

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PLEASURE DRIVEWAY AND PARK DISTRICT OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS HELD AT 10:00 A.M. ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026 AT THE BONNIE NOBLE CENTER FOR PARK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION, 1125 W. LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Trustees Joyce Harant, Ron Silver, Mark Slover, Vice President Steve Montez (in at 10:10 AM), and President Robert Johnson (in at 10:20 AM)

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Emily Cahill, Nick Conrad, Matt Freeman, Becky Fredrickson, Scott Loftus, Karrie Ross, Jennifer Swanson, Willie Howe, Tammy Johnson, Spencer Wilson, Mary Harden, Kristi Shoemaker, Yoginee Nawale, Mary Harden, Melissa Sierra, and Alicia Woodworth

OTHERS PRESENT: Joyce Blumenshine and Julie Dodge

1. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Harant called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll Call was taken.

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 July 1, 2026 Planning Committee Meeting

Trustee Silver MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes of the July 1, 2026 Planning Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Executive Director Cahill and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5. CITIZEN REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.A. Owens Capital Review

Staff reviewed feedback received during the recent Owens Center public input session. Suggestions included a third sheet of ice, additional locker rooms, a dedicated women's locker room, expanded changing space, preservation of some lobby character, second-level viewing space, enhanced concessions, additional public restrooms, a small skating-related library, continued communication with hockey and figure skating groups, and exploration of fundraising and recognition opportunities.

Staff reported that a third sheet of ice is not financially viable at this time. A preliminary estimate from the architect placed construction at approximately \$12-\$15 million, before considering the significant additional annual staffing and utility costs. The current concept can, however, be arranged so that the mechanical room does not preclude a future expansion. The Committee also discussed whether a mobile or temporary outdoor rink could provide additional public skating opportunities without the cost of a third permanent sheet.

The proposed renovation currently includes four additional locker rooms, improvements to existing locker rooms, space that could serve as a women's locker room or gender-neutral facility, and a separate changing area for younger skaters. Staff is also planning an improved cafe/concessions area and additional restroom stalls. A second-level viewing/bar area was described as cost prohibitive and difficult to configure effectively.

Staff will continue to keep user groups informed, provide trustees with Owens Center scheduling information, review the privately funded model used for the Dubuque, Iowa facility, and consider a donor/legacy recognition wall. Executive Director Cahill indicated that staff hopes to have a more formal update conversation with hockey stakeholders by the end of the year, after additional budget and project-scope work is completed.

6.B. OSLAD Grant Application

Staff reviewed a potential FY2026 Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant application for improvements at Charter Oak Park. The concept includes renovation of the existing tennis courts, four outdoor pickleball courts, a new shelter, roadway/parking improvements, and stormwater improvements. Staff estimated the project at approximately \$800,000, with the District's share expected to be approximately \$250,000 if grant funding is awarded. Lighting is not included, although conduit could be installed for possible future lighting.

Staff explained that Charter Oak was identified because the tennis courts are already a known future capital need and the site can be treated as a relatively defined project area for OSLAD purposes. The Committee discussed stormwater capacity, the competitiveness of the application, and the effect the required local match would have on future bond-issue priorities. Because applications are due at the end of August, the funding commitment and project priority will need to be discussed during the August Board/Strategy meetings.

6.C. License Agreement

Staff presented a proposed license agreement involving property owned by James and Jacqueline Ripper adjacent to Park District property at Singing Woods. A survey initiated by the property owners identified that portions of an existing garage, septic field, and related improvements encroach onto Park District property. The improvements predate the Rippers' purchase of the property, and the owners contacted the District after discovering the encroachment.

Staff explained that the District’s customary approach in a self-reported encroachment is to use a license agreement allowing the existing use to continue, but not expand, while preserving the District’s long-term property rights. The proposed license area is approximately 50 feet by 200 feet and would encompass the garage and septic-field encroachments. No license fee is proposed. The item will be placed on a future Board agenda for consideration.

6.D. DEE Amphitheater Update

Executive Director Cahill provided a follow-up on the DEE Amphitheater project. Equipment and landscaping will be separated into individual bids, and staff is developing cost estimates. Members of the project team were invited to observe the labor and operational requirements associated with setting up Soul Fest to help inform future planning.

Staff will continue to identify funding sources outside the Park District and, most likely, outside the City for Phase I operational necessities, while longer-term elements may be addressed through the City master plan or future fundraising. The project team is scheduled to meet again in late August. A pro forma and related financial discussion will be brought to the Board when sufficiently developed. Based on the current construction timeline, operations are anticipated in 2028, allowing adequate time to review any future agreement with the City concerning maintenance of Riverfront Park.

7. PENDING BUSINESS

None at this time.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.A. “Never Extinct” Lighting and Additional Elements

Staff is obtaining a revised quote for lighting intended to illuminate the “Never Extinct” sculpture, with installation anticipated in the fall. Trustee Harant discussed the importance of promoting the sculpture and exploring educational or interpretive elements such as signage, QR codes, or a walking timeline. The Committee discussed involving individuals with historical, arts, and interpretive-signage expertise and identifying possible grant opportunities once the desired scope is better defined.

8.B. Zoo Update

Executive Director Cahill reported continued momentum on the Peoria Zoo capital project. Approximately \$1.5 million in commitments had been reported during the prior four to six weeks. At the August Peoria Zoological Society meeting, the Society was expected to consider authorizing the next phase of construction documents for the meerkat, carousel, and animal care facility elements. If fundraising continues, staff hopes construction on a project could begin next spring.

8.C. Dog Park Public Input Scheduling

The Committee discussed how to structure public input regarding dog parks. Staff proposed first assessing viable locations where maintenance resources are available,

then preparing a community survey that could gather feedback on both potential locations and user behavior/education issues at existing dog parks. Committee members emphasized that public input should address more than location and should include concerns regarding responsible use of dog parks.

Staff will prepare a draft survey for Committee review. Depending on the response, the survey may be followed by a public conversation. The Committee also discussed providing information about existing dog park locations so residents understand what facilities are currently available.

8.D. Email Re: A Collaborative Vision for the Future of the Detweiller Marina and Playground

The Committee reviewed the August 4, 2026 email from Tim Herold on behalf of the Detweiller Playground Protectors outlining a collaborative vision for the future of the Detweiller Playground and Marina. The vision calls for preserving the riverfront for public recreation, improving accessibility and recreational opportunities, protecting natural and cultural resources, and pursuing collaborative governance and community investment.

The Committee discussed the current ownership and prior negotiations involving the property. Executive Director Cahill expressed concern about initiating a new Park District-led discussion without participation or an invitation from the property owner/trust, noting the difficulty created by prior discussions. Members generally recognized that the District could participate if the property owner or City initiated a collaborative process, but that the District cannot direct the use of privately owned property. Trustee Harant suggested the broader issue may be appropriate for future Strategy Committee discussion.

9. ACTION STEPS REVIEW

Staff will continue development of the dog park survey and related public-input process.

10. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:00 am, Trustee Silver MOVED TO ADJOURN the meeting. Motion second by Executive Director Cahill and carried on unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary