

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

MARCH 11, 2024

President Opyd called the meeting to order at 6:11 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Chvatal, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller
Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger
Business Services Coordinator Natalie Fakelmann
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Derke Price
Marian Honel-Wilson, Rose Naseef, Michael Buttron

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

None

Presentation by La Grange Little League Regarding Naming Rights

Michael Buttron introduced himself as the president of La Grange Little League. He expressed thanks for the District's involvement in the facility improvements that have been done since he became president.

He explained that Susan Bonnevier was a La Grange Park resident whose kids attended St. Francis Xavier and she passed away in 2021. For 40 years she watched her sons and grandchildren play baseball and loved the time she spent at La Grange Little League games. She made a large donation to Little League to improve facilities and make it a better place. In recognition of her 40 years of watching games Little League would like to name a field after Susan and is asking the Board if there are any avenues to follow to name something on her behalf at Sedgwick Park.

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Commissioner Chvatal asked if the scoreboard that was installed belongs to Little League. Michael indicated that it was but there are no names on it. Director Bechtold clarified that per our agreement once Little League puts something in at the park it is considered a donation to the Park District.

Commissioner Posey stated that regardless of what is decided she acknowledges the dedication of Ms. Bonnevier and commends Little League for recognizing it. Michael stated that it is something that their previous board did not do. Commissioner Vear inquired if the family's approval was obtained. Michael indicated that he spoke to her son and explained the process so far and asked for his permission to move forward. He was extremely humbled and gave his blessing and said he would be happy with a bench. Commissioner Chvatal thanked Michael for his attendance and presentation at the meeting.

Michael stated that he spoke with Jenny and hopes to have Park District commissioners attend their meetings. They have no complaints and the parents are happy.

Consent Agenda

President Opyd asked for a motion to approve Item 3.1 Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 12, 2024; Item 3.2 Approval of the Executive Session Meeting of February 12, 2024; Item 3.3 Approval of the Financial Reports dated February 29, 2024; and Item 3.4 Approval of the Consolidated Vouchers for March dated March 11, 2024.

The motion was so moved by Commissioner Vear, seconded by Commissioner Posey, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Staff Reports

Executive Director Jenny Bechtold

- Director Bechtold stated that SEI emails came out this morning for Cook County and statements can now be submitted. The deadline is May 1st.
- Jenny stated that she had updates to provide to the 2024 park improvement proposals that have been presented. She thanked the commissioners that attended the task force meetings. The feedback received was considered and the plans were adjusted, resulting in a 13.68 million bond proposal. The group was passionate about adding a full synthetic turf field which increases the cost by 1.5 million. As a result, we had to remove items including the pergola structure at the Community Center, but we will keep the roll-up door. The Denning restrooms, storywalk trail, and boardwalk were eliminated. At Gilbert the existing T-ball backstop will be utilized, and at Gordon the dog park

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water access will be removed and the synthetic field added. The existing senior field lighting will remain at Sedgwick and the stand-alone restrooms removed. There are no changes at Elm and Spring parks. The next step will be a mailer going out on Monday with the bond proposal and informational attachment. There are plenty of opportunities for resident feedback planned with three outreach meetings to be held at the recreation center on April 17th at 5:30 pm, April 27th at 9 am, and May 6th at 6:30 pm. The letter states that if any organization would like us to come to a meeting we will do a presentation, and we are reaching out to affiliates and other groups to offer presentations at their locations. The task force will make its recommendations at the next meeting on May 22nd.

Commissioner Posey suggested that we also contact the La Grange Newcomers and Neighbors group.

- Director Bechtold reported that today she spoke with Makaela, the chief of staff for Commissioner Frank Aguilera. Wednesday's meeting for the paid leave ordinance has been moved up to tomorrow and, unfortunately, we lost some of our support. They have pivoted from an amendment to a postponement for park districts and school districts to January 1, 2025. She has a conflict with the revised meeting date and cannot attend but Makaela indicated that there would be a lot of support in attendance from park districts. There is time before January 1st to do more work to secure an exemption for park districts and school districts. She will keep the Board posted if there is a vote tomorrow. Jenny stated that we have already done our tax levies and budget and have not had time to prepare for this. In addition to the financial impact, it involves complicated tracking. Anybody that works part-time gets 1 hour of vacation for every 40 hours worked, and if they leave and come back within 12 months we have to restart it. This will require tracking for seasonal staff.
- Jenny stated that she received a call from Mike of the Y Men's Club. They sell Christmas trees each year at the handball courts and are ready to do some work. They want to move the container on the right side behind the handball courts, install a gazebo, and build another 20x40 paved court to the west with no sides. She told him that we are developing plans and asked him if it could wait until we see where our plans go with the referendum. Now that we are putting in a full turf field at Gordon there are also detention concerns. They would like an answer within a year and she asked the Board for their feedback.

President Opyd stated that he is concerned about detention for the turf field and their project. He loves the idea of expanding the handball courts, but we need additional information regarding detention. Jenny responded that she spoke with Wight and until our plans are finalized it is difficult to know. If we do not move forward with the referendum or if it fails, there may be an

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opportunity to consider this. We appreciate that they want to do this and would like to entertain it, but she is concerned with everything else going on. Commissioners Chvatal and Posey agreed with waiting and Commissioner Vear abstained from an opinion.

Commissioner Chvatal inquired if we have an agreement with their group. Commissioner Vear stated that there have been different plans proposed over the years including a new structure and a new court, and this is their third ask. Mike is president of the Y Men's Club and is also involved in the handball group. Jenny stated they would have to fundraise to do this. President Opyd added that there are only two of these facilities in the Chicago area so it is always busy there.

- Jenny reported that the W2s were finally corrected and were issued on Friday.
- She stated that she will be out of the office next week with limited availability.

Director of Recreation Kevin Miller

- Director Miller reported that in-house basketball is ending this weekend and travel ball ends next week.
- Kevin stated that the fitness center is growing and doing well.
- He reported that Brandon is working on transitioning dance programs in-house.
- He stated that we held a job fair yesterday from 1-3 pm and had a good turnout with approximately 75 people in attendance. There are 10-15 people that we are following up with for BASE and camp.
- Kevin reported that the egg hunts are coming up at the end of the month.
- Resident registration for day camps was last week and non-resident registration begins this week. There were a couple of issues but overall it went smoothly, and we are at 77% capacity at all five sites.
- He stated that he made an offer to a candidate for the athletic supervisor position.

President Opyd asked if bringing the dance program in-house means that the instructor would be on our staff and whether they would do programming beyond dance classes. Kevin responded that it would be the same as preschool where we hire staff and they are under our payroll. He explained that Brandon will develop and oversee the program and hiring. There is a lot of competition so it will not be massive. He would start low key with 3-4 classes and build from there. Part-time instructors will teach ballet, hip hop, tap, and jazz.

Commissioner Vear inquired whether lowering the rates would increase rentals in rooms with lesser use, such as rooms 109, 112 and 102. Kevin stated that 102 is a small room and rentals normally want space for 50+ people. Rentals were down last year because of the parking lot, and now we are low on

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custodial staff so have had to scale back, but we are planning to go back up. Jenny added that rooms 105/106 can be combined for a larger rental but half the room may be rented for cost savings, and the same can be done for rooms 108/109.

Director of Parks Maintenance Eric Krueger

- Director Krueger reported that they installed tennis nets at the courts today and will work on the nets at the volleyball courts tomorrow.
- Eric stated that he and Jenny are working on the Stone Park playground plans for the 2024-25 capital budget.
- More people are out and about so they have been performing more clean-up at the parks.
- He reported that staff are inspecting playgrounds.
- Eric stated that they are filling holes with topsoil and seeding at the athletic fields and that they rolled the fields this week.

Commissioner Posey stated that a parent commented that they were surprised and their child upset that the slide was shut down at Stone Park. She is glad to hear that work is in process and asked if we have posted in the park that it is being improved. Jenny stated that we have talked about it but considered that it may draw more attention. It will be posted soon as the project progresses. This project is not under Wight, and we are working with vendors to get the best pricing. The goal is to present three of the plans at next month's meeting, seek public input and hold a community meeting, and then seek Board approval in May.

Attorney Report

Attorney Price had no report at this time.

Treasurer Report

Director Bechtold stated that there were no updates.

Action Items

Discussion and/or Approval of the Agreement between the Park District of La Grange and La Grange Babe Ruth

Director Bechtold stated that this has been discussed in previous meetings and a redlined version and clean copy are in the packets. She reported that we are moving into a rental structure with Babe Ruth versus them investing in the fields. They can put money in the fields but we will be doing all the work except for the work Babe Ruth will perform on game days. Director Miller concurred that they are renting and we will do the heavy lifting to maintain the fields, but they must be good stewards and rake the fields on game days.

President Opyd inquired whether we have the equipment necessary to maintain the fields. Director Krueger responded that we have some and he has ordered a couple additional items. Director Bechtold added that we have second round

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interviews this week for the hiring of an athletic field specialist that can take on this extra work. Commissioner Vear asked if the position was full-time and if it could be outsourced. Jenny responded that it is full-time and the job description includes additional duties in other seasons. She stated that Babe Ruth gave us their approval so we are in a good spot to move forward.

Commissioner Posey motioned to approve the agreement between the Park District of La Grange and La Grange Babe Ruth. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Discussion and/or Approval of the Intergovernmental Agreement with Countryside to Determine Partnership Continuation

Director Bechtold reported that per the Board's direction last month we asked Countryside if they could close the fields when appropriate and maintain them to the affiliates' standards. Countryside wants to keep the agreement intact and when she asked them what maintenance and closures will look like, they said they do not have staff to do this and would expect the affiliates to do it and direct people to their website. They stated they will restore the fields three times during the season and assured us their parks department do an excellent job, but could not provide a description of the work. Eric completed a write-up of what we do and we sent it to them asking for details on the restoration work they will do three times a year but they have not responded.

President Opyd referenced section 6 on page 4 of the contract which details Countryside's responsibilities including (a) Flagg Creek benefits for us, (b) residents rates granted to us for their programs, and (c) agreements with District 105. He asked if we are receiving any of these benefits and Director Bechtold responded that we are not, except for use of the soccer field at Ideal School. We also receive no benefits from item (d) agreements with other entities. President Opyd referenced section 5 detailing the Park District's responsibilities and confirmed that we provide Countryside with (a) resident rates, (b) handle all registration, and (d) include them in our program guide. (c) Pony Tail softball does not exist and (e) summer camp is not being run in Countryside. He stated that we are not receiving the benefits and does not know why we are doing this.

Director Bechtold stated that we expressed the Board's words to Countryside after the last board meeting, and they said they will only work on the fields before the season and three times during the season, which is concerning. Commissioner Posey added that the only reason we are struggling with this now is the fact that our affiliates use the park heavily. She questioned the dollar amount of fees we would lose if we terminated the agreement. Director

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Miller responded that it is approximately \$15,000 per year, but what gets lost is the administrative time of full-time staff dealing with this. He put in 60 hours of time on scheduling for spring from January through March. He stated that Countryside is telling the groups that we are getting the fees but not giving back to them.

Commissioner Vear reported that he knows of one user group that does not want us involved and prefers to go through Countryside. The agreement contains old items that are not accurate and, if nothing else, needs to be redone. He asked who the biggest users of our programs and fitness center were. Director Miller answered that La Grange Park and Brookfield are high users and the lowest user is Countryside. Jenny added that their resident discount only amounted to \$1,500 in the last year.

Commissioner Posey stated that she is struggling to see how this makes sense and what Countryside is getting. Director Miller responded that they get us as their recreation department with resident rates. Director Bechtold added that their vision is for us to act as their recreation department. They had one and it was not successful so they transitioned to us. Their head administrator said they do not want to be in the business of parks and recreation.

Commissioner Vear motioned to discontinue the current contract with Countryside as it stands and give them a 90-day notice. Commissioner Posey seconded the motion.

Prior to the vote Commissioner Posey stated that she would like it on the record that we spent months reaching out and trying hard to compromise and develop an agreement in recognition of the relationships we have with our affiliates to help both them and Countryside. She is surprised there has been no movement from Countryside to meet anywhere in between, and they have left us without choice. It is difficult for her to second this motion as a soccer parent who takes her kids there on a regular basis and as an official struggling with how to make this work without impacting our staff. The residents of La Grange and the District are not benefiting, and safety is also an issue.

Commissioner Chvatal stated that we have been going back and forth for months and we are the only one at the negotiating table; it is not a priority for them. President Opyd concurred with everything and stated he is disappointed that we cannot honor this agreement in a way that benefits both parties and the kids that play there.

The motion passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Chvatal, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Lacey

Discussion and/or Approval of Disbursement of Endless Summerfest Funds to

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La Grange Business Association

Director Bechtold stated that Endless Summerfest was a partnership with LGBA, and since the decision was made to not move forward they requested disbursement of the funds. Selden Fox audited the account and she sent it to LGBA. She did not hear back from LGBA so assumes they are fine with it. She stated a motion from the Board is needed to distribute \$34,038.59 to LGBA and then close the account at Republic Bank.

Commissioner Vear inquired if the District would allocate its share to a new event. Director Bechtold stated that the new event is already included in this year's budget and the funds will be moved into one of our other accounts with some of it used to pay bills.

Commissioner Chvatal moved to approve disbursement of Endless Summerfest funds to La Grange Business Association and close the account at Republic Bank. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vear and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

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

Board Business

Old Business

None

New Business

First Reading of the General Operations Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, Allowing the Budget to be Put on Display (Minimum 30-Day Requirement)

Director Bechtold referenced the budget packet and stated that the beginning sections provide information on how the budget is set up and jumped ahead to page 10.

President Opyd asked if there was a reason to keep the Paving & Lighting Fund. Jenny replied that we are looking at rolling it into the General Fund for next year in addition to rolling several smaller funds. We can move Liability and Audit, but the Special Recreation Fund must remain. We have held off this year because we do not have a finance department head and she would rather have someone in place dedicated to making those moves.

Director Bechtold reviewed the fund balance projections on page 10. She stated that the General Fund is in a negative balance but it is projected to make \$280,000 and we are transferring out \$300,000 to Capital. The fund balance is projected to be over 1 million dollars at the end of 2025. The remaining non-major funds are in the positive except for the last five. These funds are more

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restrictive and we are trying to draw down these fund balances. When we get them in the General Fund we can do more with that money. The Capital Projects Fund is in the negative but will be fine at the end of the fiscal year.

Director Bechtold explained that staff completed a narrative on anything that had a 5% or higher increase or decrease. We probably should have raised the threshold because there are increased costs on almost everything, but in the interest of transparency we proceeded with that.

Director Bechtold reviewed the Administrative Budget line items in detail and asked if the Board had any questions. Commissioner Vear asked why the pension expense included non-IMRF employees. Jenny stated that we are offering the benefit to more part-time employees in our struggle to retain reliable staff and it is an easier calculation.

Director Miller reviewed the budget for the BASE program in detail and cited increased capacity at Cossitt due to more space being provided by the school. President Opyd questioned whether the purchase of two dishwashers and two stoves were new or replacements. Kevin explained that they are replacement appliances. Staff members cook at the schools and the dishwashers are easier than hand washing due to the high number of kids. Jenny added that our agreement allows us to remove them if we discontinue the program.

Director Miller reviewed the budget for the Fitness Center in detail and cited a revenue increase of \$171,000 based on current numbers and fee increases. President Opyd asked if we are at or below the market cost in our area with the new 2025 rates and if we remain cost effective for our community. Kevin stated that we are and that this is only the second increase since opening the facility.

Director Miller reviewed the budget for Recreation/Marketing in detail. He highlighted the increase in summer camp revenue and stated that we maxed out during the first 15 minutes of registration and hope to accommodate additional children. Director Bechtold noted the positive bottom line of \$475,151.

Director Bechtold reviewed the Facilities & Maintenance Budget in detail. She explained that this is a non-revenue generating department and, therefore, it operates at a loss.

Director Bechtold referenced the full budget, excluding capital projects, which combines all the funds together and has a bottom line of \$233,668, with a revenue analysis by fund. Commissioner Vear pointed out that it looks like we have a deficit on pages 35-36 but removing the capital results in a positive \$233,668.

Discussion of the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

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Director Bechtold explained that for the Capital Budget we tried to keep items at \$10,000 or higher. The total revenue is \$1,277,956 in fiscal year 2024-25 and the anticipated fund balance is \$1,158,779 which together will fund the \$2,450,000 capital repairs project. She noted that the last year of each fiscal year is the schedule year in the document.

Director Bechtold referenced page 38 which includes the project list. The total revenue of \$1,177,956 includes bond proceeds, transfers in, and other sources, which is the OSLAD grant. She reviewed the project line items and stated that the \$150,000 contingency is for any unforeseen parking lot expenses. The capital projects total \$2,415,000 and though it appears there is a deficit, the use of the anticipated capital reserves of \$1,158,779 will leave approximately \$21,000 in the Capital Fund.

Director Bechtold reviewed the drafts of the capital projects for the next four years and stated that this is preliminary planning with the referendum process. If we do not get the referendum then staff will prioritize and push items back. President Opyd thanked Jenny for the process that has evolved in the last two years for long term planning and stated it is helpful that we have our eye on what is coming.

Director Bechtold stated that the next item in the packet is the annual budget and appropriation ordinance. The ordinance details the amounts to be budgeted which total \$9,646,415 and the amounts to be appropriated which total \$10,254,438.

Commissioner Vear thanked Jenny and the staff for their work on the budget process.

Reminder of Public Hearing Meeting to be Held on April 15, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. Prior to the April Board Meeting (IMPORTANT NOTICE: The April board meeting will be held at the Community Center, 200 S. Washington Ave., La Grange, IL)
President Opyd reminded everyone of the Public Hearing Meeting to be held on April 15, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. prior to the April board meeting at the Community Center, 200 S. Washington Ave., La Grange, IL. He added that it is a good opportunity for the public to visit us at the Community Center.

Discussion and/or Approval for La Grange Little League Naming Rights Request
Director Bechtold stated that Michael Buttron from La Grange Little League made his presentation earlier this evening and that updates to this policy were approved at last month's board meeting. She reported that she pulled information and found that Gordon Park is named after a commissioner who served 18 years from 1929-1947, and Sedgwick Park is named after a commissioner in place for 23 years from 1946-1969. There is also a memorial for Anne Marcisz at Elm Park. She was our treasurer from 1984-1999 for 15 years. Claudia Galla, our park operations manager, informed her that Anne

and her husband were community oriented and did a lot of work for the Village of La Grange and a previous garden at Denning Park. Prairie Path donated the pavers for the memorial in recognition of their service.

Jenny stated that two fields at Gilbert Park were also dedicated to John Yelnick and Bob Burson on June 19th, but the records do not contain the year. Commissioner Vear asked if the Park District named the fields. Jenny stated that the only information she has stated that the Park District and La Grange Little League invite you to a dedication ceremony and gave some history on each man. She will need to do further research on this.

Commissioner Posey stated that the request being considered is from Little League, whom we have an agreement with, to name a field. It is our field but they put money into it over time. This is someone that has been a supporter of Little League and sports, and it is in line with our mission as a park district. She stated that this is different from naming a park after a commissioner and does not see that it is a requirement to be an elected official. It is more in line with our mission of public parks for a citizen to be honored. In looking at our policy we can put a time limit on it so it is not in perpetuity. If there is a concern regarding permanency we can put an end date on the naming. She likes the aspect of goodwill to Little League and is comfortable with naming the field.

Commissioner Vear asked what the sign says that names the Babe Ruth field. Director Miller responded that there is a sign which names the field [after Fritz Ploegman]. Commissioner Chvatal stated that he is hesitant to open the books to an affiliate to name something and would like to hear more information on other individuals. Director Bechtold read the information on the Gilbert fields which were named:

Gilbert Park Field Dedications

The Park District of LaGrange and LaGrange Little League invite you to attend a dedication ceremony at Gilbert Park this Saturday, June 19 at 11:00 a.m. The Park District of LaGrange and LaGrange Little League are dedicating the two baseball fields at Gilbert Park. The beautiful new fields at Gilbert Park were put in last year by PDLG and LGLL.

The fields are being dedicated in honor of John Yelnick and Bob Burson. John Yelnick lived at 105 North Peck, two blocks from Gibert Park. Mr. Yelnick was a sponsor of LGLL teams for many years and was also a youth sports coach. He held practices for his teams at the north end of Gilbert Park. He started a pig roast fundraiser at St. Francis Xavier that now bears his name, over 30 years after he started it with two pigs on a spit in the parking lot of the school. The only thing bigger than the smile of this mountain of a man was his heart. He felt all kids should be given a chance to play sports and he cared deeply for the children in our community.

Bob Burson coached football and baseball at LTHS where he was a physical education teacher. He lived on Poplar, two blocks from Gilbert Park. During the summers he was in charge of the LaGrange Parks and Recreation Department's (now the PDLG) summer recreation programs. He was the head of Big Ten referees. Bob Burson inspired his players to give it their all, yet he was quick to remind his players when the breaks didn't go their way, "Remember, it's only a game." A wonderful perspective to instill in children involved in youth sports.

The dedication ceremony Saturday begins at 11:00 a.m. Following the dedication ceremony, the Tball players in LGLL will then each play one inning of baseball. Please join us for this fun and special day.

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Commissioner Vear stated that Yelnick was his coach in grade school and Bursen was at LTHS when he was there, and they are both good people. He is not against naming a field but we should be careful with setting a precedent. He knows of a recent 2 million dollar donation made to LTHS by the family of a star softball player and they had a field named.

Commissioner Chvatal stated the person being considered loved to watch baseball and left a donation to La Grange Little League and questioned whether you give a donation and get a field. There are others with years of service, and this is a donation to an affiliate. He has nothing against naming but it should be prestigious by taking baseball to the next level. It would be the Park District naming the field, not Little League. The fields named after commissioners had years of service to the Park District, but he is thrown by the naming at Gilbert. Director Bechtold stated that the information she provided is for perspective as to what was done in the past.

Commissioner Chvatal suggested that Little League be encouraged to install a memorial bench which is more in line with watching baseball. Commissioner Vear agreed with proposing something like that and see if they agree to it. He recommended that a search of the woman's history be done for due diligence. President Opyd also expressed whether we would be setting a precedent and raised the scenario of the Celtics offering to spend \$20,000 on soccer goals and how we would respond if they requesting naming rights. He is not opposed but a donation to another 501(c) gets complicated. Naming something after Mrs. Bonnevier makes sense, but he is not sure if it should be a field, bench or scoreboard.

Commissioner Chvatal stated that if a bench was purchased the cost would belong to Little League. He added that naming a field is a big deal and requires a lot of thought, and we should tell them our thoughts and have them come back; we do not need to vote yet. Commissioner Vear agreed with staff going back to see if they are open to an alternative to a field. Director Bechtold stated that she thinks they are open to anything, and it should be what the Board is comfortable with. We have 60 days and we can discuss it again in April or May.

Commissioner Posey stated that we have talked about how donation amounts, but our policy does not require a donation. Our policy honors outstanding service to the community, and those requests can come from anyone. She encouraged taking a monetary donation out of it and consider if achievement and service have been demonstrated to us. Commissioner Chvatal questioned if this person would be nominated without a donation and President Opyd agreed it makes sense to look at that.

President Opyd stated that Little League has been a good partner and put a lot of cash and equity into the fields. He suggested a follow up conversation and a more solidified proposal in April, clarifying if the nomination would stand

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without a donation. Commissioner Chvatal agreed and added that Little League shows up for our meetings, and we have a dialogue with them. Commissioner Vear requested that we ask them if an alternative would be appropriate and put it to them to suggest a bench, bleachers or something else.

President Opyd stated that there was consensus to table the topic and revisit it next month.

Committee Reports

Administration Committee

Commissioner Vear reported that the committee met regarding budget financials and it went well.

Parks and Facilities Committee

No report at this time.

Recreation & Cultural Programming Committee/Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Posey reported that the committee will schedule a meeting soon.

Public Comments (Board Manual Section #152)

Rose Naseef, 911 S. Stone, La Grange, stated that she appreciates the conversation. She is not a fan of naming for donations and Little League is a subset, which opens up a lot of thoughts on what is for sale. She wrote to the Board regarding the process on the parks and has talked to people on the task force and heard about the ideas. She was involved in the Waiola Park discussion and felt the plans were not initially what the local residents wanted, though they were revised. She is concerned about this because it sounds similar to the Waiola process with the same consultant who did not do a good job laying out the Waiola Park process. She is not on the task force but has heard that the first meeting included a lot to consider for members. She supports increased funding for parks but does not want to see a lot of development. She would like to see ball fields upgraded and a plan to include trees which reduce the urban heat island effect. There is so much development on residential properties that we only have significant trees on the parkways and in the parks. We also need plans for drainage. A long time ago the parks had more room for football and lacrosse and other activities. She is in favor of purchasing land, expanding land, and restoring land and integrating it so it is not for single use, and including native plants and pollinators. She added that the new parking lot could have had curb cuts to redirect water away from storm sewers. Flooding is a local and global issue. She stated naming things for someone that makes a donation is self-aggrandizing and donations should be made because the person places value on something. She urged the District to look beyond the money that people bring in.

Board Comments

Commissioner Posey thanked staff for spending time on the detailed budget analysis and proposal, especially while short-staffed. It was very helpful and was well done.

Commissioner Chvatal agreed and thanked staff. He stated the budget was easy to follow going through the increases and decreases to see where tax dollars are going. It is great that it is on the website so that the community can follow it as well.

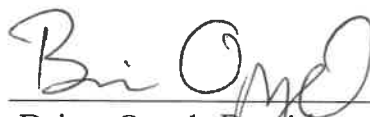
Commissioner Vear echoed thanks to the staff for the budget. He stated that he attended the two committee meetings which were interesting, and the public was very engaged. A lot of information is thrown out at meetings, and it was a curveball that artificial turf was the top item. He appreciates the input and it has been enlightening.

President Opyd thanked Eric for working and being visible out rolling the fields and making improvements. He commended staff for their work on the budget. He reiterated that the first task force meeting was a very robust conversation with a lot of ideas shared. The process is tough because we want to reflect what came from the residents in the surveys, and we have to start somewhere. He understands it can be overwhelming with all the plans for the parks and hopes the next meeting continues the dialogue. Nothing has been set yet with the park plans.


President Opyd stated it was a tough vote tonight on the Countryside topic. The agreement is from 2013 and he is willing to come back to the table to develop something that reflects where both organizations are in 2024. It is not a closed door but it is time to make an update.

Adjournment

President Opyd stated that there would be no executive session tonight and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Chvatal at 8:33 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Posey and passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jennifer Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved April 15, 2024