

**Park District of Oak Park
For Immediate Release
January 23, 2012**



A New Home for Oak Park Gymnastics Center *Park Board votes to utilize 25 Lake Property for Gymnastics Program*

After extensive research and hearing public input on a proposed new gymnastic center, the Park District of Oak Park Board of Park Commissioners voted at its Jan. 19 meeting to begin planning for construction of a new facility at 25 Lake Street. The District purchased the property, formerly the Aldi grocery, in October 2011.

The decision is expected to relieve the severe overcrowding at the District's facility at 218 Madison, which houses the gymnastics center, the buildings and grounds operations, and the District's administrative offices.

The gymnastics program serves an average of 1,400 students each season, and there is consistently as many as 100 to 200 students on a waiting list. The buildings and grounds operations are challenged by insufficient space for equipment and supply storage and work areas to perform vital functions.

"The decision to build a new gymnastics facility at the 25 Lake location is a major milestone for the Park District," stated Park Board President Marty Bracco. "The Park District's gymnastics program is extremely popular in our community and we look forward to expanding program offerings to better serve the needs and interests of our residents."

Since purchasing the property, the Park District has worked with Williams Architects to evaluate the best use for the new space -- either as a new gymnastics center or a buildings and grounds facility. In November 2011 Williams Architects completed an evaluation of facility usage options and recommended construction of a new gymnastics center at the 25 Lake property and the expansion of buildings and grounds operations at 218 Madison. A validation study of the spatial needs and probable costs for the gymnastics center and the buildings and grounds operations completed in January reinforced this recommendation prompting the Park Board's decision to move forward with the construction of a new gymnastics facility. With this decision, the District is still in search of space for outdoor bulk storage for the buildings and grounds department.

The budget for both the 25 Lake Project and the expansion of buildings and grounds at 218 Madison is \$6.7 million. Williams explored cost estimates for both projects and concluded the budget can achieve the conceptual plans outlined.

Next steps will be the demolition of the current building located at 25 Lake. The District will begin to negotiate an agreement with Williams Architects for professional design services and develop a project timeline. "This new facility will meet the Park District's objectives," said

Assistant Director/Superintendent of Recreation Matthew Ellmann.” It will allow the District to provide a modernized facility that provides safer access for our participants with parking and a drop-off area.”

For more details, please contact Matthew Ellmann, Park District Assistant Director/Superintendent of Recreation, at matte@oakparkparks.com or 708/725-2021.

###