

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS  
536 EAST AVENUE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS**

**JUNE 10, 2024**

**President Opyd called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Weber, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Director of Finance Jamie Hollock  
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller  
Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger  
HR & Administrative Assistant Adam Kopera

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Eugene Bolotnikov  
Patty King Wight & Company  
Skylar Wright Beyond Your Base  
Kyle Harding Chapman & Cutler  
Hank Beckman  
Rose Naseef  
Anna Eich  
Mony Chabria  
Monica McAndrews  
Joyce Carlson  
Becky Lorentzen  
Andrew Griffin  
Linda Christianson  
Anne Bennett  
Brandon Simak  
Aarkryti Liva  
Karel Jacobs  
John Links  
Curt Hansman  
Gloria Stephenson  
Elyse Hoffenberg

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the public comments policy. Executive Director Bechtold informed him there were no changes and welcomed Adam Kopera, our new HR & Administrative Assistant.

**Administration of Oath**

Commissioner Weber was sworn in and resighted the Oath of Office.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

***Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)***

Becky Lorentzen 103 E. Cossitt, La Grange, Becky thanked the Commissioners and staff for attending the Anti Racism Workshop, as well as reminded everyone about their summer gathering on June 13, 2024, at 6:30pm at the Community Center.

Rose Naseef 911 S. Stone Ave, La Grange, Rose stated that she was concerned with the removal of any trees in the park plan and would like details on what trees will be removed, as well as added. She discussed concerns and opposition to expanding parking lots and the installation of synthetic turf.

Anne Bennett, 644 S. Stone, La Grange, Anne stated that Gordon, Denning, Sedgwick and Gilbert have engineering issues which need to be considered with the Village before moving forward with the 2024 Park Plan Proposal. She also stated the district should use enterprise fund accounting for fee-based programming, as well as exploring a swimming pool with a municipal joint venture.

Andrew Griffin, 232 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, Andrew stated he is a physician and has lived in La Grange for 13 years. He referenced Rose's comments on synthetic turf and feels it should be a non-starter for the proposal. Requested the park district to remove the synthetic turf and have a focus on trees. He also referenced Anne's comments and stated he felt it was short sighted to have the Rec Center cover itself financially but agreed with her larger points.

Mony Chabria, 911 S. Stone Ave, La Grange, Mony stated he agreed with all the prior comments and made additional comments on the impacts of PFAS and forever chemicals and feels La Grange should be leading the fight against these chemicals, not adding them.

Joyce Carlson, 415 W. Hillgrove, La Grange, Joyce agreed with everything Rose said. Concerned about the temperatures of the synthetic turf and how this will affect La Grange in the long term and requested the district think of the children first.

Linda Christenson, 131 South Edgewood, Linda supports everything Rose stated and feels we should maintain green space. She referenced Gilbert Park, and she is opposed to the parking lot expansion. She also inquired about Gilbert and if it was being considered under a separate referendum.

Executive Director Bechtold explained that we were applying for an OSLAD

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Grant for Gilbert, but it would still be under the 2024 Park Plan Proposal and under the referendum. The grant would provide additional funding for the project.

Brandon Simak, 400 9<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange Brandon echoed the points that have been made but wanted to express more concerns from a sustainability and environmental perspective. He feels the plan is a multigenerational plan, but is opposed to synthetic turf, expansion of parking lots and removal of trees.

Elyse Hoffenberg, 1030 S. Stone La Grange, Congratulated Commissioner Weber and requested the board consider forward thinking and the impact of the decisions that will be made.

Gloria Stephenson, 1510 41<sup>st</sup>, La Grange, Gloria opposed the expansion of the Gilbert parking lot and the removal of trees. She also would like to see the Gilbert Park shuffleboard courts renewed and turning the building into a senior center.

Curt Hansman, 715 W Hillgrove, La Grange, Curt stated she is opposed to artificial turf, cutting down mature trees and expanding parking lots and requests reconsideration of the plans.

Aarkryti Liva, 38 N Edgewood, La Grange, Aarkryti stated she is opposed to synthetic turf. She moved to La Grange for the green space and mature trees. She echoes what everyone else stated. Aarkryti participated in Learning Ladders in prior years and feels people should be able to figure out parking, but expanding the parking lot should not be a solution.

Commissioner Opyd thanked everyone for their comments and participation at the meeting.

### ***2024 Park Plan Proposal Review and Potential Referendum Bond Parameters***

Sklyar White, Senior Associate from Beyond Your Base presented the survey results, Kyle Hardening, Partner from Chapman & Cutler presented bond parameters and sample ballot questions, and Patty King, Senior Landscape Architect from Wight & Company, provided additional information on the 2024 Park Plan Proposal.

Executive Director Bechtold explained the next steps would be to firm up the plan. She explained the Citizen Task Force made the recommendation to the Executive Director to move forward with the \$13.86 2024 Park Plan Proposal with the Board to decide if synthetic turf should be included. Director Bechtold reminded the Board that synthetic turf was not included in the original plans and was added due to input from the Task Force and community engagement.

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The synthetic turf was assessed in the survey and there were concerns from an environmental and health standpoint. She explained sustainable synthetic turf options, however when exploring the costs for these products exceed our budget. Director Bechtold stated the importance of evaluating what is being installed in our parks and facilities. Bechtold stated that we need to know now if the Board is interested in moving forward with the referendum. If so, we would need to know if synthetic turf should be included.

Commissioner Posey discussed the importance of parks in her life and residents' lives. She stated that synthetic turf makes her feel uncomfortable, although she is not a qualified environmentalist, she is not in favor of synthetic anything in our parks. She stated it is not worth the environmental risk.

Commissioner Vear inquired if the synthetic turf would be removed would irrigation be added.

Director Bechtold stated we have been discussing if synthetic turf was removed, we would look at enhancing the Gordon Park soccer field (Gordon main field) with an irrigation system and restoration of the turf. Patty King stated it would be approximately \$300K for an irrigation system.

Director Bechtold recommended that if the Board decided to remove the synthetic turf the following updates would be added to the 2024 Park Plan Proposal.

- Reduce the footprints of Sedgwick Park and Gilbert Park parking lots
- Add an irrigation system to Gordon Park main soccer field
- Restore the main soccer field with grading and field maintenance
- Add the restrooms back in at Sedgwick Park
- Add a fence to Denning Park on Willow Spring Road by the new soccer field

Director Bechtold asked if there was Board consensus to move forward with the referendum being put on the November ballot and if so, would they like to move forward with or without the synthetic turf.

President Opyd stated that this is a dynamic process, and he understands why the synthetic turf was raised but feels there is a lot of negative impacts that outweigh the benefits and is not in support of synthetic turf. He would also like to see the parking lots reduced. President Opyd addressed comments from the public regarding multiple Village initiatives and waiting for the Village to fix the flooding issues before we move forward without plans. President Opyd stated that he understands the challenges with the flooding but feels the Village could take quite a bit of time to implement solutions and did not feel it would be wise for the Park District to wait. He did communicate that we are in close contact with the Village regarding partnerships for water management opportunities and would continue to keep the lines of communication open.

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Commissioner Weber inquired if this was the exact wording for the ballot language and it was explained it was just a sample and it will be fine-tuned as we continue the plans. He also stated he did not feel the synthetic turf was the best for the entire plan.

President Opyd inquired about storm water management and requirements to existing permeable amenities. Patty King from Wight & Company explained that if there is disturbance or change in the elevation to a permeable area, MWRD still requires storm water management and detention.

As the presentation and questions wrapped up the Board gave consensus to move forward with the referendum on the November 2024 ballot, and remove the synthetic turf from the plans, along with reduce the footprints of Sedgwick Park and Gilber Park parking lots. Director Bechtold discussed the possibility of removing Elm Park from the plans since the basketball court is the only amenity improvement for this park. We will evaluate if this would be a project to add back into our Capital Improvement Plan. If we need to free up some dollars this might be a consideration. Bechtold explained that we would add in an irrigation system at Gordon Park, along with restoring the natural turf soccer field, adding the restrooms back in at Sedgwick Park, the fence along Willow Springs Road at Denning Park by the soccer field, and pending budget we will continue to add items back in the plan.

Commissioner Weber inquired why the dog park was so unfavorable in the survey. Skylar Wright stated that he was not sure why it was unfavorable. Commissioner Vear stated that he was surprised as well, especially because there was a lot of passion regarding the dog park from members of the Citizen Task Force. Director Bechtold added it was surprising to her as well because it was an amenity that was ranked high in our Comprehensive Master Plan. She also stated that it might not be as high of a priority since we have started to allow dogs on leashes in our parks.

### **Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 4.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 7, 2024; Item 4.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session Meeting of May 7, 2024; Item 4.3 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of May 13, 2024; 4.4 Approval of the Financial Reports dated May 31, 2024; Item 4.5 Approval of Consolidated Vouchers for June dated June 10, 2024.

The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Weber, Opyd  
NAYES: None

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ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

**Staff Reports**

**Executive Director Jenny Bechtold**

- Director Bechtold presented her report.

**Director of Finance, Jamie Hollock**

- Director Hollock presented her report.

**Director of Recreation Kevin Miller**

- Director Miller presented his report and highlighted our new special event, Country Jam, on August 10th from 2pm to 8pm. Questions were asked and answered.

**Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger**

- Director Krueger presented his report.

**Attorney Report**

No Report

**Treasurer Report**

No Report

**Action Items**

*Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution R24-02, A Resolution to Name the Scoreboard at Sedgwick Park Field B: "Susan Bonnevier Memorial Scoreboard".*

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve Resolution R24-02, A Resolution to Name the Scoreboard at Sedgwick park Field B: "Susan Bonnevier Memorial Scoreboard". It was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Weber, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

*Discussion and/or Approval of Resolution R24-03 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings.*

Commissioner Vear made a motion to approve Resolution R24-03 Authorizing the Release and Continued Retention, Respectively, of Certain Executive Session Minutes and Authorizing the Destruction of Verbatim Recordings. The motion seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed unanimously by roll call

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vote.

AYES: Commissioners Vear, Weber, Posey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### *Discussion and/or Approval of Section Policy 234 & 242 Updates*

Director Bechtold presented memo M24-028 the updates to Policy 234 & 242. Commissioner Posey made a motion to approve Section Policy 234 & 242 as presented which was seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Weber, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

## **Board Business**

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

#### *Election/Appointment of Officers*

Commissioner Vear moved to nominate Commissioner Opyd to President, seconded by Commissioner Posey.

Commissioner Posey moved to nominate Commissioner Vear to Vice President, seconded by Commissioner Opyd.

Commissioner Vear moved to nominate Commissioner to Second Vice President, seconded by Commissioner Weber.

Commissioner Vear moved to nominate Director Bechtold to Board Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Posey.

Commissioner Weber moved to nominate Jamie Hollock, Director of Finance to Board Treasurer, seconded by Commissioner Posey.

President Opyd asked for an omnibus motion to approve Brian Opyd as Board President, Bob Vear as Vice President, Stephanie Posey as Second Vice President, Jennifer Bechtold as Board Secretary and Jamie Hollock as Board Treasurer. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Weber and seconded by Commissioner Vear.

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AYES: Commissioners Weber, Vear, Posey, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### *Discussion & Appointment of Commissioners to Committees.*

President Opyd asked for an omnibus motion to approve Commissioner Lacey and Commissioner Vear on Administrative Committee, Commissioner Opyd and Commissioner Weber on Parks and Facilities Committee and Commissioner Posey and Commissioner Weber Recreation & Cultural Affairs Committee.

The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey and seconded by Commissioner Weber.

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Weber, Vear, Opyd  
NAYES: None  
ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Administration Committee*

No report currently.

#### *Parks and Facilities Committee*

No report currently.

#### *Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee/Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee*

Commissioner Posey stated she spoke with Jan Regan from the La Grange Arts League, and they were interested in reviving the yarn bombing project in the parks.

### **Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)**

Rose Naseef 911 S. Stone Ave, La Grange, Rose thanked the Board for listening to the residents and stated she is grateful for the modifications to the 2024 Park Plan Proposal. She asked the Board to consider electrification for lawn equipment, explore opportunities for natural turf options, eliminating chemicals, stormwater management, including native plants, and playground surface options.

Linda Christenson, 131 South Edgewood, La Grange, stressed that she has never seen the parking lot full at Gilbert Park and street parking is available. She suggested we keep the basketball court and thinks the playground equipment does not need to be replaced.

Andrew Griffin, 232 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, thanked the Board for listening and stated that residents are paying attention to the details of the referendum and



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bonds. He is opposed to increasing parking lots. He believes that removing trees and expanding parking lots is backwards thinking.

Gloria Stephenson, 1510 41<sup>st</sup>, La Grange, Gloria echoed that the parking lot at Gilbert Park is empty majority of the time. She requested we allocate the funds for the parking lot to other amenities and that the basketball gets a lot of use and should not be removed.

Aarkryti Liva, 38 N Edgewood, La Grange, Aarkryti spends a lot of time at Gilbert Park and does not feel that it is outdated. She does not feel parking is a problem at Gilbert Park and an increase in the parking lot is not needed. She echoed Rose and incorporating native plants is important. She feels the dog park is low priority because dog parks are dangerous and feels restrooms at parks would be a high priority. She would also like to see a nature playscape added to the plans.

Karel Jacobs, 415 East Maple Ave, La Grange, Karel thanked the Commissioners for their time on the Board. She would encourage the Board to consider using a different firm other than Wight & Company for some of the parks if the referendum passes. She also suggested we keep the ballot language general so we can incorporate other items that the residents asked for.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Posey welcomed Commissioner Weber and Adam Kopera, our new HR & Administrative Assistant. She thanked the audience for their participation and feedback, as well as the importance of their feedback in making decisions. She thanked the staff for their hard work on the plans.

Commissioner Weber thanked everyone for their support during his first meeting and welcomed Adam Kopera. He said it was great to see residents who want to participate and share their feedback for the plans.

Commissioner Vear thanked everyone for coming out, encouraged them to continue to come out and to get out and vote.

President Opyd thanked the public for coming and sharing their ideas and it helps them make their decisions.


### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Posey moved for an adjournment at 8:18pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President

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Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary  
*Approved July 15, 2024*