

**WINNETKA PARK DISTRICT
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2021 | 6:00 P.M.**

President James called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Mickey Archambault, Christina Codo, Warren James, Cynthia Rapp, Colleen Root, David Seaman

Commissioners Absent: Eric Lussen

Staff Present:: John Peterson, Executive Director; Christine Berman, Superintendent of Finance; Kyle Berg, Superintendent of Recreation; Costa Kutulas, Director of Parks and Maintenance; Molly Krohe, Marketing Brand Manager; Libby Baker, Office Associate

Audience Present: None

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

President James asked for "President's Remarks" to be added to the agenda following Staff Updates.

COMMUNICATIONS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed COVID 19 Mask Mandate and Vaccination Policies

Executive Director Peterson explained the park district is currently following the Governor's indoor mask mandate date. The next step is consideration of a vaccination mandate. He noted some businesses and other park districts have already implemented a mandate. The board shared their views and concerns, and discussed current local and state mandates, enforcement, implementation, study results, and testing protocols. Commissioners Archambault and Seaman expressed support. Commissioners Codo and Rapp suggested seeking guidance from the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) and following their recommendation. Commissioner James spoke in favor of vaccinations, but expressed concern about making it a mandate. Following questions and discussion, Executive Director Peterson made a recommendation for all full-time staff, and subsequently part-time, customer-facing staff to be vaccinated, or be required to submit a weekly negative test. Executive Director Peterson stated he is waiting on a recommendation from legal counsel. The policy will be vetted by legal counsel and presented to the board for approval, with

possible implementation by November 1.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Design of Lakefront Improvement Plans for Elder-Centennial

Director Kutulas shared a slide presentation on the Elder-Centennial Design Development Plan. The major components of the plan include breakwaters with planter pockets, a center island "T" pier and walkway, sand nourishment, increased beach area, relocated stormwater discharge, a north access route to Elder, and bluff restoration. He gave an overview of each component, highlighting improved ADA accessibility, increased shore protection, cost saving opportunities, replacement of damaged infrastructure, and increased lake views.

Following the presentation, Director Kutulas responded to questions. Commissioner James provided additional clarification on several design elements. He commented on what was learned from the Lloyd project and has helped guide the design for Elder-Centennial.

Commissioner Seaman complimented the Lloyd Beach project, stating everyone did a fantastic job; it is a tremendous success.

Dog Beach/Dog Park

Commissioner James reported on conversations with Chris Rintz, village president. There is village owned property on Tower Road at the north side of the existing pier, which the village is willing to consider as a possible location for a dog beach. Commissioner James stressed the need for community engagement and said he would like to set up a committee to advance off beach and on beach locations, as well as time-based utilization.

Commissioner Seaman shared his view that a small number of dog pass holders should not have so much dedicated lakefront. He expressed support for exploring Tower Beach for year round dog beach access, adding Tower would likely become less crowded when Elder-Centennial is completed.

Commissioner Root stated she does not see the dog beach user group as a special interest group, any more than the boat people are a user group. She continued, noting a large part of the community loves the beach. Commissioner Root stated people were truly blind-sided by the elimination of the dog beach. Commissioner Root expressed interest in being part of a committee. Commissioner James asked Commissioner Seaman if he would be interested in serving on the committee. He responded yes, unless Commissioner Lussen was. He added he would represent all sides and advocate for fairness for the entire community.

Commissioner Root suggested separating the dog beach discussion from the dog park discussion, noting a large group of people are focused on this issue and desire a dog beach.

Commissioner James recommended Commissioners Seaman and Codo meet with the Caucus Council, Randy Whitchurch, and Kristin Kalter to address the survey results related to dogs. Commissioner James asked Commissioner Root if she would be interested in participating. She replied she had no interest in a dog park; she is focused on a dog beach.

Randy Whitchurch, Sally Tomlinson, Richard Laible, Jim Dahl, and Amy McCarter were named as potential committee members, along with village representation.

Commissioner James expressed his desire for this committee to advance the dog park as well. Commissioner Root respectfully requested the issues be kept separate.

Commissioner Codo expressed disagreement with a statement made earlier by Commissioner Root, saying she feels the dog beach group is a special interest group. She also expressed concern with having two separate committees.

Commissioner James reiterated the need for the committee to represent the interests of all park users, whether for an off-leash dog park or off-leash dog beach, adding it would be best to tie both together to support the mutual objectives. Commissioner Root responded a dog beach is a different amenity; community consensus would not be built if the dog beach users were not addressed.

Commissioner James concluded the discussion stating there could be a formal motion with a recommendation to form a committee at the next board meeting.

MATTERS OF THE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Peterson reported on the numerous recent and upcoming activities: a cooperative blood drive with the Chamber of Commerce, Emerge music festival, Winnetka Parks Foundation charity kickball tournament, Bike Winnetka, Fall Fest and fireworks. Staff were recognized and thanked.

BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

Caucus Council

Commissioner Seaman reported on the survey results. One hundred thirty-one comments were made regarding a pool: sixty against and fifty-five in favor. Eight comments were made on the dog beach. Fifteen comments were made on a dog park: thirteen in favor, two against.

Commissioner Codo commented on the recent events of the bond markets.

Stormwater

Commissioner Archambault gave a design status update, noting there has been a positive exchange of information. The target date for closure of the course is November 1, 2022.

STAFF UPDATES

Kyle Berg, Superintendent of Recreation – reported fall programs are underway. Staff is preparing for several upcoming special events. Indoor boat storage was offered at Lloyd and received positively. The opening of Lloyd Beach has made a significant impact on revenue numbers.

Costa Kutulas, Director of Parks and Maintenance – reported he has been working closely with Valslist to prepare for the Emerge music festival. He and Ania submitted two Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant proposals to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to help fund park projects. More than 200 pine trees outside of the woodland area at Crow Island Woods have died from pine wilt. Staff have been tracking them for over a year and they need to be removed. New trees will be planted over time. A communication plan will be developed to inform the community, emphasizing the tree removal is not related to stormwater. Commissioner Rapp suggested use of the school's parent communication system to inform families of the Crow Island tree work. Jacobson Golf Design is preparing a percentage-based proposal for course renovation work. The proposal will be presented to the board next month.

Director Kutulas suggested contacting Glencoe Park District to learn how they arrived at their decision not to create a dog park in Glencoe.

Molly Krohe, Marketing Brand Manager – reported beta testing of the new website would be September 20, followed by staff training. Tentative launch date is December 8.

Christine Berman, Superintendent of Finance – reported the August financials are closed. Property taxes have been received. Staff budgets are due September 17.

John Peterson, on behalf of Ania Cramer, Community Outreach/Business Development – reported on the submittal of the two OSLAD grants. Over \$14,600 in sponsorship dollars have been received for Fall Fest events and the charity kickball tournament.

Libby Baker, Office Associate – gave a status update on expenses related to the property exchange and Elder-Centennial, noting two invoices have been received since the last update.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Commissioner James addressed concerns he had following the last meeting. He stated he thinks the caucus system is broken. He said he felt he was treated with hostility during his candidate interview, and was asked pointed question about the dog beach. Commissioner James explained not all prospective candidates were interviewed or given consideration.

Commissioner James also addressed an email he received from Commissioner Root after the last meeting and asked her to share the contents of the email.

Commissioner Root explained she met with Executive Director Peterson to discuss follow through on the motion made at the August meeting to advance the off-leash dog beach. She also expressed concern that the park district proceed appropriately on everything to do with the transactions for the property exchange and all negotiations with Orchard 2020. Commissioner Root expressed she wants to be sure the park district has done its due diligence so there is no question otherwise from the public. Commissioner Root held back additional comments, reserving them for closed session.

Commissioner Seaman stated he would find out early who will be the new Parks Chair. Commissioner Root commented she was interviewed twice by the Caucus and dogs were never discussed.

Executive Director Peterson suggested to Commissioner Seaman that the next Caucus Parks Chair be more engaged with the park board to gain a better understanding of the park district.

Commissioner Rapp suggested the Caucus should provide more outreach and inform new residents of who they are and what they do.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Archambault made a motion to go into closed session at 8:18 p.m., pursuant to Sections 2(c)(1), (5), and (6) of the Open Meetings Act to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, and the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body, Commissioner Rapp seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ayes: Archambault, Codo, James, Rapp, Root, and Seaman

Nays: None

Motion carried

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Archambault made a motion at 9:38 p.m. to return to open session. Commissioner Seaman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ayes: Archambault, Codo, James, Rapp, Root, and Seaman

Nays: None

Motion carried

Executive Director Peterson gave an update on the Winnetka Platform Tennis negotiations.

Commissioner Seaman will participate and represent the board.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Archambault made a motion at 9:39 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Seaman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ayes: Archambault, Codo, James, Rapp, Root, and Seaman

Nays: None

Motion carried

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Peterson', written over a horizontal line.

John Peterson, Board Secretary

approved October 21, 2021