

**CHAMPAIGN PARK DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**

May 28, 2014

The Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners held a Regular Special Meeting on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 at 5:30 p.m., at the Bresnan Meeting Center, 706 Kenwood Road, Champaign, Illinois, pursuant to notice duly given. President Petry presided over the meeting.

Present: President Joseph Petry, Vice President Alvin Griggs, Commissioner Barbara Kuhl, and Treasurer Gary Wackerlin.

Absent: Commissioners Timothy McMahon and Jane Solon, and Attorney Guy Hall.

Staff: Joseph DeLuce, Executive Director, J.R. Pope, Director of Operations, Megan Kuhlenschmidt, Director of Recreation, Tammy Hoggatt, Director of Human Resources, Kevin Crump, Director of Planning, Design and Construction, Steven Bentz, Virginia Theatre Director, Cindy Harvey, Assistant to the Executive Director/Board Secretary, and Stacey Cornell, Administrative Specialist.

Patrick Wade, a reporter with the News-Gazette, was in attendance.

Call to Order

President Petry called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

CPD Highlights

President Petry reported that Commissioner McMahon was unable to attend the meeting due to his mother-in-law passing, and Commissioner Solon was out of the country.

Commissioner Kuhl commented that the flower gardens are beginning to look very nice. She mentioned the one on the north end of Hessel Park in particular was eye catching.

President Petry reported he has received compliments on the new pool feature and it is hugely popular. He has also noticed our online presence has been augmented considerably within the past couple of months. Mr. DeLuce said Chelsea Norton, Marketing Manager, has done a good job developing the Park District's social media presence.

Comments from the Public

None.

Action Items

Approval to Apply for a Building Better Communities Grant

Mr. Crump presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. He reported that the National Recreation and Park Association has partnered with the American Water Charitable Foundation to implement the Building Better Communities program. Building Better Communities makes \$50-\$150,000 grant awards designed to enhance public parks by creating and improving nature-based playgrounds and natural play areas for children, while also providing educational messaging and demonstration areas about water resources, stewardship and conservation. Mr. Crump stated that staff is requesting approval to apply for a \$75,000 grant award for a natural play area and interpretive water resource amenity at Heritage Park. The grant would be 100% funded with no matching requirement. The successful grant applicants would be awarded the funds in July 2014 and the project must be completed by December 2014. The preliminary grant application is due May 30, 2014. He discussed details of the project including the nature playground, interpretive signs,

accessible parking spaces and the parking lot. Discussion ensued about the number of current and future parking spaces. Staff is comfortable with being able to complete the project by December 2014 since it will be a contracted project if awarded.

Vice President Griggs made a motion to approve applying for a Building Better Communities Grant in the amount of \$75,000 to construct a natural play area and interpretive water resource amenity at Heritage Park. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kuhl. The motion passed 3-0.

Discussion Items

Virginia Theatre Proposed Business Plan Report

Ms. Kuhlenschmidt presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. She reported that Kyle Ridout was contractually hired to develop a business plan for the Virginia Theatre. Currently the theatre presents shows as they come, which is not amenable to developing a vision for theater use and has not been successful financially. Mr. Ridout conducted a SWOT analysis. Identified strengths were knowledgeable and friendly staff, upscale ambiance, great value and community support. Weaknesses identified were a reliance on tax subsidy, previously limited schedule, and the repeated closures for renovation. Opportunities available are a full season of entertainment, sponsorships and ad sales. Threats are a reliance on tax subsidy, an aging audience, competition from other local venues and union rates for technical services. First run movies are a possibility.

Ms. Kuhlenschmidt reported that the business plan for FY15 would be to plan for a season, sell subscriptions and have a 12 week booking window. Single ticket sales would also be offered. Other revenue sources would be advertising, sponsorships, concessions and rentals.

Currently the sale of alcohol depends on the show. A percentage of the sales is what commercial promoters want, but the Virginia Theatre has not been in a position to offer this. The Park District works with the client, makes the option available and the revenue flows back to the house. It has worked well with the larger scale events, but not with movies. The Park District must obtain a special event permit each time it wants to sell alcohol. This is less expensive than getting an annual license.

Audience development was also addressed with subscriber parties or events, "front of curtain" speeches, first-time visitor incentives, themed events, and newsletters as avenues to that end. Financial development could include corporate sponsorships, naming opportunities, membership donations and in-kind gifts. Marketing and promotions would involve a season brochure, newsletter, social media, and the website. Community outreach pursuits could be staff speaking at local service clubs, attending conferences, and networking.

The Virginia Theatre offers weekly tours on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.

Park Signs

Mr. Crump presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. Currently the Park District has many variations of the brown "scout camp" signs. In 2009 a redesigned sign was installed at the dog park. Since then, replacement of the old signs has continued with the new design. The size of the sign is related to the park location. They will also be incorporated into the planting beds. Mini Park signs would be removed and replaced with identification signs. "Banner signs" would continue to be used with banners. Funding for sign replacement has been included in the capital budget. The signs are made in-house by horticulture staff during the winter months. A seasonal staff person is also being sought to make them June through September.

State requires the no gun sign posted at each park.

Smoke Free Parks

Mr. DeLuce presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. He was approached by the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District about implementing a "Smoke Free Parks" program. There is grant funding available for signs, education, or promotion. Staff also spoke to the coordinator who implemented the smoke free campus at the University of Illinois. Mr. DeLuce met with professionals from the Urbana Park District, Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Village of Mahomet Parks and Recreation and the Village of Savoy to see what they do and if there would be something they would agree to do together. Currently smoking is not permitted at the dog park, Sholem Aquatic Center, and in sports field dugouts. It is a trend across the country with several Illinois Park Districts having banned smoking in parks, beaches and special event venues. The Park District has not received complaints. Discussion ensued.

Vice President Griggs commented that a smoking ban would be difficult to enforce. Mr. DeLuce believes the police would not have time to enforce it either. The public health district enforces the Indoor Smoke Free Act.

Commissioner Kuhl would like to continue to research, observe, and monitor the situation. She does not want to pass an ordinance that cannot be enforced.

Mr. DeLuce reported the Park District has not received any complaints or issues regarding smoking in the parks. When asked about the litter it created, Mr. Pope said in general it is sporadic. He stated that there can be a heavy accumulation of cigarette butts near pavilions after the weekend that are difficult to clean up.

Commissioner Kuhl commented that Disney World has a smoking area. She would be more in favor of providing a controlled area instead of making a rule that cannot be enforced.

Commissioner Griggs stated he thought it was a good idea in concept. He favors the Park District promoting a healthy lifestyle.

President Petry said if there is not a problem, he did not see a reason to pursue the matter.

Mr. DeLuce said that this matter would be monitored, and he will keep the Board informed about what the other county agencies decide to do.

Comments from Commissioners

None.

Closed Session

Vice President Griggs made a motion to convene in Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kuhl. The motion passed 3-0. Upon roll call vote, the vote was as follows: Vice President Griggs – yes; President Petry – yes; and Commissioner Kuhl – yes. The Board convened into Executive Session under the Illinois Open Meetings Act, specifically 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) for the discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, or legal counsel for the public body, 120/2(c)(5) for the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body, and 120/2(c)(6) the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body.

Return to Regular Meeting

Following the adjournment of the Closed Session, the Board reconvened in open meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Kuhl made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice President Griggs. The motion passed 3-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Approved:

Joseph A. Petry, President

Cindy Harvey, Secretary