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 5:00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025 HELD AT THE BONNIE NOBLE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1125 WEST LAKE AVENUE, PEORIA IL

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Emily Cahill, Nick Conrad, Becky Fredrickson, Matt Freeman, Becky Fredrickson, Scott Loftus, Karrie Ross, Jennifer Swanson, Mary Harden, Kristi Shoemaker, Tammy Johnson, Mike Eddlemon, Spencer Wilson, Attorneys Kevin Day and Justin Gunn, and Alicia Woodworth.

OTHERS PRESENT: -Ryan Hoff, Claire Eaton, and Kate Pearson (attended virtually) of McKinstry
-Joyce Blumenshine of Heart of Illinois Sierra Club (encouragement of sustainability work)
-Jim Haptonstahl of Peoria 50501 (remarks on peaceful demonstrations and appreciation for Board accommodation)

1. CALL TO ORDER
President Johnson presided and called the meeting to order at 5:06 pm.

2. ROLL CALL
Roll call was taken.

3. MOTION TO PERMIT TRUSTEE TO ATTEND MEETING ELECTRONICALLY
No request to attend meeting electronically was received.

4. MINUTES

4.A. Approval of Minutes of September 10, 2025 Strategy Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Trustee Harant MOVED TO APPROVE the minutes of the September 10, 2025 Strategy Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Slover and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

5. POLICY/PROCESS UPDATES
None at this time.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.A. McKinstry Presentation
Tammy Johnson reminded the Board that McKinstry was selected in November 2024 following an RFP to analyze fossil fuel reduction and alternative energy opportunities across the District.

- **Presentation by Claire Eaton (Project Manager), Ryan Hoff (Engineer), and Kate Pearson (Solar Engineer):**

- **Workshops Conducted:**
  - *Carbon Accounting Best Practices* – analyzed sources of emissions (electricity, natural gas, fleet fuels).
  - *High Performance Buildings* – benchmarking facility energy use against efficient building standards.
  - *Renewables & Purchasing* – feasibility of solar installations, funding, and purchasing strategies
- **Findings:**
  - Electricity was the largest emissions source; solar offsets were already reducing utility-sourced emissions.
  - Several facilities performed near efficiency benchmarks, while outliers indicated opportunities for deeper dives.
- **Solar Recommendations:**
  - *Golf Learning Center* – 44 kW rooftop system offsetting ~50% of usage.
  - *Equipment Maintenance Facility* – 127 kW rooftop system offsetting nearly all usage (structural reinforcement needed).
  - *Lakeview Recreation Center* – 85 kW ground mount offsetting ~80% of usage.
  - *Secondary Option:* RiverPlex carport array, requiring further review due to proximity to railroad and bike trail.
- **Financial Incentives:** Illinois Shines REC program, Ameren smart inverter rebate, and IRA/ITC direct pay credits (30–40%). Potential lifetime project benefit estimated at $1.4M over 30 years
- **Sustainability Projects:**
  - Retro-commissioning recommended at RiverPlex and Noble Center to optimize building automation systems.
  - Lighting controls at RiverPlex; window/envelope upgrades at Proctor Center.
  - Fleet electrification considered for light vehicles as feasible; heavy-duty equipment not yet viable.
  - Ameren incentives cover 95% of survey costs and provide additional rebates.
- **Overall Impact:** Implementing recommended projects could reduce greenhouse gas

- **Board Questions & Discussion:**
  - Clarification on solar capacity: recommendations would add ~250 kW, increasing District solar capacity ~25%.
  - Prioritization: Golf Learning Center and Equipment Maintenance Facility ranked highest, followed by Lakeview.
  - Discussion of wind energy and use of agricultural land for community solar; McKinstry noted financial and logistical challenges but identified leasing land as an option.
  - Retro-commissioning defined as “fine-tuning” existing automation systems without replacing equipment.
  - Trustees raised questions about ROI, energy pricing, methane vs CO_2 equivalence, and emergency backup power needs.

6.B. Police Fund 2026 Draft Budget Discussion

Due to time constraints, this item was tabled and not discussed.

6.C. Handling of Public Demonstrations Discussion

Executive Director Cahill introduced this item by noting the significant increase in requests for demonstrations and rallies on Park District property in recent months. While the District welcomes public expression and recognizes the importance of free speech, staff are struggling with how to balance access with the District's responsibility for safety, liability, and fairness. Current policy requires a Facility Use Agreement and a Certificate of Insurance for any organized use of park facilities. Executive Director Cahill explained that the District has historically applied this consistently, as recommended by PDRMA, the District's risk management agency.

However, grassroots organizers have raised concerns that insurance is financially prohibitive for them and effectively restricts access to park land for First Amendment activities. Staff therefore sought Board consensus on whether to enforce the insurance requirement, waive it for demonstrations, or develop an alternative process.

Discussion Highlights:

- Trustee Sierra expressed that requiring a Certificate of Insurance for grassroots demonstrations sets an unreasonable barrier and conflicts with the District's values of public access. He moved to waive the insurance requirement for demonstrations, emphasizing that peaceful assembly is a constitutional right and should not be conditioned on coverage that many organizers cannot obtain.
- Vice President Hill seconded the motion, agreeing that the District must protect free speech while still ensuring basic order and safety.
- Trustee Harant voiced support but cautioned that staff need clear guidelines so enforcement is consistent and not left to case-by-case judgment.
- Attorney Day raised concerns about liability exposure and whether waiving insurance could set a precedent that undermines the District's risk management practices. He urged that the Board carefully weigh the potential risks.
- Executive Director Cahill reiterated that staff would still require a signed Facility Use Agreement (with no fee), allowing the District to establish rules of conduct, designate locations, and ensure coordination with security and police if needed. The waiver would apply only to insurance requirements, not to the overall process.

Trustee Sierra MOVED TO PROVIDE CONSENSUS TO WAIVE the Certificate of Insurance Requirement for any Event as it Relates to the First Amendment, Pending Policy Review and More Information from PDRMA. Motion seconded by Vice President Hill and carried unanimously on roll call vote. Direction was provided to staff to revise internal procedures accordingly while continuing to require a Facility Use Agreement and adherence to PDRMA guidelines where applicable.

At 6:29 PM, Trustee Harant MOVED TO RECESS the Strategy Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

At 7:20 PM, Trustee Slover MOVED TO RECONVENE the Strategy Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Sierra and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

7. PENDING BUSINESS

Following reconvening, the Committee held a lengthy and at times challenging exchange, primarily between Trustees Sierra and Slover, regarding revisions to the District's DEIA Pillars and community workforce development. Trustee Slover summarized his recent meeting with Trustee Sierra, Executive Director Cahill, and staff. He emphasized that while there was common ground, he remained concerned about several areas:

- Maintaining Pillar 4 of the DEIA document (community workforce development).
- The District's 20% minority workforce goal, which he believed was higher and inconsistent with City and County benchmarks.
- The contracting goals with minority- and women-owned businesses, which he felt might discourage some contractors.
- The "good faith effort" requirement in the procurement policy, which he opposed, arguing that staff already act in good faith and that additional requirements may not be realistic in the current labor market.

Trustee Sierra, as DEIA Committee Chair, responded that:

- The procurement policy and DEIA commitments were previously adopted by Board consensus and remain in effect.
- Any proposed changes must be brought formally to the DEIA Committee and/or full Board.
- The "good faith" requirement was designed to be evaluated using Illinois Human Rights Code standards and was previously discussed as part of the contractor dashboard reporting framework.
- Many of Trustee Slover's points (e.g., surveys of contractors, workforce pipeline initiatives) are already underway, but alignment with regional efforts led by Mayor Ali's procurement working group is critical before making changes.

- Trustee Slover maintained that prior DEIA discussions had not reached true consensus and that he had been "shut down" in committee by both Trustee Sierra and community representatives. He expressed frustration about transparency and about the Park District's goals being out of step with other government entities.
- Trustee Sierra reiterated his role as DEIA Chair to keep committee discussions on track, emphasized that Board-adopted goals cannot be disregarded without formal action, and defended the District's leadership role in regional DEIA and procurement initiatives.
- Both Trustees Sierra and Slover agreed more clarity was needed on aligning Park District policy with ongoing City and County initiatives, and that further revisions should wait until regional strategies are clearer.

- Outcome: No formal action was taken. The discussion will continue in the DEIA Committee, with the understanding that any proposed changes must be advanced to the full Board for decision.

8. CITIZEN REQUEST TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Joyce Blumenshine of Heart of Illinois Sierra Club commended the District for its ongoing sustainability leadership. She stated that the Sierra Club has been following the District's efforts closely and was especially encouraged by the McKinstry presentation and the consideration of

solar, retro-commissioning, and fossil fuel reduction strategies. She emphasized that the Park District has become a regional leader in sustainability, with its work influencing the City of Peoria and Peoria County. She urged the Board to continue prioritizing renewable energy and climate-conscious initiatives, noting that other governments and agencies will "copy what you are doing" because of the District's example.

Jim Haptonstahl, co-leader of the Peoria 50501 chapter of the national *50 Protests, 50 States, One Movement* grassroots organization, spoke about his group's demonstrations and appreciation for the Park District's cooperation. He explained that the movement, founded about eight months ago, responds to what members believe is "authoritarian executive overreach" at the federal level, but is organized to be peaceful, nonviolent, and locally grounded**.**

- He highlighted that Peoria 50501 has grown to over 1,200 members in its Facebook group and more than 1,500 followers on TikTok, with strong local participation.
- The group trains ushers in de-escalation techniques to ensure protests remain safe, peaceful, and respectful of others.
- He acknowledged the risks of rising political tension and the potential for counter-protests but reiterated the group's commitment to peaceful assembly and First Amendment expression.
- Mr. Haptonstahl expressed gratitude to the Park District for accommodating events in District parks, emphasizing that the group could not afford formal insurance because they are grassroots, non-501(c)(3) entity, but still wished to work in partnership with the District.
- He specifically thanked staff and the Board for the evening's decision to waive the Certificate of Insurance requirement for demonstrations, which will allow his group to continue holding events in Park District facilities.

He closed by stressing that the movement's goal is to provide a positive outlet for free speech and civic engagement, while working respectfully with the Park District to maintain safety and order.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

9.A. Approval to Convene into Closed Session Pursuant to Section 2(c)(6) Concerning the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body, and, pursuant to Section 2(c)(8) Security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property.

This item was deemed not necessary at this time and therefore pulled from the agenda.

10. ACTION STEPS REVIEW

None noted at this time.

11. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:25 PM, Trustee Sierra MOVED TO ADJOURN. Motion seconded by Trustee Silver and carried unanimously on roll call vote.

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Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Woodworth
Executive Assistant and Board Secretary