



**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
OF THE COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICERS
OF THE PROSPECT HEIGHTS PARK DISTRICT
GARY MORAVA RECREATION CENTER, MEETING ROOM 2
110 W. CAMP MCDONALD ROAD, PROSPECT HEIGHTS, IL 60070
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023**

Call to Order

Roll Call

Commissioner Jones called the Special Board Meeting of the Prospect Heights Park District to order at 5:33 p.m.

Commissioners present:

Ellen Avery
Paul Fries
Tim Jones
Eric Kirste
Betty Cloud
Steve Messer

Also present:

Christina Ferraro – Executive Director
Ray Doerner - Superintendent of Recreation
Dino Squiers – Superintendent of Facilities & Parks
Edlyn Castil – Marketing & Communications Manager/
Recording Secretary

Commissioners absent:

Karl Jackson

A quorum was present.

Public Comment

None

Announcements

Regular Board Meeting at Gary Morava Recreation Center – April 25, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Future Planning Discussion facilitated by Jan Peterson Hincapie

The discussion included how staff and board listened to the residents, a plan was created accordingly, and funding was sought via referendum. The request was denied with 44% of the votes. The recreation center is beyond its useful life. The pool is also reaching the end of its useful life. The flooding in Lions Park is causing surface problems for the tennis courts. The park district mission is to provide programs, facilities and other amenities for all ages, abilities, and interests. Staff share resources with other taxing entities to provide community events and services. Staff adjusts services based upon budget to make it the best for the residents.

Commissioner Ellen Avery arrived 5:39 pm

The discussion continued that fifty years ago the residents built the facilities for the future generations of residents so they don't have to leave the community and the kids can recreate with their friends. Now with tax caps and other limitations we are trying to maintain these appropriately-sized-facilities and programs while trends are changing which is challenging; we want to provide what residents have asked for: walking track, modern facilities, etc. There is a partner resident agreement in place with Mount Prospect and River Trails. The pool is a 10-week program and loses money. Would residents be content

to go to a pool at a neighboring pool for resident rates? What impact will that have on summer camp? There is a need for a larger gym and more efficient space.

Separating the projects recreation center project and the pool project is difficult because they share mechanicals being shared. There is agreement that something needs to be done with these aging facilities. What are the alternatives: selling current assets to help fund referendum projects. Park districts have a mission to conserve open space and once it is sold there is no other land to purchase in district boundaries. Is the one-time inflow of cash worth selling park amenities? The pool is where we teach kids how to swim so if we close the pool then they could learn from neighboring districts. How can we work with school district 23? What can we do with other park sites such as Country Gardens?

Commissioner Tim Jones departed 6:52 pm

When residents were surveyed in the fall of 2021 the results showed 46.2% never use pool; 60% closing pool would not impact them. 67.2% replace with modern pool. With the failed referendum, replacing the pool with a modern pool is not an option. If the pool is closed, a spray park or splash pad may be an alternative. The park district needs to evaluate its responsibilities: recreation center, pool, 14 park sites, golf course, bike path, etc. The pool operation loses money. Staff costs will only be more expensive in the future. A splash pad can be used beyond summer months, less staff are required. Any large construction will need a referendum. The district's budget cannot continue to repair a facility at the end of its life with replacement roof, mechanicals and HVAC.

Commissioner Tim Jones returned at 7:29 pm

Certain changes were discussed for the future such as using different verbiage: "in district" versus "resident". Exploring a new referendum is an option. The scope of the project would change: eliminate tennis courts? eliminate pool? add splash pad? Move the recreation center to the admin building site? The proposed recreation center is similar in size to the current recreation center with the addition of a second gymnasium and suspended walking track. Christina will create a potential referendum timeline for the next board meeting.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Commissioner Kirste and seconded by Commissioner Cloud to adjourn the Regular Board Meeting at 7:55 p.m. The motion was approved by a voice vote with two absent (Commissioners Cloud and Messer). The motion carried.

Approved: April 25, 2023

Elizabeth "Betty" Cloud, Secretary