

WESTERN SPRINGS PARK BOARD MINUTES
Wednesday, October 12, 2005

Call to Order by President Kurfirst:

Commissioners present:

Leonard Kurfirst
Deborah Lyons
John White
Michael Kane
Matthew Gresge
Michael Bruck
Phyllis Osborn

Others present:

Trustee Anne Marie Hickey
Trustee John Madell
Former Comm. Ken Sitkowski
Robert Ekroth, Attorney
Joseph Brusseau. W-T Eng.
Lisa Najarian, LL Park resident
Denise Downing, LL Park res.
Craig Himmelmann, Superintendent
Kay Schuetz, Secretary

Approval of Minutes of September 13, 2005

MOTION: Michael Kane moved, with a second by John White, that the minutes of the September 13, 2005, Park Board meeting be approved with two corrections, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Acknowledgment of Visitors and Persons to be heard from the Floor

Introduction of New FRIENDS OF THE PARK President

Former Park Board Commissioner Kenneth Sitkowski attended the meeting on behalf of Friends of the Park, of which group he is the new president. He advised that the present board consists of Greg Jonas, Pat Rogers and Don McMurray and her is in the process of trying to increase the Board by two. It was suggested that he contact former Commissioner Victor Fraccaro who had expressed an interest in joining this group.

Mr. Sitkowski added that he would like to see the balance of the money in their bank account earmarked for Laidlaw Park finalized and that they are already in contact with Veterans and Ridgewood Park representatives regarding their planned fund raising. He added that he is concerned regarding the issue of donor's names in upgraded parks and wondered if it might not be best to have all names placed on one large plaque. He feels this is an item, which requires further discussion.

President Kurfirst welcomed Mr Sitkowski's insights as a former Park Board president and suggested that he work closely with Commissioner Osborne on upcoming park improvement issues, adding that we appreciate his suggestions and recommendations.

Laidlaw Park Issues with Lisa Najarian and Denise Downing

Lisa Najarian and Denise Downing attended the meeting to again discuss who will pay for the remaining work to complete the Laidlaw Park upgrading. According to their bookkeeping there are unspent funds at their disposal in the Friends of the Park account of approximately \$3,900.00 plus a promise of \$5,000.00 from the Park District. Discussion ensued regarding uses for the remaining funds and the fact that the Park District is the final arbiter of any decisions regarding work to be done on property owned by the Park District. It was finally agreed that these issues will continue to be discussed and be settled down the line and an eventual determination made on which items should complete the park, i.e., a sidewalk OR additional signs as requested by PDRMA, a bike rack and additional benches.

MOTION: Matthew Gresge moved, with a second by Michael Bruck, that landscaping in the approximate sum of \$2,000.00 be installed in Laidlaw Park out of Park District funds, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Considerable discussion then followed on the sidewalk proposed by Mrs. Najarian for the park and for which Trustee Hickey advised the Village would pay. It was finally agreed to table this subject until the Village's Bill Nelson looked more thoroughly into the matter and determined the feasibility of the issue when considering ADA issues, playground safety, potential damage to trees in the area, possible need for a railing, and snow removal in winter.

Mrs. Najarian then requested approval of the "thank you" ads to donors she is planning for a future issue of the DOINGS, though she added that she will omit naming the PTO if they do not pay for said ad.

MOTION: Phyllis Osborn moved, with a second by Michael Bruck, to approve the ads for a future issue of the DOINGS newspaper, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

It was agreed that the allocation of the remaining funds would be the subject of future discussions between Mrs. Najarian, Commissioner Osborn and Superintendent Himmelmann.

Trustee Hickey's Report

Trustee Hickey and the Board discussed the following items:

Sidewalk in Laidlaw Park: It was acknowledged that there is a question as to whether or not this walk is really needed, how many residents are actually in favor of it, what is the potential of damage to trees in the area, and what are ADA issues which must be addressed. Trustee Hickey advised that the Village's Bill Nelson would look further into these issues and a determination then made on the need for the walk for which the Village will pay if it is installed.

Payment from Village to Park Board: A recommendation was made at a recent Village Board meeting to provide \$50,000.00 to the Park District in 2006. This matter will continue to be discussed by the Village's Finance Committee. The Village will only agree to a one-year agreement and the Village plans to increase user fees to Recreation activities to acquire these

funds. President Kurfirst suggested that a sub-committee consisting of Commissioners Bruck and Gresge sit down with the Village Finance Committee and work through some of the details of what has been proposed since this is a complicated issue.

Trustee Hickey added that the Village president has stated at a recent Village Board meeting that he does not understand why the Park Board has not gone to referendum, as it is obvious that the Board is under-funded. President Kurfirst added that there are several issues to consider. One is future budgeting for 2006 and another is where we are going from there. He recommends that further meetings be held between both Boards.

Trustee John Madell added that the Village Board would like to know the Park Board's Long Range Plan so that they know what they can and cannot afford. He urged the Park Board to review our future needs so the Village knows what is expected of them down the line. He added that the Village would work together with us on this matter.

Recreation Department Report

Director Tracy Alden was unable to attend this evening's meeting but a copy of his report is attached hereto and becomes a part of these minutes.

Bid Results for Spring Rock Park Pavilion

Joseph Brusseau of W-T Engineering advised that only two bids had been received as a result of our recent Invitation to Bid, neither of which was acceptable. He suggested that we restart the bidding process again with the intention of being ready to start the project in the early spring. He added that it may be necessary to make some changes in order to receive an acceptable bid, such as a wooden building instead of brick and concrete pavers rather than embossed concrete, but these can be considered down the line. President Kurfirst suggested that we might also have to consider an additional \$30,000.00 for this project. In the meantime, Mr. Brusseau will immediately begin the rebidding process

MOTION: Michael Kane moved, with a second by Michael Bruck, that we rebid the Spring Rock Park pavilion project, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Timber Trails Update

Though the Board had planned requesting resident input on plans for Timber Trails Park at its upcoming November Board meeting, President Kurfirst suggested that this would be premature and recommended that we delay that meeting for another month or two. He further advised that there is a possibility that some additional space in the subdivision may open up which would require consideration. Commissioners also suggested that we might want to consider Dartmoor's planned building "style" when designing our park

Update on Request by Hilds to Purchase 15 Feet of Ridge Acres Park

President Kurfirst advised that he has not heard further from these residents and suggested that this item be removed from the agenda until further notice.

Update on Laidlaw Park Improvements

Commissioners discussed signage issues which have been suggested for this park. It was agreed that some park “rules” (such as no dogs, how to report vandalism, etc.) could be added to this sign and that the signs should be “professional”. Commissioner Osborn will provide costs at the November Board meeting.

Safety

Superintendent Himmelmann advised that it had been another good month and there had been no accidents or injuries.

Long Range Plan Strategy

President Kurfirst advised that he would begin work on this along with Commissioner Gresge and Attorney Ekroth. It was then agreed that it would be well to have a workshop on this Plan and Tuesday, November 8th, was agreed upon for this meeting at 7 P.M. in the Superintendent’s shop. Commissioner Kane advised that he had some goal setting material he had received from a focus meeting he had attended which he would bring with him.

Cook County Fiscal Responsibility Report Card

Commissioner Gresge presented Commissioners with a Fiscal Responsibility Report Card/ Draft Data Summary for Fiscal Year 2004 which he had received from Daniel W. Hynes, Deputy Director, Local Government Division, as a result of figures Matt had supplied. Questions addressed in the “report card” are the kinds of funds available to the municipal entity for spending, how much are reserves, and how do revenues compare to other park districts. Commissioner Gresge indicated that the results from Mr. Hynes indicated that we are under-funded relative to our peer groups, we do tend to balance our budget whereas our peer groups did not, and that we are carrying a higher level of debt that other groups but ours is mostly in land acquisition. The final conclusion indicated that the Western Springs Park Board is fiscally responsible.

Kompan Train for Veterans’ Park Group

Commissioner Osborn advised that the two fund raisers for Veterans’ Park had advised her that a train they would like to purchase for the park has become available at a cost of \$5,000.00 but their recently started fund raising only totals \$2,000.00. They questioned whether the Park Board would forward the cost of the train, which is an item other Districts would like to purchase, and repay the debt as soon as funds permit

MOTION: Phyllis Osborn moved, with a second by Michael Kane, that the Park Board front \$5,000.00 to the Veterans' Park fund raisers to purchase the train and that the Veterans' Park would repay the debt as soon as funds are raised by this group, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Ridgewood Park Action Group Fundraising

Commissioner Osborn discussed the fund raising efforts underway by the *Ridgewood Park Action Group* to raise money "to improve the aesthetics of our park using a multi-dimensional approach" and advised that while she had some questions about the content of the letter, it had already been distributed. Regarding the group's request to erect a thermometer so that residents could know how the fund raising was progressing it was agreed that there could be no thermometers on Park District property but that one can be erected on private property.

Treasurer's Report

MOTION: John White moved, with a second by Michael Kane, that the September 30, 2005, Financial Report be approved as prepared and that checks written in the amount of \$57,703.08 be approved for an ending cash balance of \$200,755.77, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent's Report is attached hereto and becomes a part of these minutes. In addition Superintendent Himmelmann advised that he had received a note from Lyons Township Little President Tom Hinshaw regarding a possible proposed increase in user fees and in conversation Mr. Hinshaw had indicated that they would be happy to do their share in this regard. A copy of Mr. Hinshaw's letter is attached hereto.

Adjournment

MOTION: John White moved, with a second by Phyllis Osborn, that the Park Board meeting be adjourned at 10:35 P.M. and move to an executive session, which motion was approved by all on a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary