

Park District of Oak Park [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org)

Park District of Oak Park, Board information: [www.pdop.org/about/park-board/](http://www.pdop.org/about/park-board/)

Regular Board Meeting, February 16, 2017.

Joan Fiscella, Observer

The meeting was held at the Hedges Administrative Center.

Present: Commissioners Victor Guarino (Vice President); Sandy Lentz (Secretary); Kassie Porreca; David Wick (Treasurer). Absent: Paul Aeschleman (President)

Vice-President Victor Guarino opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Approval of the Agenda:

The Board approved the agenda.

Annual Community Services Awards.

McLouis "Mac" Robinet served Oak Park for six years on the OP Energy and Environment Commission before joining the Park District Greening Advisory Committee. Early in 2016 he made a connection with a developer who wanted to lease roof space for solar panels and introduced the developer to the OP Park District. After research into the possibility, the Board of Commissioners approved a contract with the developer to install solar panels on the roof of Ridgeland Common Recreation. This project will save approximately \$7,000 annually and reduce the carbon footprint of the District.

Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (FOPCON) was founded in 1986. By raising funds and working with the Oak Park Park District, FOPCON has helped make the Conservatory one of the top three historic destinations in Oak Park. Volunteers help run special events, provide educational programming and fundraising. Since its founding, the Friends have contributed over 1 million dollars for infrastructure improvements, most recently the Elsie Jacobsen Discovery Garden in 2015.

Visitor/Public Comments:

None

Old Business

A. Recreation and Facility Program Committee: None

B. Building and Grounds/Facility Maintenance Committee: Commissioner Guarino

1. Ridgeland Common Recreation Complex Motorized Blinds

The Park Board of Commissioners voted to give authorization for Executive Director Arnold to engage Tunnel Vision, Inc., of Chicago, IL, for an amount not to exceed \$35,502 including a 5% contingency for the Ridgeland Common Recreation Complex blinds installation project. All present voted yes.

The purpose is to better control light and heat.

2. Taylor Park Drainage

The Park Board of Commissioners voted to give authorization for Executive Director Arnold to engage Team Reil, Inc., Union, Illinois, for an amount not to exceed \$84,500 to allow this project to be completed in 2017 by AYSO [soccer organization] providing the necessary funds.

Team Reil was the 2nd lowest bidder, chosen because the lowest bidder did not meet the needs of the project.

The Park District is providing staff time to complete the project.

The Commissioners thanked AYSO for its contribution. Although there are no guarantees, this approach is the best the Park District can foresee. It is a better option than an artificial surface. The Park District will track the speed of recovery of the playing field, and will make adjustments as necessary.

3. Austin Gardens Update: verbal update.

At this point the District is doing an analysis of 33 trees, 14 of which are memorial trees. There are fewer than 6 hours of sunlight on a given day; the sunlight is needed for the trees to thrive. This is a worse case scenario.

Research is still being done on the trees, as the District tries to get more data, including wind data. Since July 2016, Austin Gardens has lost 4 trees that were between 22-28 feet. The loss was due to wind, but they do not know whether or not the Vantage building was the cause or contributed to the loss. More studies will be done, for example, on the combination of wind, less sun, etc. What is the cumulative effect? What is the effect on park visitors' experience of the park? More information will be available at the March 2 Committee of the Whole meeting. The staff was thanked for the extensive time it is giving to the analysis.

C. Administration and Finance Committee: Commissioner Wick  
Historic Properties Facility Assessment

The Park Board of Commissioners approved the contract with Rocco Castellano Design Studio Inc., of Chicago, IL for an amount not to exceed \$27,285.

The assessment concerns capital planning for Cheney Mansion, Pleasant Home, and the Conservatory. The Company is charged with compiling information on the conditions for each building in terms of its "envelope", roofing and flashing, electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, and interior finishes, with a priority rating for each building. All present voted yes.

New Business –

1. Annual Recreation Department Report

Members of the staff reported. The annual reports began in 2005.

Revenue went up to \$1 million, a 21% increase. Activities included doing a survey; they were able to buy equipment at lower prices; there was a 2% increase in use.

Sports included fewer programs but brought in an increase in money. Hiring specialized instructors led to improvement. 2017 is showing an increase of 25% as of February.

Teen activities are showing steady numbers; camps remain active. There is an increase in drop-ins (typical of teen behavior); more middle school students are participating. Marketing has changed for teens.

Fine arts program has shown some increase in participation, especially in the dance programs. There is a new dance instructor who has accounted for some of the increase. There was growth in the 2016 summer circus camps. A greater number of adults participated in ceramics classes.

Early childhood activities have shown an increase in enrollment, perhaps due to consistency of instructors. Nature and environment activities are being incorporated into childhood exploration; adventure camps did well.

Growth was also seen in community programs for adults, the Frank Lloyd Wright runners.

The staff are preparing for the "next big thing." What will people be interested in next, what training does the staff need? Understanding the life cycles of programs is important for long range planning. Because of the growth in programs, the staff is running out of space for programs.

2. Annual Revenue Facilities Report

These facilities seem to be doing well. In 2013, the ice rink began to be available year around, and it seems to be working. A greater number of new staff has been hired at Ridgeland Common. Gymnastics remain active, as are pool users. More pass-holders are using pools.

Rehm Park is putting up shades for rentals. Swim lessons continue well. Concessions remain a challenge for outdoor events, and the staff is modifying the offerings.

Users still show interest in figure skating and ice hockey for the ice rinks. There is still interest for adult skating.

The gymnastics programs have offered fewer classes, but the usage is still up. Birthday parties are still successful; only one was not filled.

Two hundred kids are on recreation wait lists.

The dog park is doing well.

Pools: water temperature has improved, and the staff has gotten high reviews. The quality of the lifeguards is very high: they are drilled every day. There are occasions when the pools can't be open as often as residents want, but the staff is putting safety first

#### Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Porreca: Attended FOPCON Board meeting; its retreat focused on funding and philanthropy. Likes the Park Board statement about Austin Gardens; thinks citizens are responding well.

Commissioner Wick: Attended the peace demonstration at Scoville Park. He is preparing for the conversation about Austin Gardens.

Commissioner Lentz. On March 1st, there will be a play reading from the play Lovers at Connolly's, 7:00 pm.

Commissioner Guarino: Congratulations and thanks to the winners of the Community Service awards. He wants to be sure that the Park District holds fast to the already determined 80 feet building height limit. Any meeting is to explain to developers; it is not a negotiation.

The Regular Board Meeting will be continued to March 2, 2017.

All present agreed.

The meeting was adjourned,