PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK
Committee of the Whole

Oak Park Conservatory
615 Garfield St., Oak Park
Thursday, October 7, 2004 7:30pm

Minutes

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:40pm by President Kelly.
Commissioners Present: President Kelly; Commissioners Kindler and Philion. Commissioner Gartland arrived at 7:46pm. Commissioner Conway was absent
Staff Present: Gary Balling, Executive Director; Kent Newton, Superintendent of Business Operations; Mike Grandy, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds; Lisa Lightcap, HR/Business Operations Assistant.
PDCC Members Present: Mary Kay O'Grady and Patience Nelson

II. Administration and Finance Committee—Commissioner Gartland: Chair

A. Park District Citizen Committee – Governance Position Statement

Park District Citizen Committee members, Patience Nelson and Mary Kay O'Grady, discussed the PDCC's Governance Position Statement. The PDCC has unanimously accepted this statement byemail and will consider action on it at their next meeting. Ms. O'Grady and Ms. Nelson discussed the process by which the Committee came to consensus which included a thorough, objective process which reviewed all governance models and applied a thoughtful set of criteria, all while responsibly representing the citizens of Oak Park. The criteria applied were: vision, planning and community input, sufficient assets, service delivery, citizen involvement, community benefits, partnering, sustainability and access to decision makers. After thorough review, the Committee determined that consolidation under the Park District is the best governance model. Access to decision makers is highly valued in Oak Park and the Park District model, with a Board focused only on parks and recreation would be the best model to accomplish this. The Committee recommends that the Park District and Village work to immediately consolidate parks and recreation policies, programs, assets, funding and responsibilities under the Park District independently of the completion of the Master Plan. This would involve transferring the centers to the Park District and parkways to the Village, reorganizing funding deficits, working to address sustainability for meeting current and future needs and creating partnerships to create maximum community benefit from collective assets.
Commissioner Kindler and Commissioner Philion questioned whether there would be funding and administrative advantages if the Park District became a department of the Village. Ms. O'Grady stated that the benefits of a separate Park District, with its access to decision makers, would outweigh any advantage that a Village department would have. Commissioner Philion then asked what the Committee's rationale was for transferring the parkways to the Village. Ms. Nelson stated that this is not useable recreation space, the Park District is simply maintaining the space and it is not within the Park District's mission or means to have property such as this. Commissioner Kindler stated that he was grateful to the PDCC for their tremendous amount of thoughtful reflection on the issues and Oak Park should have confidence that this issue was thoroughly researched. President Kelly recommended and the Board agreed that public comments on the PDCC Governance Position Statement be taken at the October 21 Board Meeting. The Board will then discuss the Position Statement and take action on whether or not they are in concurrence.

B. Draft Lease and Partner Agreement OPRF Historical Society

Director Balling discussed the first reading of the draft three year lease and partner agreement with the OPRF Historical Society. The terms of the two part Agreement are being discussed with Frank Lipo of the Historical Society. Because these details are being worked out, the Board will not take action on the Agreement in October.

C. Budget Update

Superintendent Newton distributed and discussed the draft Budget Highlights. The Highlights state that the Park District is seeing signs that recent action's to improve the Park District's financial situation are having a positive effect. Preliminary 2004 year-end estimates indicate that the Park District will have increased fund balances by a greater than budgeted amount and program revenues are anticipated to exceed expectations. The 2005 Budget builds on these successes and continues improvement in programming, staff training and fiscal responsibility. Superintendent Newton requested and the Board agreed that at the October 21 Meeting, the Board will consider action to place the 2005 Budget on the table for 30 day public review.

III. Buildings and Grounds/Facility Maintenance—Commissioner Kindler: Chair

A. Park Signage

Superintendent Grandy discussed his recommendation for park signage replacement. The signs he recommends are made of High Density Polyethylene framed in cedar. The Park District's maintenance staff would build the frames. The signs would have one section of our logo that is identical to all other signs to allow for more efficient and cost effective printing. An additional section on the sign would describe the park location. Superintendent Grandy stated that the signs would cost approximately $1,000 each and there are 70 signs that could potentially be replaced throughout the Park District. The Board agreed that replacing all 70 signs at this point in time would not be financially feasible. The Board directed Superintendent Grandy to create a mock sign so the Board could better decide whether they like the sign and Commissioner Conway could be present. If the Board determines they like the mock sign, signs would be produced for Barrie Park, which would be paid for as part of the restoration efforts, and Merritt Lovett Field in Lindberg Park, which has been missing a sign since it was named after Merritt Lovett.

B. Fall Park Tour – Saturday, November 13 at 8:30am

Commissioner Kindler asked that the Board members check their calendars to see if they are available for the Fall Park Tour on Saturday, November 13.

C. Barrie Park Restoration Update

Director Balling stated that the Park should be complete by the end of the year and the park area around Barrie Center should be complete by Thanksgiving. Installation of shrubs, light posts and the irrigation system is beginning. Plans for work on Barrie Center are continuing.

D. Extension of the Temporary Dogs Off Leash Permit

Commissioner Kindler discussed staff's recommendations to extend the Temporary Dogs Off Leash Permit through March 13, 2005 at Lindberg Park and Ridgeland Common. Director Balling explained that Janet Kelenson and the Oak Park Dogs group have done a great job of communicating with the Park District and ensuring that dogs and their owners follow the rules set forth during off leash times. He then stated that there has been very little negative feedback from staff or community members about the off leash hours. Because this permit seems to be effective for the time being and the Comprehensive Master Plan is not yet complete, Director Balling recommended that this permit be extended on a temporary basis through March 13, 2005. Beginning November 13, 2004, the time will revert to 7:00am – 9:00am on Saturdays and Sundays. Legal Holidays will be included at Ridgeland Common Park from 7:00am - 9:00am. The Board concurred that this item should be placed on the consent agenda at October 21 meeting.

E. Update on Austin Gardens

Director Balling explained that CYLA Design Associates will lead three focus groups on Wednesday, October 20 as part of the update of the Austin Gardens Site Master Plan. Community Groups have been invited to participate in these sessions which will focus on Maintenance, Safety and Security at 9:30am; Aesthetic Character, Trees and Nature at 11:00am; and Business and Tourism at 2:00pm. Director Balling requested that the Board let him know if they are interested in attending any of these sessions.

F. Gymnastics Center Truss

Superintendent Mike Grandy explained that a truss in the Gymnastics Center will need to be replaced. While this presents no imminent danger to anyone or anything at the Center, the work will need to be completed prior to snowfall. A support has been installed until the replacement can be completed. The replacement work will cost approximately $10,000 - $15,000 to complete and the Center will need to be closed down for a week to ten days. Superintendent Grandy has been working with Gymnastics Program Director, Jamie Lapke, to determine the best time for the work to be done.

IV. Recreation and Facility Program Committee – Commissioner Philion: Chair - No Action.

V. New Business – No discussion.

VI. Executive Session - At 9:38pm, a motion was made by Commissioner Kindler and seconded by Commissioner Philion to adjourn to closed session for the discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employee of the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee to determine its validity in accordance with section 2 (C) (1) which is an exception to the Open Meetings Act.. Motion passed in a voice vote of 4:0. The Board went into Executive Session at 9:45pm. The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:12pm.

VII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Kindler and seconded by Commissioner Gartland to adjourn the meeting at 10:15pm. Motion carried in a voice vote of 4:0.

Secretary	**President**
Board of Park Commissioners	**Board of Park Commissioners**
November 18, 2004	**November 18, 2004**
Date	**Date**