

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, HELD AT 6:30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026 HELD AT THE BONNIE W. NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, IL**

**TRUSTEES PRESENT:** Trustees Joyce Harant, Reagan Leslie Hill, Alexander Sierra, Ron Silver, Mark Slover, Vice President Steve Montez, and President Robert Johnson

**TRUSTEES ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Executive Director Emily Cahill, Brianna Cobb, Nick Conrad, Matt Freeman, Becky Fredrickson, Scott Loftus, Karrie Ross, Willie Howe, Mike Friberg, Angela Martiens, Kelli Parke, Melinda Huett, Mary Harden, Kristi Shoemaker, Attorneys Kevin Day and Kyle Tompkins, Miles Howley, and Alicia Woodworth

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

President Johnson presided and called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Roll call was taken.

**3. CALL FOR MOTION TO PERMIT TRUSTEE TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY**

No request was received to attend the meeting electronically.

**4. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

A moment of silence was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**5. MINUTES**

**5.A. Approval of Minutes of the April 8, 2026 Regular Board Meeting**

Trustee Harant requested the minutes of the April 8, 2026 Regular Board meeting include the names of those that spoke during Citizen Request to Address the Board. As such, the minutes will be revised and resubmitted for approval at the next Regular Board meeting.

**6. CITIZEN REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Mike Rucker (Trail Advocates / Friends of Rock Island Trail)

Mr. Rucker stated that he is the chairman of the group formerly known as Friends of Rock Island Trail, now Trail Advocates. He distributed handouts regarding the Detweiller Marina trail proposal and an additional trail-related matter.

He explained:

- The photograph provided shows where Caroline Street enters the Detweiller Marina.
- One map shows the current trail alignment; another shows the proposed alignment if the property sale proceeds.
- He emphasized that the trail is **heavily used**, noting he personally observed “half a dozen, maybe eight people” using the area that same day.
- He referenced the **Peoria Riverfront Museum 5K race**, which uses the trail from RiverPlex to the Goose Loop.
- He stated that if the property sale occurs, “we will pretty much lose that goose loop,” and the trail would become longer and significantly altered.

**Pat Palmer (Resident, 1419 NE Madison Ave, Peoria)**

Ms. Palmer stated she has lived in the neighborhood since 1976 and described the trail and river access as “a big huge part” of her life.

She stated:

- From her home, she can see Caroline Street and the river.
- She, her children, and grandchildren have all used the area extensively.
- Community interest has grown rapidly, noting:
  - 6 people attended an initial trail walk
  - 20 people attended the following weekend due to increased awareness

She provided personal observations:

- Families using the trail, including a bicycling family from Eureka who stopped due to fatigue
- Residents walking dogs
- Children playing at the water’s edge looking for wildlife

She emphasized:

- The uniqueness of the location as one of the few places with direct river access
- Concern that the community may lose this access

She referenced Thomas Detweiller’s will, stating it emphasized preserving riverfront land for public recreation due to increasing industrial encroachment.

**Joyce Blumenshine (Resident, 2419 E Reservoir Blvd, Peoria)**

Ms. Blumenshine:

- Thanked the Board, staff, and legal counsel for their work
- Commended the Board for allowing public input

She expressed concerns:

- Confusion regarding agenda timing, particularly that a decision appeared scheduled for April 23 (the following day)
- Concern that the timeline did not allow sufficient public awareness or input

She provided public engagement data:

- 65 attendees at a Sunday informational session
- Over 200 signatures collected during Earth Day
- Additional outreach at the Historic Preservation Commission

She urged:

- Clarification of the decision-making process
- Consideration of delaying action for further public awareness and deliberation

**Tim Herald (Resident, Detweiller Marina area)**

Mr. Herald stated he has lived in the area for nearly 30 years.

He:

- Referenced the historical context of the Detweiller Playground Trust
- Requested the Board postpone the vote, stating:

“It’s been there 80 years. What’s a couple more weeks?”

**Jo Lakota (Resident, 1111 W Russell St, Peoria)**

Ms. Lakota discussed:

- Historical and cultural significance of the area
- The presence of the Copper Falcon artifact (now in the Smithsonian)
- Historical use of the area, including French settlement remnants

She compared river access in other cities (Rockford and Moline), noting:

- Those cities maintain accessible riverfronts
  - Peoria's access is limited, making this site especially valuable
- She urged the Board not to dismiss the significance of the site.

**Karrie Alms (Resident, North Valley, since 1994)**

Ms. Alms requested postponement of both Items 11.A and 11.B.

She stated:

- Item 11.A represents "the cart before the horse" as it ties into easement changes
- Concern about the marina's prior neglect versus sudden redevelopment interest

She referenced:

- FOIA-obtained communications regarding Caroline Street acquisition and vacation
- Concerns about inconsistencies in legal documents (permanent vs. perpetual easement language)
- Missing exhibits in documentation

She urged:

- Delay of action
- More accurate and complete documentation for public review

**Julie Dodge (Resident, 8756 N Picture Ridge Rd, Peoria)**

Ms. Dodge:

- Spoke about Earth Day outreach and public awareness
- Thanked the Park District for stewardship and accessibility efforts

She expressed concerns:

- Loss of access for individuals with mobility limitations
- Importance of proximity for accessibility (not being able to walk several blocks)

She highlighted:

- Wildlife and natural features (geese, eagles)
- Use of the boat ramp by:
  - Fire Department
  - Commercial fishermen
  - Bass Pro Shops repair operations

She emphasized the site's unique functionality and urged expanded public access protections.

**Mike Rucker (Second Appearance – Trail Proposal)**

Mr. Rucker presented a second issue:

He proposed:

- Extending the Rock Island Greenway from Park Avenue
- Creating a safer alternative route to avoid unsafe conditions on Abington Street
- Utilizing a potential alley corridor to connect to Caroline Street and the marina

**Andy Schneider (President, Detweiller Playground Trust)**

Mr. Schneider responded to public concerns and provided clarification:

He stated:

- The Trust worked with Park District leadership to revise plans
- The project has been modified to:
  - Retain nearly 12 acres (up from 8 acres)
  - Preserve full riverfront and harbor access
  - Expand trail easement from 9 feet to 14 feet
  - Maintain Goose Loop and breakwater trail

He acknowledged:

- The trail will not be as straight as before

He explained:

- Proceeds from the sale would fund park improvements, including native plantings
- The Trust has lost money annually since 2010 and cannot sustain operations without action

He provided historical clarification:

- Original land donation was approximately 7 acres
- Additional land was later acquired and developed (including harbor and fill areas)

He concluded that:

- The plan will result in a “better trail, better park,” while maintaining access

**7. STAFF REPORTS**

**7.A. Executive Director**

**8. PRESENTATION OF THE 2025 LANDEN MEMORIAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD**

**9. PRESENTATION OF THE 2025 RHOELL E. OWENS DISTINGUISHED GROUP COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

**10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**10.A. Finance Committee – Approval of Accounts Payable**

Trustee and Finance Committee Chair Slover stated that the Finance Committee has examined the bills and MOVES that the President and the Secretary be authorized to issue orders on the Treasurer for the several amounts. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**11.A. Resolution – Future Collaborative Projects at Detweiller Marina**

Trustee Slover MOVED TO APPROVE the Resolution regarding future collaborative projects at Detweiller Marina. Motion Seconded by Trustee Silver.

As President Johnson began to move the item toward a vote, Trustee Sierra asked if the Board would be going directly to roll call? At that point, Attorney Kevin Day stepped in to clarify the proper procedure. He explained that since there was a motion and a second on the floor, the Board needed to address that motion before proceeding. He stated that this was the appropriate time for questions or discussion related to the motion.

Trustee Harant then asked whether the motion could be deferred or amended. Attorney Day responded that the motion could be amended, but only by the Trustee who originally made the motion, and that any amendment would require a second. He further explained that there are other procedural motions available, but reiterated that the Board currently had a motion pending that needed to be addressed.

President Johnson reinforced Attorney Day’s guidance, stating that there was a motion on the floor that had been seconded and that the Board needed to proceed with discussion on that motion. Trustee Sierra then indicated he had comments and referenced prior conversations that had taken place leading up to the meeting. He began to speak to his understanding of the proposal based on those discussions.

During the discussion, Trustee Slover expressed that he believed there had been significant compromise between the parties involved, including the Detweiller Playground Trust and O'Brien Steel. He stated that the proposal, as presented, would provide additional green space and maintain access to the river and marina. He commented that it appeared the parties had worked toward a solution that responded to concerns raised by the Park District and the community, and that from his perspective, the agreement represented a positive outcome. He stated that, based on what he had heard through discussions and negotiations, the proposal seemed like "a very good deal" and that he would like to see it move forward.

Trustee Sierra followed up by asking whether discussions had taken place regarding reducing the proposed easement expansion if the Board did not approve the item that night.

Attorney Bob Gates responded that conversations between attorney and client would remain confidential and would not be discussed publicly. He then added that momentum was important and stated that they appreciated the efforts of the Park District team throughout the negotiations. He further commented that significant effort had gone into attempting to reach a compromise solution that addressed public concerns while still allowing the project to move forward.

Trustee Harant then asked whether the Detweiller Playground Trust had received approval from the Illinois Attorney General's Office to sell the property to O'Brien Steel.

Attorney Bob Gates first responded that the approval is available in the court records, but we do have approval to sell our property.

Trustee Harant then clarified that her question was specifically whether there was approval to sell the parcel to a specific buyer, namely O'Brien Steel.

Attorney Gates responded that a broad-based order that is available, talks about selling the property in general.

Trustee Harant again clarified that she was asking whether there was Illinois Attorney General approval to sell the parcel to a specific entity such as O'Brien Steel.

Attorney Gates then stated that in this case, we visited Peoria County Courthouse, received a judge's approval for the sale of our property. Any Attorney General discussions would be between you and the Attorney General.

Attorney Day then added that the Attorney General participated in the hearing, and was made aware of that hearing, was noticed on that hearing, and he believes has been probably made well aware.

At this point, President Johnson asked if there were additional questions from the Board. Rather than continuing discussion on the merits of the proposal, Trustee Harant made a motion to defer Item 11.A to the next Regular Board meeting.

Trustee Harant MOVED TO DEFER this item until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustee Harant – Aye, Trustee Hill – Aye, Trustee Sierra – Aye, Trustee Silver – Aye, Trustee Slover – Nay, Vice President Montez – Nay, President Johnson – Aye. Results: 5 - Aye; 2 - Nay; 0 – Abstain

**11.B. Detweiller Marina/Trail Easement Expansion and Alteration**

President Johnson introduced this item regarding the Detweiller Marina trail easement expansion and alteration. Before any substantive discussion began, Trustee Sierra moved to defer Item 11.B. to the next Regular Board meeting. Trustee Hill seconded the motion. At that point, President Johnson briefly paused to confirm the motion and second, and then asked if there was any discussion on the motion to defer. No additional comments were made by Trustees at that time. The Board did not engage in further discussion on the merits of the easement expansion or alteration during this portion of the meeting. A roll call vote was then taken.

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO DEFER this item until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Hill and carried on the following roll call vote: Trustee Harant – Aye, Trustee Hill – Aye, Trustee Sierra – Aye, Trustee Silver – Aye, Trustee Slover – Nay, Vice President Montez – Nay, President Johnson – Aye. Results: 5 - Aye; 2 - Nay; 0 – Abstain

**11.C. Design Proposal – Design Development Phase – Owens Center**

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver and carried on unanimous roll call vote.

**11.D. Approval of AFSCME Union Contract**

Trustee Hill MOVED TO APPROVE. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried on unanimous roll call vote.

**11.E. Acceptance of City of Peoria CDBG Funds – Martin Luther King Jr Park**

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried on unanimous roll call vote.

**11.F. Rental Agreement – IDOT (Knoxville Ave & Northmoor Rd)**

Trustee Silver MOVED TO APPROVE. Motion seconded by Trustee Harant and carried on unanimous roll call vote.

**11.G. Pre-Travel Expenses Approval for Trustees to Attend the Annual IAPD Legislative Reception and Conference**

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver and carried on unanimous roll call vote.

**12. CALENDAR OF CONSENT ITEMS**

**12.A. Quote – 2026 Summer Camp Bus Services**

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO APPROVE Calendar of Consent item 12.A. Motion seconded by Vice President Montez and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

**13. PENDING BUSINESS**

None.

**14. COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**15. ACTION STEPS REVIEW**

No formal action steps were identified.

**16. OTHER BUSINESS**

**16.A. Approval to Convene into Closed Session Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) The Appointment, Employment, Compensation, Discipline, Performance, or Dismissal of Specific Employees of the Public Body.**

A Closed Session was not called.

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:07 PM Trustee Sierra MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver and carried unanimously on voice vote.

Full discussion can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mP6yBTgJim8>

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Submitted by Alicia Woodworth  
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary