

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
FEBRUARY 19, 2019  
7:00 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present:

President Susan Aberman  
Vice President Michael Reid  
Commissioner Michael W. Alter  
Commissioner Khemarey Khoeun  
Commissioner Maureen Yanes

Others Present:

Executive Director/Secretary John V. Ohrlund  
Superintendent of Business Services William G. Schmidt  
Superintendent of Recreation and Facilities Michelle Tuft  
Superintendent of Parks Mike Rea  
Assistant Superintendent Jon Marquardt  
Marketing and Communications Manager Jim Bottorff  
Graphic Designer Rachel Pozner  
Graphic Designer Scott Walker  
Skatium Facility Manager Kurt VonHelms  
Customer Service Supervisor Iris Levin  
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Aberman called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

Mr. Benjamin Schueler said he advocates dogs in parks. Mr. Schueler said one of the District core values is open spaces and he would like to enjoy beautiful opens spaces with his dog.

Mr. Arthur Rosenson asked the Board to consider scheduling more tennis lessons at the Skokie Park Tennis Center on weekends instead of Central Park tennis courts. There are eight courts at the tennis center and scheduling tennis lessons at Central Park does not allow for neighborhood residents to use the courts. Superintendent Tuft said she will speak with the tennis supervisor to coordinate tennis programming and will keep Mr. Rosenson informed.

Mr. Scott Holtz urged the Board to move forward with allowing dogs in parks. Mr. Holtz said he is a web designer and a former Skokie Chamber member. He recommended the District try to stay local when awarding bids.

Mr. Dennis Clark concurred with allowing dogs in parks. People walking their dogs experience nature and interact with other dog owners and neighbors.

Mr. Kenneth Mantel supports increased access to dogs in parks. Other communities allow and he would like to expand access at all parks.

Judy Mendel checked with other communities and does not think a pilot program for dogs is necessary, and asked how it would be monitored.

President Aberman thanked everyone for their comments. She said it demonstrates their passion and the Board appreciates the comments.

### **CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner Alter moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Yanes seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners present voted aye. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of minutes of the January 8, 2019 Diversity Advisory Committee Meeting; Regular meeting of January 15, 2019; bills payable for the month of January /February 2019; Treasurer's Report; and Staff Reports.

### **DISCUSSION ON DOGS IN PARKS**

Executive Director Ohrlund presented some information for consideration in changing the ordinance on dogs in the parks. Executive Director Ohrlund said there are Village of Skokie ordinances and a park district ordinance. The Village ordinances states that dogs must be on leash and are not allowed on park district or school property unless otherwise permitted by the local governmental authority.

In 2002 a group addressed the Board regarding dogs in parks. A public hearing was held. The end result was that four parks were allowed to have dogs on leash on certain pathways. The parks are Central, Devonshire, Laramie and Dammrich Rowing Center.

Most nearby communities allow dogs in parks on leash. Morton Grove Park District changed their ordinance two years ago, a process that took about five months.

Steps would need to be taken with the Village of Skokie Health Department and rules would need to be established. Certain parks would likely not be appropriate for dogs such as Emily Oaks Nature Center and Kawaga Garden. If the ordinance was revised specific rules would need to be established and review would be needed by the Village, attorney, etc.

President Aberman opened up the meeting for discussion.

Commissioner Yanes asked about any feedback from staff on dogs in the parks at Devonshire, Laramie, Central Parks and Dammrich Rowing Center. Superintendent Rea said there have not been any concerns. The park monitor handles any issues with dogs off leash. Commissioner Yanes asked if there are any refuse stations. Dog owners bring their own bags. The cost of providing refuse bags was discussed.

Vice President Reid suggested that staff draft some rules and regulations, have the attorney review, investigate costs and provide to the Board to review to make an intelligent decision. This was the consensus of the Board.

### **WEBSITE PRESENTATION**

Jim Bottorff, Marketing and Communications Manager announced to the Board that the new website went live today. Jim introduced Graphic Designers Rachel Pozner and Scott Walker

who worked many hours on the new website over the last six months. Staff is excited about this great new resource for the community. President Aberman asked if registering for programs will be easier. Mr. Bottorff said WebTrac has not changed. The website will make it easier to navigate. Mr. Bottorff announced the headliner bands for Backlot Bash; Friday, the Smithereens with Marshall Crenshaw; Saturday, War; and Sunday, Tributosaurus as the Rolling Stones.

### **APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR LARAMIE PARK RENOVATION PROJECT**

Superintendent Rea said the District was awarded an OSLAD grant in the amount of \$400,000 for the Laramie Park renovation project. The planning process involves design development, public hearing, a final design, construction design, permitting, bidding, award and park construction. The grant is a matching grant, but the project scope will likely be around \$1,200,000. Some of the amenities being considered are a new shelter, pickleball courts, ball diamond, splash pad, more parking and a universal design playground. Staff is requesting approval of the professional services agreement with Hitchcock Design Group. The District has used Hitchcock Design Group on several renovation projects and have been very satisfied with their work.

Commissioner Yanes moved to approve the agreement with Hitchcock Design Group for professional services for the Laramie Park renovation project for \$97,600. Commissioner Khoeun seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

### **SKATIUM MAJOR MECHANICAL PROJECT BID REVIEW**

Superintendent Rea said bids were opened on February 7<sup>th</sup>. The bids came in much higher than estimated. The project was estimated at \$3,247,000. The bids came in at \$3,882,000 which does not include engineer fees or dasher boards, which are an additional \$191,000. After much review staff is recommending all bids be rejected and the project be rebid at a future date. Superintendent Rea said staff will meet with engineers to see how the project can be revised. President Reid asked if repairs were going to be made to the existing system. Superintendent Rea said there will be some temporary fixes including likely, a rebuilt compressor for about \$30,000 - \$40,000.

President Aberman asked about plans to use the Skatium ice rink during the summer now that the renovation has been cancelled. Superintendent Tuft said staff will have the ice show as scheduled, a mini session before summer and the summer programming is ready for the summer brochure.

Some of the affiliates have purchased ice time at other locations because of the planned renovation. Staff will continue to try to sell ice time to interested parties. Ryan Moller President of SAHA was in attendance at the meeting and said SAHA values and wants to continue their relationship with the Skatium and will work with Kurt VonHelms. President Aberman asked for the potential financial loss. Ms. Tuft said this has yet to be determined.

President Aberman asked how this information was going to be made available to the public. Ms. Tuft said a letter will be sent to Skatium customers. An article will be posted on the website tomorrow. A mini brochure will go out to Skatium customers as well. President Aberman suggested reaching out to the high schools for ice usage this fall.

Commissioner Khoeun moved to reject all bids for the Skatium Ice Arena project. Commissioner Yanes seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioner voted aye. Motion carried.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

President Aberman said the agenda format has been changed to include Old Business and New Business to better allow for discussion.

Vice President Reid asked about the locker room entries at Fitness First. Superintendent Tuft met with the customer service desk builder in late December. The desk would need to be altered as it is a custom made item and it is expensive. Ms. Tuft has not heard back yet on the cost estimate. Ms. Tuft said there have not been complaints lately, most people have adjusted to the entry layout. There are signs posted. Commissioner Yanes asked about installing a door. Ms. Tuft said a door would not be a good solution and there was a door in the old fitness center and most of the time it was propped open.

Ms. Tuft said policy states non-residents rates are 25% higher than resident rates. The new way this will be marketed in future program guides will be to highlight the resident fee as a 20% discount.

Executive Director Ohrlund spoke about the welcome sign in the Weber Center lobby. No comments have been received about missing languages and has decided to leave the sign as it is. Most people looking at it recognize that it is representative of the great level of diversity in Skokie.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Khoeun asked about plastic bag recycling. Executive Director Ohrlund said he discussed this issue with Village Manager John Lockerby recently. Executive Director Ohrlund said this is not a District responsibility and suggested the Village pass an ordinance on recycling plastic bags.

President Aberman said she was informed that sandboxes have had dead squirrels buried in them in three different parks. President Aberman suggested considering removing sandboxes from the parks. Superintendent Rea said Park Services staff has a sand sifting machine for cleaning sand areas and staff has not found animals in the sand. Executive Director Ohrlund said as playgrounds come up for renovation, sand areas are generally removed.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The Board Workshop will be held on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at the Oakton Community Center.

The Finance Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Skatium Party Room.

The regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Yanes attended a WHO (We Help Others) meeting. This is a volunteer high school group that is looking for volunteer opportunities.

Commissioner Yanes asked about a recap of the IAPD/IPRA conference sessions. President Aberman suggested staff come up with a report on new program ideas/suggestions from conference. Superintendent Tuft will discuss with the recreation and facilities staff to report on one or two ideas they came away with.

Jon Marquardt introduced the new recreation intern Lindsey Lahmeyer. Lindsey attends Northeastern University and will be completing 200 hours for her internship.

Executive Director Ohrlund said there is a meet and greet with Senator Ram Villivalam on Friday, February 22 from 1:00 – 1:45 p.m.

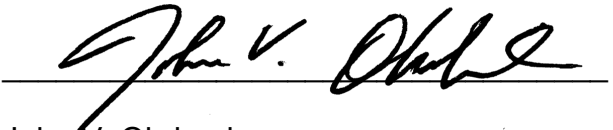
An active shooter training video was shown, followed by discussion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Alter moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Yanes seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



Susan Aberman  
President



John V. Ohrlund  
Secretary