

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 3:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022, AT THE BONNIE NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 W. LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair and Trustee Joyce Harant, Vice Chair and Trustee Laurie Covington, and Executive Director Emily Cahill
- MEMBERS ABSENT:** None
- TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Trustees Joyce Harant, Laurie Covington, Vice President Jackie Petty, and President Robert Johnson
- STAFF PRESENT:** Emily Cahill, Becky Fredrickson, Matt Freeman, Mike Friberg, Jacob Kuban, Mike Miller, and Alicia Woodworth
- OTHERS PRESENT:** Peoria Heights Mayor Mike Phelan and Peoria Heights Trustee Brandon Wisenburg

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Joyce Harant called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm.

2. MINUTES

2.A. Approval of August 2, 2022 Planning Committee Meeting Minutes

Trustee Harant moved to approve the minutes from August 2, 2022. Motion seconded by Trustee Covington and carried on unanimous voice vote.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.A. Peoria Heights Collaboration Discussion

Trustee Harant welcomed Peoria Heights Mayor Mike Phelan and Trustee Brandon Wisenburg. She stated they were invited to today's meeting to find ways in which the Peoria Park District and the Village of Peoria Heights can collaborate and work together.

Mayor Phelan thanked the committee for inviting them to today's meeting. He had the opportunity to meet with President Johnson and Trustee Harant on separate occasions concerning collaborating. He stated that a couple years ago, Peoria Heights identified opportunities within the Village by hiring a consultant to help develop a comprehensive plan for development of the Village's green spaces. Many stakeholders at all levels in the community were engaged in this process. Out of that comprehensive plan, the Village Board developed a strategic plan and identified goals and objectives within that plan. One big opportunity is to not only continue to evolve into a destination but also to take advantage of ecotourism. Route 29 may be a collaborative opportunity. The Village of Peoria Heights is the recipient of \$70M to redo Route 29. It will make it much safer including bike lanes and more connectivity.

Peoria Heights formed a committee for parks and neighborhoods in which Trustee Wisenburg oversees. Trustee Wisenburg shared that one of the frustrations he has and that

he receives from his constituents, especially younger families, is that the parks accessible in Peoria Heights are not Peoria Park District parks, but yet Peoria Heights residents pay taxes to PPD. Emily Cahill pointed out the following listing of parks and land in or near Peoria Heights that is owned/managed by the Peoria Park District. This was also included in today's agenda packet. She appreciates and understands Trustee Wisenburg's concerns but also wanted to point out that the volume of high visibility parks that are part of the Peoria Park District's system that are in Peoria Heights that are maintained by the Peoria Park District with a significant tax subsidy is significant and something the Park District is proud of.

- Section of the Rock Island Greenway
- Endres Park
- Part of Grand View Drive
- Forest Park Nature Center
- Bielfeldt Park
- Margaret Rutherford Woods (177 acres)
- Forest Park Riverfront properties - Krause, Longshore, Firefighters (235 acres)

Adjacent:

- Stadium Park
- Grand View Drive Park

Activity from Peoria Heights (61616). Please note that this only includes activity registrations and anyone who would have purchased a pass. This does not include league registrations or rentals since we only capture information from either the manager or person making the rental and not the whole party.

2019

344 class registrations
72 pass purchases

2021

179 class registrations
46 pass purchases

RiverPlex usage:

Visits from 61616:

2019: 6788

2020: 2901

2021: 2469

So far in 2022: 1453

Zoo members in 2022: 40

Trustee Wisenburg stated that one of the goals that Peoria Heights has is to attract families to Peoria Heights. Other communities the size of Peoria Heights have really nice family parks. Peoria Heights does not have nice family parks like other communities do. Emily

Cahill asked for clarification as to what he considers is a nice family park and what would his recommendation be. She stated that Forest Park Nature Center is a jewel of the Park District and there are lots of families with young children on the trails. In addition, Bielfeldt Park has a brand-new playground. The Peoria Park District truly wants to help but the value of the high-profile parks in Peoria Heights should not be lost. The District will be happy to review any action items Peoria Heights would have.

Trustee Wisenburg stated that of the listing of Peoria Park District parks in Peoria Heights, only Endres Park is suitable for younger families and that it hasn't been updated in decades. Mike Friberg stated that one of the biggest problems in developed areas like Peoria Heights is having adequate land and green space for parks and that is one of the main issues in planning parks in developed areas. If Peoria Heights has land in neighborhoods that can be parceled together, Peoria Park District will be happy to look at it and evaluate for adding park land into dense neighborhoods. Becky Fredrickson stated that the Park District would be happy to collaborate with Peoria Heights in areas where they have smaller parks. Another option could be the Park District could possibly work out an intergovernmental agreement in the planning and maintenance of an existing small park. Mayor Phelan and Trustee Wisenburg expressed great interest in collaborating in this manner. A tour of the Peoria Heights parks will be scheduled between the Peoria Park District and Village of Peoria Heights to determine where the collaborative opportunities exist.

Mayor Phelan stated he would also like to explore what collaborative opportunities exist in regards to Route 29. In addition, collaborative opportunities may exist for Poplar Park, a 10-acre park along the riverfront. Mayor Phelan described many opportunities that may exist. Farnsworth Group has drawn conceptual drawings as to what that park could look like.

Trustee Harant asked the committee what they think is the best path forward to approach the possible collaborative projects with Peoria Heights. Emily Cahill stated she believes it should start at the staff level where they could tour the Heights' properties, develop a plan, then report back. At the next meeting, District staff will share the results of the needs assessment/community survey the District conducted in early spring of 2021, with data specific to 61616.

3.B. Detweiller BMX Discussion

Matt Freeman stated that staff is seeking consensus from the committee for staff to continue to seek operators for the Detweiller BMX. Historically, the Peoria Park District does not operate the BMX track, it is operated by an outside organization. Most recently, the Planning Committee gave consensus to take to the Board for approval the renewal of the annual license agreement with a local individual, and this was ultimately approved by the Board. Generally, on average, there are 15-20 BMX events per year and are all sanctioned by USA BMX. The District has recently been contacted by an individual who would like to operate the BMX track next year. With consensus, staff will reach out to that individual and set up an in-person meeting between them and the Planning Committee where they would present their plan and answer any questions. USA BMX has given a letter of support for this individual and USA BMX will sanction all events. Vice President Petty asked if the District receives a fee for this. Matt Freeman stated yes, it is a \$30 per acre annual fee and the track

area is 3.02 acres. They also are responsible for all the grounds maintenance of the area. Trustee Harant asked if the agreement allows subletting the property. Matt Freeman stated he's fairly certain it does not but will reread the agreement to verify. The committee gave consensus to move forward with this individual in pursuit of an agreement for next year. Matt Freeman stated he will contact them to set up a meeting.

3.C. Potential Land Donation

Mike Friberg stated that Trustee Covington was approached by a landowner near Dunlap concerning the possibility of donating his land to the Peoria Park District. Staff met with the landowner and toured the property and today, staff is requesting consensus from the committee to proceed with the next step. This would consist of the Park District's attorney meeting with the landowner's lawyer to discuss the details. Once that information is gathered, staff would then take it back to the Planning Committee for further consensus. This land is 128 acres off of Salem School Road and is mixed agriculture and woodlands. The woodlands are in excellent condition and have never been razed. The District is very excited about this land for two main reasons: 1) The land is very close to Dunlap proper. Should Dunlap ever come into the Peoria Park District or should they ever create their own park district, this land would be a convenient and exciting prospect. And 2) The conservation potential is spectacular. Of the 128 acres, approximately 40 are agriculture. There is a small, stocked pond on the property as well. There are some existing buildings that would need to be considered. There is significant topography, Kickapoo Creek, that cuts the northern from the southern part of the site, but there is an access road. The landowner would continue to live on the property until his passing. Transference of the property to the Park District would then occur. Through discussion, the committee gave consensus to staff to take the next step in having the District attorney meet with the landowner's attorney for more details.

3.D. OSLAD Grant Application

Mike Friberg stated the OSLAD grant, which is an IDNR program that focuses on open space land acquisition and development. Starting over 40 years ago, a path has been planned and slowly developed that goes all around upper Peoria Lake on both sides. Over time, the District has been acquiring parcels of land to complete the path with the idea that it connects Grandview Drive up through Forest Park Nature Center, Detweiller Park, Green Valley Camp, Robinson Park, Camp Wokanda, then up to Tawny Oaks. When Route 6 was constructed, the Park Board at the time approved to pay \$40,000 to install a tunnel under Route 6. At that time, the Park District did not own any property near there however, the Board approved the payment for a tunnel so that a path could possibly be constructed. Now, that tunnel has made that path possible.

With the OSLAD grant, another parcel just south of Detweiller Park could be purchased. This 40+ acre parcel is currently owned by the Catholic Diocese of Peoria and they have expressed a willingness to sell. The Park District would like to prevent the parcel from being developed. The OSLAD grant application deadline is the end of September. Today, staff is seeking consensus from the committee to proceed with the Catholic Diocese, determine how much they want for the parcel, then proceed with the grant application for the funds to purchase the parcel. Since we are a disadvantaged community, the District would apply for

100% purchase price, with no matching funds needed. Consensus was given by the committee to proceed. Becky Fredrickson stated that the forms for this grant will be presented to the full Board at the September 28 meeting for approval.

3.E. Request for Collaboration – Next Step

Emily Cahill stated that this is the Owens Center item that was discussed at the last Park Board meeting. An action step was that staff is to develop a list of questions to present to the Rivermen. Per the directive at that Park Board meeting, staff is presenting that list of questions to the committee for review. Emily asked the committee to please review the questions and send her any feedback by end of week. The questions will then be sent to the Rivermen for their response.

3.F. Trewyn Park Improvements – Update

Becky Fredrickson stated the playground installer is on site this week and next week. The contractor on site is finishing the construction of the shelter. Basketball courts are completed but the fencing still needs to be installed. The fencing installation delay is due to supply chain issues. The park is looking very nice and the District is focused on having it completed by the deadline.

4. PENDING BUSINESS

4.A. Outstanding Action Items

Urban Forest Proposal – Trustee Harant stated that earlier today she, Trustee Sierra and Emily Cahill presented the Park District’s urban forest proposal to the Peoria Urban Forest Advisory Board (PUFAB). The meeting was very positive and productive. Respective City of Peoria and Park District staffs will work together to chart out ideas on how it would all work. PUFAB members have been invited to attend Park District committee meetings as well.

Art Work Request by Uplands and West Bluff Neighborhood at Upper Bradley Park – Emily Cahill stated that Conrad Stinnett reached out to her this morning about next steps. She shared with him the policy and the process for letters of inquiry and requests from the community. She urged him to work through that process with his neighborhood group and to contact her if he had any questions. She let him know that his next step is to provide a request with an outline of the plan in what they want to see. Then that plan would come to the Planning Committee and resources allocated.

Columbia Park and Morton Square Park New Shelter Request Questions – Emily Cahill stated that presented to the committee today, per the last Planning Committee meeting, staff developed a list of questions to be used uniformly when there are requests for considerations for the addition of a shelter. This would be accompanied by different specs of shelters that the Park District offers.

Donovan Sculpture Garden Update – Emily Cahill emailed to the Planning Committee the results of a survey taken by the Sculpture Garden committee. Staff will draft a recommendation of next steps to be presented to the Planning Committee.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.A. Springdale Cemetery Savanna Update

Emily Cahill stated that she attended a meeting with Mark Matuszak of the Springdale Cemetery. Staff is working to develop a list wants and needs to be part of the maintenance agreement to be sent to Mr. Matuszak in the hopes of moving to the next step.

5.B. Sustainability Action Program Update

Trustee Harant stated that she recently learned that the state of Illinois now has an Electrification Coordinator, funded through the Illinois EPA. Trustee Harant will contact that person to see if they would be interested in talking with the Park District about their efforts.

Mike Miller stated that the conservation working group recently met to set the stage for the upcoming budget process. It set some immediate priorities from an environmental perspective. A meeting was held with the PPD Marketing team to develop a sustainability portion of the PPD website. It will be a place to highlight all the steps the District is taking towards sustainability and will be updated as those efforts continue.

6. ACTION STEPS REVIEW

1. Set meeting with Peoria Heights staff through Brandon Wisenberg to review inventory, opportunities for collaboration
2. Share community survey data specific to 61616 zip code.
3. Present OSLAD grant information to the Board.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, October 4, 2022 at 3:00 pm.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 4:44 pm Trustee Covington made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion second by Trustee Harant and carried on unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Secretary to the Board