

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE/TALK ABOUT IT TUESDAY OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS HELD AT 5:30 PM ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026 AT THE BONNIE W. NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, IL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Trustee and Chair Alexander Sierra, Trustee and Vice Chair Joyce Harant, and Executive Director Emily Cahill

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Trustees Joyce Harant and Alexander Sierra

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Emily Cahill, Scott Loftus, Jess Main, Dawn Parrish, Jonelle McCloud, Julie Craghead, Shelby Martin (HISRA), Tom Miller, and Alicia Woodworth

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee and Committee Chair Alexander Sierra convened the February 3, 2026 Programming Committee session at 5:31 p.m. in a Talk About It Tuesday public engagement format.

Chair Sierra noted that the initial portion of the evening was structured as a public engagement session designed to gather community input regarding Peoria Park District summer camp programming. As such, this portion of the meeting was interactive and did not begin with a formal roll call, as it was not conducted as a formal Open Meetings Act (OMA) deliberative session.

2. WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF MEETING STRUCTURE, INCLUDING ONLINE SURVEY

Superintendent of Recreation Scott Loftus welcomed attendees and reviewed the evening's engagement structure. Staff introductions were made, including camp leadership and representation from HISRA.

Executive Director Emily Cahill explained the online survey tool distributed via QR code and email to registered camp families. The survey collected demographic data, experience ratings, suggestions for improvement, and contact information for follow-up. Compiled responses were shared to inform discussion.

3. OVERVIEW OF CAMP OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DISTRICT

Jess Main provided an overview of Peoria Park District summer camp offerings, including:

- Five primary camp locations serving ages 5–13
- Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program for ages 14–15
- ACA accreditation (approximately 290 standards reviewed every three years; annual verification)
- Only ACA-accredited day camps within 45 miles
- Approximately 80 seasonal staff hired annually
- 61% returning staff in 2025
- Minimum 25 hours of training per staff member
- CPR/First Aid certified staff on site
- Inclusion support through HISRA

Shelby Martin (HISRA) reviewed inclusion services, including:

- Online accommodation request process
- Parent outreach and assessment
- Staff training support

- Social/emotional, behavioral, and physical support as needed
- No cost to in-district families for inclusion services

Clarification questions were addressed regarding inclusion capacity and support structure.

4. PUBLIC INPUT AND FEEDBACK (TALK ABOUT IT TUESDAY)

A. Survey Feedback Themes

Staff reviewed compiled survey responses. Themes included:

- Positive feedback on check-in/check-out processes
- Requests for expanded activity offerings
- Zoo Camp timing concern (already addressed during 2025 season)
- Significant demand at Ancient Oaks and waitlist concerns
- Requests for improved friend-group placement flexibility
- Strong praise for staff quality and camper experience

B. Public Comment – Camp Families

Two Proctor Camp parents addressed the Committee.

Strengths Identified:

- Trust in staff
- Safety and communication
- Expanded experiences (swimming, fishing, STEAM activities)
- Social development and confidence building
- Strong sense of community

Challenges Identified:

- Camp cost and deposit requirements
- Installment billing structure (two-week upfront payment)
- Early drop-off needs
- Late pickup flexibility
- Financial strain for multi-child households

Staff explained the two-week pre-billing policy, scholarship availability, and administrative considerations.

Executive Director Cahill stated that staff would review the deposit structure and evaluate potential adjustments, particularly for families enrolling multiple children.

C. Camp Capacity and Waitlist Discussion

Discussion focused on Ancient Oaks capacity limitations.

Staff reported:

- Current capacity limits (85 campers/week due to storm shelter and ACA standards)
- Camps currently 65–68% full district-wide
- Enrollment up 500+ camp weeks compared to prior year
- Historic waitlist movement prior to summer season

The Committee acknowledged strong demand and directed staff to include broader Sommer Farm site planning discussions in future capital planning conversations.

TRANSITION TO FORMAL PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MEETING

Following the public engagement portion, Chair Sierra announced that the Committee would transition into a formal Programming Committee meeting conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. At that time, the interactive Talk About It Tuesday portion concluded.

A formal roll call was conducted.

5. ROLL CALL (FORMAL MEETING)

Members Present: Trustee and Chair Alexander Sierra, Trustee and Vice Chair Joyce Harant, and Executive Director Emily Cahill

Members Absent: None

6. OPEN FORUM

Ms. Yolanda Wallace provided information regarding the Jon Buckley Memorial Garden.

Discussion included:

- Garden established in 2012
- Privately maintained
- Restricted Park District Foundation fund for donations
- No tax dollars used for operations
- Desire for enhanced collaboration and community programming
- Original agreement not formally memorialized

Executive Director Cahill clarified the existing structure and limitations regarding public fund usage.

The Committee requested:

1. Historical documentation related to the original verbal agreement.
2. Staff review of any existing documentation.
3. Future meeting to clarify and formalize partnership structure.

7. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee engaged in substantive discussion regarding the historical structure, purpose, and authority of the Programming Committee.

Members acknowledged that while the “Talk About It Tuesday” format has increased opportunities for public input, additional clarity is needed regarding:

- Clarification of governance role versus operational management
- Defining intended outcomes of committee meetings
- Developing a structured framework for tracking public input
- Establishing measurable outcomes
- Aligning with governance best practices

Trustee Sierra emphasized that committees of the Board exist to provide policy-level guidance, strategic oversight, and recommendations to the full Board — not to direct day-to-day operations.

The Committee determined that additional focused discussion was warranted regarding committee structure and format moving forward.

Chair Sierra requested scheduling of a Special Programming Committee Meeting on February 19, 2026 to address:

- Committee charge refinement
- Governance boundaries
- Standardized meeting structure
- Procedures for documenting and tracking action items
- Strategies for meaningful public engagement

Staff will coordinate public notice and logistics for the special meeting in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

8. ACTION ITEMS REVIEW

1. Review camp deposit and installment billing structure, including consideration of multi-child enrollment impacts
2. Evaluate operational flexibility for multi-child families
3. Include Ancient Oaks infrastructure in Sommer Farm capital planning discussions
4. Compile historical documentation regarding Jon Buckley Memorial Garden
5. Coordinate scheduling and notice of the February 19, 2026 Special Programming Committee Meeting

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:34 pm, Trustee Harant MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Executive Director Cahill and carried on a unanimous aye of members present.

Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary