OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGY AD HOC COMMITTEE/BOARD OF THE WHOLE OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, AT 4:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025 HELD AT THE BONNIE NOBLE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA IL

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Trustees Timothy Bertschy, Laurie Covington, Joyce Harant, Steve Montez (v), Alexander Sierra, Vice President Reagan Leslie Hill, and President Robert Johnson
Note: (v) = attended virtually

TRUSTEES ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Emily Cahill, Brianna Cobb, Nick Conrad, Becky Fredrickson, Matt Freeman, Scott Loftus, Karrie Ross, Jenny Swanson, Attorney Kevin Day, Attorney Justin Gunn, Mike Friberg, Kristi Shoemaker, Victoria Zamora, and Alicia Woodworth.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dawn Jeffries (in at 4:55 pm)

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Johnson presided and called the meeting to order at 4:09 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

3. MOTION TO PERMIT TRUSTEE TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY

Trustee Montez requested to attend the meeting electronically due to personal illness. Trustee Bertschy MOVED TO ALLOW Trustee Montez attend the meeting electronically. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results 6 Ayes; 0 Nays)

4. MINUTES

4.A. Approval of Minutes of February 12, 2025 Strategy Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Trustee Harant MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes of the February 12, 2025 Strategy Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Covington and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Montez, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Abstain; 0 Nays)

5. POLICY/PROCESS UPDATES

5.A. Staff/Legal Update: Policy Updates Tied to Changes in State Law: Discussion

Justin Gunn stated that he worked with Superintendent Shalesse Pie on the employment law changes that became effective January 1, 2025. As such, staff is recommending the following changes to the Policy Manual:

- PART II, SECTION I, Subsection 12.00 Equal Employment Opportunity Policy,
- PART II, SECTION I, Subsection 22.00 Funeral/Bereavement Leave
- Part II, SECTION III, Subsection 38.00 Discriminatory Harassment Policy
- PART II, SECTION III, Subsection 4.00 Equal Opportunity
- PART II, SECTION III, Subsection 7.00 Official Records

As such, staff requests consensus to submit to the full Board for first read on March 26 and approval on April 9.

Trustee Bertschy MOVED TO APPROVE CONSENSUS to forward the policy changes to the full Board on March 26 for first read and April 9 for approval. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Montez, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Abstain; 0 Nays)

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.A. Community/Trustee Request: Central Park Pool

Executive Director Cahill stated that at the February 25, 2025, DEIA Committee meeting, staff and committee members talked about the use of Central Park Pool by GLOW, Girls Lighting Our Way, an organization led by Dr. Dawn Jeffries. The action step from that meeting was for Superintendent of Recreation Scott Loftus to follow up regarding GLOW use of Central Park Pool.

Scott Loftus stated that Dawn Jeffries had contacted staff about access to the Central Park Pool with her group, GLOW. At that time, PAWW was providing discounted swim lessons to GLOW. For various reasons, the lessons ended and Dawn Jeffries wanted to continue to have water access, specifically, at Central Park Pool because of its proximity to most of her students in her program. Unfortunately, PAWW was not able to honor that because of the IHSA meet schedule and did not have the availability to provide swim lessons to GLOW. Scott Loftus communicated with Dawn Jeffries, offering other water access options, such as RiverPlex on weekdays, or in the summer at Gwynn Family Aquatics. Dawn Jeffries did not want either of those options and currently, is pursuing having water access at Central Park Pool granted for GLOW.

Executive Director Cahill stated that since Ms. Jeffries had an issue with public tax dollars being used to support Central Park Pool and as such, GLOW should have access without PAWW having exclusive use of the pool, staff contacted Attorneys Day and Gun to provide a legal analysis on the matter.

Attorney Day stated that under Park District Code, the District has the ability to lease property to private entities, so long as a public purpose is being satisfied. As approved by the Board, the lease with PAWW satisfies a number of public purposes.

Trustee Sierra stated that his request to staff on this matter was to conduct due diligence and see if there was a feasible way to allow GLOW access to Central Park Pool. Based on that due diligence, staff is indicated that it is not feasible at this time. It's a gray area for what it means to be a public entity where the District can't meet the needs of every organization and he appreciates the additional offerings provided. In his conversations with Ms. Jeffries, Trustee Sierra believes there's a gap of understanding to what Attorney Day just noted.

Trustee Sierra stated that another reason why he wanted to discuss Central Park Pool is because Trustee Harant had inquired previously about the facility itself and how it operates.

President Johnson stated that he believes GLOW was given opportunity to swim and access Central Park Pool. PAWW does have a commitment to its swimmers and with their lease, they should be given priority and primary use of the pool. GLOW was offered other opportunities but Ms. Jeffries indicated she was not interested in any of them. Scott Loftus stated that during the current IHSA season schedule, PAWW does not have time availabilities that would be suitable for GLOW. President Johnson stated that since Scott Loftus had communicated this to her and provided other options/opportunities in which she was not interested, he's good with continuing PAWW's primary and priority access to Central Park Pool. President Johnson stated that if Dawn Jeffries was still not satisfied with the answer, she is welcome to address the Board at an upcoming Board meeting.

Note: Dawn Jeffries arrived at the meeting at 5:50 pm to address the committee. President Johnson stated that staff will contact her and tell her of the Board's decision in this matter.

6.B. Staff Request: Camp Wokanda Naming Sites

Kristi Shoemaker stated that Camp Wokanda was acquired from the W.D. Boyce Council of the Scouts B.S.A. in 1995. The camp was formed in 1937 and consists of tent sites, cabins, larger event spaces, hiking trails, a fishing pond, and natural areas. Currently, tent sites and cabins within the valley are named after Native American tribes. Many of these names originated in the 1960's; prior to that time several sites were named for cartoon characters.

To be consistent with the District's DEIA efforts and being proactive to be a welcoming and inclusive campground, staff recommend renaming some of the tent sites and the Valley cabins with a nature theme. Staff recommend renaming the Valley cabins with bird names and the tent sites with the names of trees to honor the camp's history as a place where scouts would learn tree identification.

Currently the Valley cabins are named: Blackfeet, Cherokee, Handicraft, and Iroquois. The Nature Lab is an additional "cabin back up" site within the Valley that would follow the recommended naming scheme.

As such, staff recommends the following:

Tent Camp Site Changes:
1. Apache to Hackberry
2. Delaware to Locust
3. Navajo to Buckeye
4. Lakeside – stays the same
5. Future Site – Maple
6. Algonquin to Sycamore
7. Pines – stays the same
8. Cedar – stays the same

9. Walnut Grove – stays the same
10. Ridge Adirondacks to Oak Shelters
11. Winnebago (Valley Adirondacks) to Hickory Shelters
12. Illini to Ironwood

Valley Cabin Changes:
1. Cardinal
2. Finch
3. Blue Jay
4. Chickadee
5. Nuthatch

In addition, staff also recommend changing the name of the O.A. Lodge to "the Lodge", and the Dining Hall to the "Event Hall". The 'O.A.' refers to the Order of the Arrow, a Scouting honor society and our site is not an official O.A. Lodge. The Dining Hall is primarily used as a wedding venue and event space. Changing the name to "Event Hall" is a more user-friendly identifier for prospective clients.

Trustee Bertschy stated that renaming these spaces around the nature around them is long overdue and is consistent with the Park District's Mission and Commitments. He believes this does speak to a bigger issue, the District's Naming Policy which was voted down last year. The District needs a Naming Policy that addresses past situations such as spaces at Camp Wokanda, and for the future such as Peoria Zoo's upcoming capital campaign. There needs to be direction on how to handle donations connected to requests for naming rights.

As such, Trustee Bertschy stated his motion will be 1) That the Strategy Ad Hoc Committee recommend to the Full Board the Camp Wokanda name changes, and 2) The Board revisit the Naming Policy, one that not only gives staff guidance on how to proceed with renaming sites at places like Camp Wokanda, but also for when staff is communicating with potential capital donors, and 3) gives direction and guidance to staff for how to navigate future requests.

Trustee Bertschy MOVED TO RECOMMEND to the Full Board APPROVAL of staff's recommended Camp Wokanda name changes; And … that a discussion be held at the Board level about what the naming parameters are; AND … Guidance to staff for how to handle future naming requests. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Montez, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays).

6.C. Staff Update: RiverPlex Membership Rates

Scott Loftus stated that during the 2025 budget process, staff noted that RiverPlex membership rates would be reviewed by both the Peoria Park District and Greater Peoria YMCA, with a possible rate increase recommendation for board approval. All other rates were approved as part of the 2025 budget process and the focus here, as shared during the budget presentation, is solely focused on membership rates. After evaluating membership trends and market rates, a rate increase is necessary to address rising operational costs and support ongoing facility improvements.

Membership rates have not been increased in several years, and in 2022, some membership types were reduced as part of the partnership with the Greater Peoria YMCA. Since then, RiverPlex has experienced steady growth in both membership and usage, which has positively impacted the community. However, rising expenses related to maintenance, staffing, and utilities have made it necessary to adjust the current financial structure to ensure the facility remains viable and able to continue providing high-quality services and programming to their members and visitors. The proposed rate adjustments align with those at similar facilities in the Peoria area. Additionally, the Park District continues to offer RiverPlex scholarships for those in need, ensuring access to the facility for everyone. The financial impact of these rate increases over the course of a year is estimated to be $105,000. This additional revenue will help offset rising operational costs and ensure the facility can continue to operate effectively and efficiently, supporting its long-term sustainability.

6.D. Community Request: Peoria Lakes

Mike Friberg stated that the study of the effects of erosion and sedimentation in the Peoria Lakes has been going on since at least the 1960's. These studies have been spearheaded by local, state, and federal groups at different times, and for different specific purposes. Early studies focused on the economic impacts, especially to barge traffic. Other studies focused on tourism, environmental concerns, flooding, and quality of life issues. It is important to note that the Peoria Park District has long been a participant in these discussions. More importantly, the Peoria Park District has been a leader in the actual implementation of best practices identified in these studies to deal with stormwater and sediment runoff in this stretch of the river.

Over 50 years of studies have identified basically the same things:
1. When Europeans first travelled the Illinois River, it had a sand and clay bottom, visible from canoes.
2. Erosion of the bluffs is a natural process, but it has been massively increased by human activities.
3. The Peoria Lakes are a complex, interconnected system of main river channel, backwaters, and the aquatic life that lives in and around these waters.
4. The main source of sediment to the Illinois River valley is soil erosion in the watershed land areas, streambanks, and bluffs.
5. Agricultural erosion is a huge contributor to sediment in the Illinois River, and farming practices need to change.
6. Restoration of fire and natural plantings help to hold highly erodible bluff land in place and reduces erosion.
7. In the steepest ravines (for example: along Grand View Drive), natural solutions do not work, and highly engineered piping and structures are key to keeping stormwater from eroding these areas.

The myriad of plans and studies have identified the problems and have suggested solutions. The implementation of those solutions has fallen short due to lack of funding. Communities and federal agencies have developed policies and best practices that have helped significantly, however there is still much to be done, and that will require massive funding

and effort. It is important to note the Park District's contributions to addressing the problem. A few of the District's efforts are noted.

• Since the 1970's, the Park District has acquired 67 individual parcels totaling 750 acres of riverfront land. These acquisitions protect vulnerable shoreline and floodplain areas of the Illinois River. This was a deliberate focus by the Park District, as this was one of the early identified goals for the Tri County Riverfront Action Forum.
• In 2002, the Mossville Bluffs Watershed Restoration Master Plan focused on bluff areas in Camp Wokanda, Robinson Park, and Forest Park. The plan identified very specific, site level best practices for erosion and sediment control. This study was one of the first to address the issues at a site level, and has served as the basis for all Park District bluff erosion projects since then. The Park District has spent millions of dollars installing these best practices, and continues to refine those practices.
• The Park District continues to manage bluff properties using prescribed burns and invasive plant removal. Prescribed burns are an essential practice to restore ground plain vegetation that holds and enriches highly erodible soil. The Park District is currently ramping up its capability for natural area restoration and maintenance with new staff roles and focus.
• The Park District has also been the first in the community to introduce and use such practices as bioswales, level spreaders, and pervious concrete. Those are projects conceived, designed, and implemented from the District's Planning Department based on best practices.
• In addition to actual work on the ground, the Park District has spent considerable staff time educating the public on bluffland best practices. From the Park District's Prairie School curriculum, to countless meetings with bluff landowners (including some as far away as the Mississippi River bluffs) Park District staff have championed best practices with the public at every opportunity.

In summary, the Park District is committed to action, not just words. The District has been actively delivering real results for many years. Moving forward, the Park District should certainly be involved in future conversations about the Illinois River. As the Peoria area's largest single landowner, the Park District has a compelling and continuing interest in the condition of the Peoria Lakes. The District welcomes conversations regarding the future of Peoria Lakes.

Trustee Bertschy MOVED TO RECOMMEND the Full Board approve a statement in support of this in which staff is to articulate the reasons. Motion seconded by Vice President Hill and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Montez, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays).

6.E. Trustee Request: Youth Advisory Council

Executive Director Cahill stated that per the request of Trustee Sierra, this item has been placed on the agenda for discussion. At the February DEIA Committee meeting, staff was asked to present a plan to the Board of Trustees related to the establishment of a Youth Advisory Council focused on middle school youth in the District. Staff proposes to utilize the District's Good Idea Council to serve in this capacity. The Good Idea Council is currently funded by Friends of Proctor and operates similarly to a student council or rotary club and

teaches kids in the 3rd-8th grade about being good citizens, the importance of voluntarism, and what it means to be philanthropist.

Currently the Council has 15-20 members who come from the following schools:
Reservoir
Lindbergh
Lincoln
St. Thomas
Charter Oak
Calvin Coolidge
Christ Lutheran
Maude Sanders

They meet monthly from September to May with one summer volunteer opportunity. To utilize the group in this role, they and their families will be given passes to facilities, events or programs and then asked to complete post-participation surveys. They will also be asked to give feedback about potential programming or other strategic considerations.

Trustee Harant stated that the Good Idea Council is good, but what she sees missing is an overarching statement of what the group is and how are they selected. There should be a connection back to the schools so that there can be more ideas or information gathered from the general population of the school. She would like to include high school and grammar school students as well. Executive Director Cahill stated that staff is very receptive to that idea and before this is all built out, staff understood what the Board's expectations were first, as it will take significant staff allocation and commitment to make it function, for example, transportation. It was thought that as that model was built out, possibly start with something that's already working and then support it with potentially more structure around targeted schools.

Trustee Harant stated that she is agreeable in starting with a structure that already exists. She does however, want to have clear, separate objectives and outcomes specific to the advisory portion of the group. Executive Director Cahills stated that staff needs a better understanding of what it is exactly the group should advise on so that a more robust proposal can be drafted. Trustee Harant agreed, stating that she would like to discuss that at a separate meeting.

6.F. Trustee Request: Committee Structure

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred.

6.G. Trustee Request: Attorney – Trustee Communications

Executive Director Cahill stated that per the request of Trustee Montez, this item has been placed on the agenda for discussion and consensus on the proper process for trustees to contact legal counsel and how billed time to should be authorized and tracked related to their requests. Legal counsel will provide information about process they use with other municipal clients for consideration by the Board.

Attorney Kevin Day stated that his firm represents the Park District and is appointed by the Board of Trustees. At the beginning of their representation, they were instructed to work through the Executive Director on a day-to-day basis. Their duty is to the confidentiality of the Park District. Conversations with Trustees and the Executive Director are privileged, but that's not to mean that that is an individual privilege, where they represent Trustees in their individual capacity. They represent the District and as such, conversations between himself and President Johnson for example, would be shared with other Trustees or the Executive Director, but that doesn't mean that the conversation would be shared with other Park District staff members. There is a differentiation between high level, i.e., President Johnson and Executive Director Cahill, and working downwards, similar to that of how representing a corporation would work.

Attorney Day stated that in regards to whether there is a current process or procedure to contact his office and ask that legal work be performed, he is unaware of any. This is a common topic that is brought up by governmental entities they represent. President Johnson stated that eventually, Park District attorneys report back to the Executive Director the items they are working on and requested by whom, especially since it appears in the monthly billing in which the Park District pays. President Johnson stated that parameters need to be set on how Trustees contact the District's attorneys. There are seven Trustees and it is a Board of the Whole, and it is not proper protocol for one Trustee to contact the District attorneys individually without contacting the Board President or Executive Director first. A private conversation between a Trustee and the District attorneys should not be held.

Trustee Harant MOVED TO REQUEST Staff and Legal Counsel Develop an Effective Policy Addressing this Issue to be Presented to the Full Board. Motion seconded by Trustee Bertschy and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Montez, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays).

7. PENDING BUSINESS

None noted at this time.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None noted at this time.

9. ACTION STEPS REVIEW

Due to time constraints, none noted at this time.

10. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:05 pm, Trustee Sierra MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustees Bertschy, Covington, Harant, Montez, Sierra, Vice President Hill, and President Johnson. (Results: 7 Ayes; 0 Nays).

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Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary