

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

**JANUARY 13, 2025**

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

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Weber, Opyd  
Commissioner Lacey arrived at 6:13 P.M.

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold  
Director of Finance & HR Jamie Hollock  
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller  
GM of Parks Maintenance Larry Buckley  
HR & Administration Coordinator Madonna Giampietro

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price  
Brad Carter, Brian Suchan, Linda Pluto, Laura Seliga,  
Brian Erickson, Ray Sipla, Virginia Delaney, Jean  
O'Brien, Tish Bernhart, David Bernhart, Avel Rodriguez,  
Gerald Hilger, Sharon Cooke, Dan Magiera, Marian Honel-  
Wilson, Rose Naseef, and John Pluto

President Opyd welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any announcements or changes to the agenda and there were none.

**Communications, Presentations & Declarations**

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

President Opyd mentioned that public comments are limited to three minutes and commentors should say their name and address.

John Pluto, 718 East Ave, La Grange, shared concerns with the Sedgwick Park Plan Proposal regarding flooding issues especially around the 49<sup>th</sup> street section of Sedgwick Park.

Jean O'Brien, 701 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, asked the Park District board to support the Sedgwick Park area residents in expressing their concerns regarding IDOT regarding road construction.

Dan Magiera, 701 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, expressed concerns about the location

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of the proposed multipurpose court (basketball court) at Sedgwick Park.

Virginia Delaney, 730 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, agreed with previous commentors about not wanting the proposed multipurpose court to be located on the 49<sup>th</sup> Street end of Sedgwick Park. She stated that street parking in that area is already an issue.

Tish Bernhart, 755 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, Sedgwick area resident supported previous speakers in their concerns about the location of the proposed multipurpose court at Sedgwick Park, the flooding issues, and the traffic pattern due to road construction on East Ave.

Marian Honel-Wilson, 950 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, President of the Community Diversity Group, La Grange mentioned, the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Building Inclusive Community Conference and the Community Diversity Group Scholarship program for kids in grades K-7<sup>th</sup> grades to help with the cost of summer programs.

Laura Seliga, 700 East Ave, La Grange, supported previous speakers about not wanting the proposed multipurpose (basketball) court on the 49<sup>th</sup> side of Sedgwick. She also said that it is a beautiful park and has been pleased with the development of the park since she moved to the area.

Linda Pluto, 718 East Ave, La Grange, stated that she would like signs saying “Drive like your kids play here” around the park area as a safety precaution for speeding cars. She also supported the previous speakers regarding the traffic issues around Sedgwick Park.

Sharon Cook, 729 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, agreed with previous commentors’ concerns regarding the water issues at Sedgwick Park, the location of the proposed multipurpose court at 49<sup>th</sup> Street, and the traffic/parking issues.

### **Consent Agenda**

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 9, 2024; Item 3.2 Approval of the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing Minutes of December 9, 2024; Item 3.3 Approval of the Financial Reports dated December 31, 2024; and Item 3.4 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for January dated January 13, 2025. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Staff Reports**

**Executive Director Jennifer Bechtold**

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- Director Bechtold presented her report.

### **Finance & Human Resources Jamie Hollock**

- Director Hollock presented her report.

### **Director of Recreation Kevin Miller**

Director Miller presented his report and answered questions from the Commissioners.

### **Parks & Maintenance Larry Buckley**

- General Manager Buckley presented his report.

### **Attorney Report**

None

### **Treasurer Report**

None

### **Action Items**

#### *Discussion and/or Approval of Referendum Site Plans and Schedule*

Director Bechtold stated that the site plans would need to be approved by the board tonight to hit the timelines and meet the spenddown requirements. She introduced the proposed plans including Group A, 2025 construction, which includes: the Community Center, Denning Park (without the soccer field), Elm Park, Gordon Park (without the dog park), Rotary Centennial Park, Spring Park, and the facilities at the Community Center, Gilbert and Sedgwick. Group B will include the soccer field at Denning Park, Gilbert Park, Gordon Park (the dog park) and Sedgwick Park.

Director Bechtold explained that for the locations in Group A, staff is looking to relocate programs/renters and planning accordingly. Some fields could be closed up to a year or more with construction. Space is going to be limited for the affiliate groups. She added that we have been in contact with the Village of La Grange and have been made aware that special use permits might be required for some parks. Each plan was presented and approved as discussed.

**Community Center-** No changes to the plans- All commissioners agreed to move forward with these plans as presented.

**Denning Park-** Soccer field left out of Group A, but will be added to Group B. No changes to the plans. All commissioners agreed to move forward with these plans as presented.

**Elm Park-** Commissioner Posey inquired about including some type of barrier on the sledding hill.. Director Bechtold explore this suggestion.

All commissioners agreed to move forward with the plans for Elm as presented.

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**Gilbert-** There was one item that needed to be finalized, Item 12, the multigenerational game element. Director Bechtold explained that staff would like to include a Bocce court in this plan.

All commissioners agreed to move forward with these plans including the Bocce Ball courts as the multigenerational game element.

**Gordon Park-** Director Bechtold stated that the handball group has reached out and asked for more shade by the handball courts. She explained that in speaking with Wight, we can repurpose the old smaller bandshell that is getting replaced by moving the smaller shelter closer to the handball courts. The handball group is also looking to add another cement wall court and a shed for their Christmas tree sale. Director Bechtold will advise the handball group that for the additional court and shed, they will need to put together a proposal to present to the board and that if the projects are approved, they would need to be funded by the group, not the Park District.

Director Bechtold added that we have received concerns from residents and affiliates about the location of the dog park at Gordon Park. A couple of alternative locations which may have potential for a dog park are Sedgwick or Denning Park. Staff are exploring removing the dog park from the plans and adding it as an alternative until a better location for a dog park is determined. After discussing the dog park concerns, it was decided to keep the dog park in Group B to give more time to determine which location, if any, would be best for a dog park.

Director Bechtold did inform the Board that we will not hold Country Jam in 2025 due to the construction at Gordon Park.

All commissioners agreed on moving forward with the Gordon Park plans to include repurposing the existing bandshell, moving it closer to the handball courts, and keeping the dog park as part of Group B construction schedule to give more time to determine the best location, or if the dog park will be removed.

**Rotary Centennial Park-** Per executive director Bechtold, the only change to the Rotary Park plans was to push the playground a bit north due to the tree lines and the original location plans being in critical root zones. Director Bechtold also explained how the neighboring home's driveway is in our property line. We are not aware of any previous arrangements regarding this property line issue. In a discussion with our legal team, it was determined that we can create an easement agreement to allow the neighbor to use the property for the life of the garage. Once the useful life of the garage is up and being rebuilt, the easement agreement would be terminated.

All commissioners agreed to move forward with these plans as presented and working with legal counsel to implement an easement agreement which the

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Board would need to approve at a future meeting.

**Sedgwick Park-** Executive director Bechtold advised that staff have spoken with Wight about relocating the multipurpose (basketball) court away from 49<sup>th</sup> to the northeast end of the park. She indicated that it can be relocated there, however, per Wight, moving the court to this location would require the removal of 4-7 trees and this area of the park would require a 2-3 foot retaining wall on the south and east sides of the court. Another point brought up by executive director Bechtold was that this proposed new location for the multipurpose court is one of the areas being explored for the dog park.

Commissioner Vear questioned why trees would have to be removed if the proposed court is moved to this new location, and why Wight set the court so far back from the parking lot. Director Bechtold explained that the information provided to her from Wight showed this placement and trusts Wight placed it in the best location based on grading, set-back requirements and removing the least number of trees.

There was discussion on the current usage of the parking lot near 47<sup>th</sup> Street, and how the pickleball courts will increase the usage of the lot. There was also discussion about what trees would need to be removed.

Director Bechtold stated that Sedgwick Park construction is set for Group B but wanted to get approval for plans as soon as possible because it will take a little more time to secure the permits with the Village, as courts might require special use permits and more time would be required to obtain the MWRD permit. She added that she would be happy to get more information from Wight if the board would like more information for them to be able to decide at the next board meeting regarding the multipurpose court location.

Commissioner Weber proposed pushing the vote for Sedgwick Park until the next meeting as there is still some concern about the multipurpose court. He questioned why the courts are being proposed to move from where they are currently. Director Bechtold answered that the thought process is to move it near the volleyball courts to keep like amenities near each other and to keep passive green space open. Director Bechtold stated that she would get more proposals and drawings for the February meeting.

Commissioner Weber also inquired about permeable pavers. Commissioner Vear and President Opyd explained that we have applied for two grants for permeable pavers but we did not receive the grants. President Opyd explained that pavers are significantly more expensive than asphalt and the District does not have the budget to install permeable pavers in the parking lots.

Commissioner Posey stated she is conflicted with the options for the location of the multi-sport court but wants to ensure we stay on target to meet the spenddown requirements. She stated compromises may need to be made.

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Director Bechtold explained that the last option would be to take the multipurpose court out completely. Commissioner Vear stated that if trees had to be removed to relocate the multisport court to the northeast side he may not be as in favor of the relocation. He proposed moving forward with approval for the Sedgwick plans in their entirety but hold the multicourt decision until next month.

Commissioner Posey asked if the current basketball courts are not being utilized does the community really want courts at this location. Director Bechtold responded that basketball courts were a high priority in our recent community survey.

Commissioner Opyd stated that he was not in favor of removing the multisport court, as he wants to ensure all residents have access to basketball/multisport courts that cannot afford to have a basketball hoop at their home.

All commissioners agreed to move forward with the plans for Sedgwick Park, with the exception of the decision on the location of the multipurpose court being moved to next month.

**Spring Park-** All commissioners agreed to move forward with the plans for the park with no changes as presented.

Director Bechtold asked for a motion to approve the referendum site plans and schedule as presented with the following changes, Gilbert Park to have bocce courts added as the multigenerational element, Rotary to have an easement agreement prepared for the neighbor, Gordon to have the bandshell repurposed and moved closer to the handball courts, and and with the Sedgwick multisport court and Gordon dog park's locations to be explored further. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear and seconded by Commissioner Posey, which passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

### **Board Business**

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **New Business**

None

### **Committee Reports**

#### *Administration Committee*

No report at this time.

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### *Parks and Facilities Committee*

No report at this time.

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

No report at this time.

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

Jean O'Brien, 701 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, does not want to impede access to the multipurpose court or other amenities by removing them. Appreciates the discussion of courts at Sedgwick and supports it if it is a fiscally and environmentally sound decision.

Brian Suchan, 730 East Ave, La Grange, asked if the soccer field at Sedgwick has to be as big as presented and can the multipurpose court be moved near the soccer field and then still have room to have a dog park.

Dan Magiera, 701 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, does not think the parking lot will be full on the northeast side of the park if the multipurpose court is located there. He also hopes that the argument that the new area for the multipurpose court would be too far away from the volleyball courts is not considered.

New speaker-Did not state name or address, felt that the existing location for the courts is where it would benefit parents who have multiple children using different amenities like the playground, preschool, and the courts. However, she rationalized that if the courts are moved, the existing area can be used for dog park.

New speaker- Did not state name or address, asked why not fix up current courts instead of moving location.

Rose Naseef, 911 S. Stone, La Grange, stated that if we keep the court where it is currently, she suggested that would probably make the residents on that side come out with concerns about that location too. She would rather have a dog park at Gordon where there are more trees. Rose expressed her concerns about adding concrete regarding the Handball group adding a court and/or shed. She also would like to see the Park District to continue trying for permeable pavers for parking lots.

Brian Erickson, 725 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, La Grange, said he is not about pro or con basketball, he is against congestion all on one end of the park.

### **Board Comments**

Commissioner Weber thanked everyone for their comments. He mentioned that he was not aware of all the traffic issues around the Sedgwick Park area, and

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that while the Park District cannot do too much as it is not a Park District project, he certainly would endorse and support the neighbors' efforts with the Village/IDOT.

Commissioner Posey explained how the referendum and the ensuing park improvements have been a massive undertaking that staff have been working on for years. She is happy to be part of this process and a witness of what we are accomplishing as a community.

Commissioner Lacey was excited to see people coming out to the meeting working together with the Park District to get things done in a way that is beneficial for the community.

Commissioner Vear thanked the community members for being at the meeting, it was a great show of community and purpose. He also congratulated Director Bechtold and the staff on receiving another OSLAD grant.

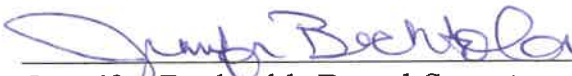
President Opyd agreed that the traffic issue is concerning, and he would support any efforts with IDOT. He also wanted to share that the decisions of the board are difficult to make on the spot as they are getting information, and he does appreciate the feedback from those in attendance. He acknowledged that the job of the board is to make the best decision for the entire community. He thanked the staff again for their efforts in getting another OSLAD grant

President Opyd announced that there would be no executive session tonight and asked for a motion to adjourn.

### **Adjournment**

President Opyd moved for adjournment at 7:52 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Weber and passed unanimously by voice vote.

  
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Brian Opyd, President

  
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Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary  
*Approved February 10, 2025*