

**MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
OF THE COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICERS OF
THE WINNETKA PARK DISTRICT, WINNETKA, IL VIA ZOOM
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2020**

President Archambault called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Mickey Archambault, Teresa Claybrook, Christina Codo, Warren James, Colleen Knupp, Eric Lussen, David Seaman

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff present in the Winnetka Park District Office with observance of social distancing practices and via Zoom video conference: John Peterson, Executive Director; Christine Berman, Superintendent of Finance; Costa Kutulas, Superintendent of Parks; John Shea, Superintendent of Recreation; Kelsey Raftery, Marketing Brand Manager; and Lara Kuechel, Executive Assistant

Audience Present via Zoom: Steven Adams, Cal Bernstein, Bill Cadigan, Dave Chung, Richard Coasby, John Edwardson, Ellen F. (last name not provided), Betty Finken, Jill Fischer, Andy Goodrich, Claudia Goodrich, Brian Goodwin, Elisha Gray, Patrick Heraty, Ankur Joshi, James McLaughlin, Mike McGoohan, James Patton, Jim Rauh, Judy Rauh, LeeAnn Rehtin, Beth Skalla, Laura Sorensen, Christine Souferis, Randy Whitchurch

Audience Present in the Community Room with observance of social distancing practices: Rebecca Ferguson, Stephanie Heraty, David McHugh

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

NEW BUSINESS

President Archambault relayed that the purpose of this special meeting was to provide the public with notice of the Park District's plan to exchange real estate owned by the Park District for other land along the lakefront between Elder Lane Park and Centennial Park.

Commissioner James provided a description of the proposed conveyance, emphasizing that it was a long-desired goal of the Park District and within the plans of the Winnetka Waterfront 2030 Master Plan, which was approved in 2015. The Master Plan identified a privately owned parcel of property that has been of keen interest of the Park District to acquire for many years. That property will be acquired in exchange for a similarly sized parcel on the south end of Centennial Park. The combination of the Elder Land and Centennial Beach properties will provide the public with nearly 1,000 feet of continuous shoreline and nearly 8 acres of parkland. It was noted that the parcel of real estate is of

considerably greater value than the value of the property the Park District is conveying, thanks to the generosity of a Winnetka resident.

This public meeting will be followed by a Board meeting to approve an ordinance to move forward with the exchange agreement, due diligence and closing on the property exchange.

Superintendent Kutulas provided a visual storyboard presentation explaining the details of the project. He reviewed the Winnetka Waterfront 2030 Lakefront Master Plan, the parcel at 261 Sheridan Road and the parcel at the south end of Centennial Park.

Commissioner James added that the property exchange will be a typical real estate transaction and normal steps are to be taken. President Archambault offered his thanks.

REMARKS FROM VISITORS

David McHugh ... offered criticism that no regular notice was provided village wide as would be required with a referendum. He questioned why the Park District did not buy the 261 Sheridan property outright to which President Archambault acknowledged that the WPD was outbid. Commissioner James clarified that once the property is exchanged, it will no longer be public property and further plans are not the responsibility of the Park District. Mr. McHugh also expressed concern over historical intent and Executive Director Peterson responded accordingly.

Judy & Jim Rauh ... stated that they are new to the Village of Winnetka and thought that the purchase of their home would be a safe investment across from a public park, and did extensive design work on their home intended to preserve the view. They are concerned that this will impact the value of their home and be a precedent setting action.

Rebecca Ferguson ... said that they were building their house because they wanted to be close to the beach for their child with special needs. They were disappointed that there was not communication from the Park District. While she is supportive of some aspects of the Master Plan, she expressed concern as to what the future plans may be (i.e. green space) and that they may impinge on the views for others.

Ankur Joshi ... purchased their home based on the view and desire to escape the uncertainty of development in the city. He suggested that Park District take into consideration the views of residents in making decisions.

Stephanie Heraty ... expressed disappointment since the residents did not have time to make their voices heard and emphasized that they do not want the parkland to be compromised.

REMARKS FROM VISITORS – cont'd

Claudia Goodrich ... expressed that she wants the Park District to take the views of residents into account. Upon moving from the city, they were looking for greenery, space and stability when they bought their home. She expressed shock that the Park District would shrink a public park, further noting surprise and disappointment.

Richard Coasby ... said he was shocked and disappointed that this wasn't communicated and being held to ransom in this way. He asked for clarification of the financial aspects of the transaction to which Commissioner James responded, but he further disagreed with the valuation.

Betty Finken ... questioned the lack of communication and suggested that perhaps had residents known, someone would have donated the property, further suggesting that residents should vote on changes to the plan. She appreciated the Board's time.

Randy Whitchurch ... said that he was stunned that no notification was supplied to the residents of Fuller Ln., suggesting that it is malpractice. He emphasized that everybody on Fuller Lane is affected by this.

Steve Adams ... Attorney for the Winnetka Park District stated that the Park District has followed to the letter, the requirements and process outlined by State of Illinois law. The Master Plan process involved extensive discussions about the parks and how they would be affected by this transaction. A very public process took place in making decisions about a hugely important element to provide quality services to the community. He is certain that the Board will weigh the comments made at this meeting and keep in mind the best interest of the community as a whole. He noted that it is a different process than what would be required by a village zoning change and the accusation that the transaction is malpractice is unfounded.

Commissioner James ...said that he appreciated the comments expressed by the residents and their concerns. He further emphasized the Park District's efforts and the financial strain it has caused. He looks forward to the benefit that will be enjoyed by the residents.

Alan & Meaghan Weed ... letter read by President Archambault... stated that they are supportive of the Winnetka Waterfront 2030 Plan. They are concerned and emphasized their desire for the Board to be mindful of the aesthetics of the plans, in particular regarding the parking lots and attention to plantings. They are thankful for the consideration.

Judy & Jim Rauh ... spoke again, acknowledging that the difference in property value is due to presence of a house. They are disappointed that the Board has not acknowledged the negative impact on resident, it seems like that Park Board does not care about stakeholders, and should have sought other funding rather concede to a once in a lifetime opportunity.

REMARKS FROM VISITORS – cont'd

Dave Chung ... asked for confirmation that the individual in the swap is the owner of the property at 205 Sheridan Rd. Executive Director Peterson confirmed that. Mr. Chung suggested that this will be a significant increase in value to that property as a whole and further suggested offering a smaller parcel of land instead due to the value conveyed.

Andy Goodrich ... questioned the plans for redevelopment. President Archambault clarified that once the transaction is complete, it will be a private property, subject to the Village's requirements and cautioned that it was not necessary to make negative assumptions.

Beth Skalla... said that this appears to be a forum of neighbors and questioned plans to open the plans for the land swap to the whole community. President Archambault said that it is public and has been in three publications. Steve Adams added that it is a part of the Master Plan.

LeeAnn Rehtin ... spoke of the historical problem of cars cutting through the Fuller Ln. neighborhood and wondered if the street could be made private to avoid people cutting through to the park. She also suggested adding aesthetics to improve their view and questioned what happens if the transaction does not go through.

Bill Cadigan ... questioned process and changes of residential use and incompatibility with park use and the Master Plan. President Archambault and Commissioner James emphasized that zoning is the purview of the Village of Winnetka. Suggested that the Board find out more about plans before conveying the property.

James McLaughlin ... said that his father was on the Park Board when they considered purchasing the house in question at 261 Sheridan, felt it disconcerting that there has been no communication. Very real concerns from the people present at the meeting. Would like to see a bigger audience.

Betty Finken ... messaged a question if the Board considered less feet for the swap – has the final decision been made? President Archambault noted that it has not been voted on, but the Board is in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

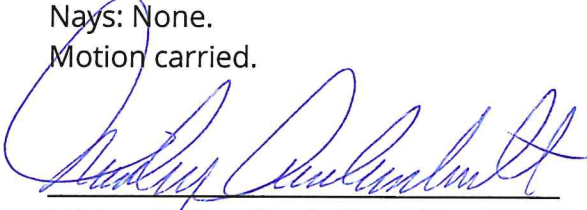
Commissioner James made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Commissioner Claybrook seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ayes: Archambault, Claybrook, Codo, James, Knupp, Seaman

Abstain: Lussen, not present for the vote due to lost Zoom connection

Nays: None.

Motion carried.


Mickey Archambault, Board President
John Peterson, Board Secretary