

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS HELD AT 4:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 AT THE BONNIE NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 W. LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustee and Committee Chair Joyce Harant and Executive Director Emily Cahill

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Ron Silver

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Trustees Joyce Harant, Alexander Sierra, Mark Slover (v), and Vice President Steve Montez
(v) = Attended Virtually

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Emily Cahill, Nick Conrad, Matt Freeman, Becky Fredrickson, Scott Loftus, Karrie Ross, Jennifer Swanson, Mike Friberg, Yoginee Nawale, Willie Howe, and Alicia Woodworth

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Harant called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

3. MOTION TO PERMIT COMMITTEE MEMBER TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY

No request to attend meeting electronically was received.

4. MINUTES

4.A. Approval of Minutes of January 14, 2026 Planning Committee Meeting

Executive Director Cahill MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes of the January 14, 2026 Planning Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.A. Trewyn Park Facade

Becky Fredrickson presented proposed interior and exterior improvements associated with Peoria Grown's lease of the lower level of Trewyn Pavilion for Market 309 operations. Interior improvements include flooring replacement, lighting upgrades, shelving and refrigeration installation, and ADA-related entry modifications. Exterior improvements include replacement of the existing rear steel door and the addition of a façade treatment around the entrance to create a more welcoming storefront presence. Because Trewyn Pavilion is listed on the Park District Register of Historic Resources, any exterior modification triggers the Historic Preservation Policy, requiring Planning Committee review, public comment, a public hearing, and Board approval.

Trustee Sierra stated that he supports Market 309 and has supported the project since its inception; however, he expressed significant concern regarding process and potential conflict-of-interest implications.

Trustee Sierra questioned the sequence of events surrounding:

- The lease approval with Peoria Grown
- The grant application process
- The engagement of the private design firm owned by a sitting Trustee

He referenced the Zoo design engagement process as a prior example in which designer selection had involved Board awareness and asked whether similar procedural safeguards had occurred in this instance.

Trustee Sierra stated that his concern was not personal but circumstantial, emphasizing that when a Trustee's private business performs work connected to District property, there exists a potential perception of unfair advantage or insider knowledge. He articulated a hypothetical scenario in which advance knowledge of potential renovations could influence private business engagement and stated that the Board must ensure that no Trustee benefits from information obtained through their elected position.

Trustee Sierra requested:

- A documented timeline of when discussions began with Peoria Grown
- Clarification regarding when the design firm was engaged
- Confirmation of when the lease negotiations occurred
- Written confirmation of legal counsel's opinion regarding the conflict-of-interest handling

Trustee Sierra further stated that while legal counsel may have reviewed the matter, he would prefer counsel to explain the analysis on the record at a future meeting so that the public record clearly reflects the reasoning and protections in place.

Executive Director Cahill confirmed that legal counsel had been consulted and advised that the Trustee in question must formally declare the conflict, abstain from deliberation as a Trustee, and abstain from voting on the matter. Staff agreed to request that counsel reiterate this guidance at a future Board meeting.

Trustee Sierra also requested a copy of the contract between Peoria Grown and the design firm for review. Staff noted that the Park District is not a party to that contract and may not have authority to produce it but would inquire.

Throughout discussion, Trustee Sierra reiterated that transparency and procedural consistency were necessary to eliminate even the appearance of impropriety.

Trustee Sierra asked whether Park District funds were being used for the improvements and raised a question about a line item identified as "miscellaneous" in the project estimate. Staff clarified that:

- The project is funded through Peoria Grown grant and partner funds.

- No Park District capital dollars are being used.
- All construction must comply with Park District standards and prevailing wage requirements.

Executive Director Cahill MOVED to advance the proposed exterior modifications to the full Board for the next required steps under the Historic Preservation Policy, including scheduling of a public hearing and solicitation of public comment. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried unanimously by voice vote.

Staff will:

- Coordinate public hearing logistics
- Work with Marketing on outreach
- Provide timeline documentation
- Obtain legal counsel clarification for the record

5.B. Bradley Park Sculpture Unveiling Discussion

Staff provided an update on planning for the unveiling of the Preston Jackson sculpture at Bradley Park.

Staff proposed aligning the unveiling with the Spring Equinox (March 20, 2026, at 9:46 a.m.) to symbolically reflect renewal and new beginnings, consistent with Native American cultural themes associated with the artwork. Alternative consideration included Earth Week programming in April.

Discussion included:

- Confirming availability of Preston Jackson
- Consulting with advisory participants and Native American community representatives
- Ensuring completion of signage and site elements (benches subject to delivery timelines)
- Avoiding conflicts with other Park District programming

The Committee supported staff continuing planning efforts and confirming artist availability before finalizing a date.

5.C. West Bluff Historic Signs

Mike Friberg presented a request from the West Bluff Council to install a permanent “Historic West Bluff” sign in Bradley Park along Farmington Road.

Farmington Road (IL Route 8) is a state highway under IDOT control. IDOT prohibits such signage within the right-of-way. The right-of-way extends 16 feet from the curb, meaning the proposed sign would need to be placed further inside Park District property.

Staff identified two primary concerns:

1. Precedent:
Approving this sign could open the door to similar requests from other neighborhood associations across the District, creating challenges in applying consistent standards.
2. Long-Term Maintenance & Ownership:
 - Who maintains the sign 20 years from now?
 - What happens if the requesting organization dissolves or leadership changes?
 - Would the Park District assume responsibility?

Staff noted mowing and trimming impacts would be minimal but emphasized precedent as the larger policy concern.

The Committee acknowledged the value of neighborhood pride and the attractiveness of the sign but expressed concern about establishing a precedent difficult to manage districtwide.

The Committee discussed whether the sign might be more appropriately located on private property or through the City of Peoria rather than within Park District parkland. Trustee Slover (virtual) deferred to Central District trustees but agreed precedent concerns were valid.

Executive Director Cahill MOVED to direct staff to inform the West Bluff Council that the request to place the sign within Bradley Park property would not be approved. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried unanimously by voice vote. Staff will communicate the decision.

6. PENDING BUSINESS

None at this time.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

President Johnson initiated discussion regarding the Columbus statue. Staff explained that the statue remains on the Park District Historic Register and is considered a protected cultural resource. Any disposal or permanent removal would trigger:

- Public comment
- Public hearing
- Board vote

Trustees discussed whether to proactively initiate that process or wait for a formal external request. Consensus leaned toward not initiating action absent a formal proposal. Staff will consult legal counsel regarding application of the Historic Preservation Policy to potential disposal and provide guidance.

8. ACTION STEPS REVIEW

1. Schedule and promote public hearing for Trewyn Pavilion exterior modifications
2. Provide documented timeline regarding Market 309 lease and design engagement
3. Obtain legal counsel clarification on conflict-of-interest protections
4. Continue coordination of Bradley Park sculpture unveiling and confirm artist availability
5. Notify West Bluff Council of sign decision

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 4:57 pm, Executive Director Cahill MOVED TO ADJOURN the meeting. Motion second by Trustee Harant and carried on unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary