

8.3 Annual Budget, Appropriation Ordinance. The Board shall review and approve an annual budget after review and recommendation of the Administration and Finance Committee. The presentation of the budget shall include a written description of the significant changes to the prior year's budget as well as review of the budgeted and projected revenues and expenditures for each fund in prior fiscal year, the results of significant organizational, operational, or accounting changes, and the timetable for review, revision, public display, and adoption of the budget and appropriation ordinance, the annual tax levy ordinance, and the Truth-in-Taxation hearing (if one is necessary). The Executive Director shall supervise the preparation of the proposed budget and appropriation ordinance in consultation with the Superintendent of Business Operations and the District's General Counsel. The proposed budget and appropriation ordinance shall be released for public inspection in the manner provided by law. The Board will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget and appropriation ordinance. The Board shall approve a budget at a Board meeting prior to the beginning of the District's fiscal year, usually at the regular meeting of the Board in December.

8.4 Annual Tax Levy. The Board shall consider and approve a tax levy ordinance annually in accordance with the schedule established by law. The annual tax levy ordinance shall be approved by the Board no later than the regular meeting of the Board in December and filed with the Cook County Clerk within the deadline for filing established by law.

8.5 Annual Audit. The Board shall conduct an annual audit using an independent auditing firm. The Board's policy is for full disclosure of pertinent financial reports. The District's accounting procedures shall conform to all applicable standards, including accepted principles and standards of the Governmental Financial Officers Association, the National Committee on Government Accounting, and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

8.6 Program Fees. The Board shall maintain a revenue policy that recognizes the various costs related to the District's facilities and programs, including without limitation facilities operations costs, facilities maintenance costs, program costs, and administrative costs. That revenue policy also shall recognize the various types of programs provided by the

District and the scope of those programs, including without limitation community-wide programs (for example special events) that benefit the community as a whole, community-based special interest programs (for example swimming lessons and teen programs) that benefit both participants and the community as a whole, and revenue programs (for example gymnastics and summer camps) that principally benefit the participants. Program fees should be established and adjusted based both on costs and expenses and program type.

8.7 Debt Service Principles and Procedures. Inappropriate levels of debt can create financial difficulty. For example, short-term borrowing to cover routine costs can be expensive and may be a sign that the District is becoming financially overextended. Further, an unduly high level of debt may place an undue financial burden on the taxpayers and thereby adversely affect the health of the local business community. Reasonable levels of debt, however, may provide a mechanism to reduce costs for the District by allowing funding of projects or equipment purchases sooner than possible if those projects or equipment purchases were paid with current funds, thus reducing or negating cost increases due to inflation. Issuing debt also is a mechanism for spreading the costs of capital improvements equitably among current users and future users of the improvements. The Board also recognizes that the condition of the District's facilities, equipment, and programs are an important component in maintaining the desirability of the area and local property. For this reason, too, it may be desirable to issue debt to secure the funds necessary for maintenance and improvement of the District's facilities, equipment, and programs. The Board thus intends to adhere to the following general debt policies:

- (a) The Board will endeavor to achieve and maintain the highest possible bond rating for the District.
- (b) Except under extraordinary circumstances, average annual bond maturities shall not exceed 20 years.
- (c) The District will endeavor to maintain minimum reserves in the Debt Service Fund at least equal to the next required principal and interest payments on outstanding debt.
- (d) Except in emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances, borrowing shall be undertaken only to fund to capital improvements included in the District's 5-Year Capital Projects Plan.
- (e) Because the District's authority to issue bonds is restricted by the Illinois Property Tax Extension Limitation Act's debt service extension base limit, the Board may choose under appropriate circumstances to issue debt certificates instead of bonds.
- (f) No person or committee or other entity shall be authorized to create any financial liability on behalf of the District except only as approved in nature and amount by the Board or in accordance with the District's purchasing policy.

- (g) The 5-Year Capital Projects Plan shall be the basis for planning and consideration of issuance of bonds or other instruments.

8.8 Bond Sales. Bonds may be issued by private placement or through an open bidding process. The District may invite proposals from particular financial institutions and, if so, shall invite financial institutions within the boundaries of the District to be a part of that proposal process. Depending on the market circumstances as determined by the Board, the Executive Director, and any financial consultants advising the Board, bonds may be marketed publicly. The District shall be represented by the District's General counsel acting as issuers counsel, and the District also shall retain bond counsel.

8.9 Grants. The Board shall seek to finance proposed improvements through public or private grants, whenever feasible. The Executive Director and other staff shall be vigilant about exploring all possibilities for obtaining grants and other financial assistance.

8.10 Competitive Bidding. The Executive Director shall use a competitive bidding process for public works projects undertaken by the District, when required by law or otherwise appropriate. When such a project has been let for competitive bidding, the Board will award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder in the best interests of the District in accordance with State law. In determining the responsibility of the bidder, the Board may consider the bidders' financial responsibility, general experience, past projects of similar nature, adequacy of equipment, ability to perform under current circumstances, references, and other pertinent matters. Contracts for a public works project should provide that the Board may reject any and all bids when the Board determines that it is in the best interest of the District to do so.

8.11 Procurement Cards. The District may provide procurement cards to designated employees to facilitate the purchase on behalf of the District of approved items from approved vendors, in accordance with the procurement policy.

Article 9 District Property

9.1 Tours of Facilities. The Board shall endeavor to tour the District's parks and other key facilities at least once each year as a group, to facilitate Board members' understanding of the needs and issues related to the District's facilities. The tour shall be conducted by knowledgeable members of the District's staff. Board members also are strongly encouraged to visit and review the facilities and programs of the District individually and as often as possible. Such visits should be made with due consideration for the integrity of any on-going program.

9.2 Land Acquisition. The Board may seek to acquire additional land for park purposes. The following matters should be considered as part of the Board's determination whether to acquire land:

- (a) The acquisition and proposed use of the land will significantly enhance the recreation and leisure activities the District can provide to its residents.

- (b) Acquisition, development, and maintenance of the land is not inconsistent with the District's 5-Year Capital Projects Plan and can be undertaken without violating the Board's fiscal and funding policies.
- (c) Public approval via voter referendum has been obtained if funding requirements cannot be met with currently available financing mechanisms.

9.3 Property Leases. The District may a lease of real property when the Board determines that such a lease would enhance the ability of the District to provide quality services to its residents. Each such lease shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the Illinois Park District Code.

9.4 Historic Sites. The Board shall continue to own, maintain, and operate the historic facilities at Pleasant Home, the Oak Park Conservatory, Scoville Park, and the Cheney Mansion.

Article 10 Additional Matters

10.1 Staff and Board Education and Training. The Board believes that it is in the best interests of the District to maintain an informed and educated District staff and Board. The Board thus believes that the District should pay appropriate costs and expenses for the Executive Director and other staff members to attend appropriate conferences, training sessions, and professional development meetings, within the limits of the budgeted funds and as determined by the Executive Director. The Board also believes that funds should be provided to pay appropriate costs and expenses for Board members to attend seminars, conferences, and training sessions in furtherance of their ability to best serve the District, as designated by the majority of the Board. Board members are expected to participate in seminars, and state and national conferences as attendance at these events makes a well informed Commissioner.

10.2 Membership in IAPD and NRPA. Based on the determination that the programs, services, and information provided by the IAPD and NRPA are beneficial to the District, the District shall maintain membership in the IAPD and NRPA unless otherwise determined by the Board. Each Board member shall have an individual membership in these organizations. Board members are encouraged to participate actively in these organizations by attending events and training and by joining committees.

10.3 Annual Calendar of Actions and Activities. The Executive Director, in consultation with the Board President, shall provide the Board, at or before the Board's regular meeting in December, with a calendar of annual, recurring, and anticipated Board actions and activities for the upcoming calendar year.

10.4 Use of Expert Consultants. The Board shall seek the advice of expert consultants when the Board determines it is appropriate and shall use the advice of those consultants as an aid for Board decision-making.

10.5 Acceptance of Donations. The Board may accept donations of land, equipment, and other items when the Board determines that the acceptance would be in the

best interests of the District and only when the District will attain full control of the donated item.

10.6 Recognition of Outgoing Board Members. Service on the Board shall be recognized, upon completion of the term, by presentation to outgoing Board members of a plaque or small gift at a regular Board meeting, typically during the meeting that includes the annual meeting of the Board.

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