

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

October 22, 2014

The Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners held a Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, October 22, 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 S. Griggs, Commissioners Barbara J. Kuhl (arrived at 5:32 p.m.), Jane L. Solon, and Timothy P. McMahon, Treasurer Gary Wackerlin and Attorney Guy Hall.

Staff present: Joseph DeLuce, Executive Director, Cindy Harvey, Assistant to the Executive Director/Board Secretary, Andrea Wallace, Director of Finance, Jameel Jones, Director of Cultural Arts, Tammy Hoggatt, Director of Human Resources, Tony Oligney-Estill, Programs Manager, Hsiung Marler, Facilities and Events Manager, and Stacey Cornell, Administrative Specialist.

Tim Mitchell, a reporter with the News-Gazette, was present.

Call to Order

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

CPD Highlights

Vice President Griggs reported he attended the National Recreation and Park Association Congress. He stated he would give a report in November. He noted that it was a great conference and one of the best he has attended.

President Petry congratulated staff on the good work being done within the parks. In particular, he mentioned the Hessel Park pavilion improvements. He was also excited about the pathways, lighting, and splash pad at Douglass Park.

Commissioner Solon commented she was appreciative that the bollards around Hessel Park were being finished.

Comments from the Public

Rick Shurtz, 1725 Robert Drive, Champaign, addressed the Board regarding installation of a sidewalk inside the dog park. He stated that currently the dog park is not accessible for people in wheelchairs and many of them have dogs. He requested a six foot wide sidewalk for the interior of the dog park so it could be used by all people. Mr. Shurtz presented approximately 200 signatures he collected in favor of a concrete pathway.

Presentations

Enterprise Zone

T.J. Blakeman, from the City of Champaign Planning Department, made a presentation about the Enterprise Zone Recertification process with assistance from Bruce Knight, City of Champaign Planning and Development Director. Mr. Blakeman reported that Mr. DeLuce and Ms. Wallace had attended a meeting with the City, Champaign County, the Champaign Economic Development Corporation, Champaign Unit 4 Schools, Parkland College and the

Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District (CU-MTD) to discuss proposed Enterprise Zone programs. He presented the proposed Enterprise Zone map to the Board. The Enterprise Zone program goals are to promote job growth, encourage reinvestment in declining commercial and residential areas, encourage infill development, and have the flexibility to change programs if they are underperforming. Mr. Blakeman outlined the six proposed programs: 1. Targeted Neighborhood Improvement – Designed to assist single family residential structures that are owner or renter occupied in struggling neighborhoods. The areas on both sides of Centennial Park are included. The property tax abatement period would be five years on any repairs. 2. Affordable Multi-Family Housing – Designed to assist owners of multi-family housing structures make substantial and permanent improvements in the structure. It requires a \$25,000 minimum investment. Three and five year abatement periods are available. The units along Crescent Drive east of Centennial Park near Centennial High School are included in addition to the ones along Kirby Avenue near the former Carrie Busey Elementary School. 3. Commercial District Enhancement – Designed to address declining commercial areas. Mr. Blakeman highlighted the areas of Country Fair, Mattis Avenue, Bradley and Market, Bradley and Prospect Avenue, and Bloomington Road and Prospect Avenue. The abatement period is five years, with a minimum \$25,000 investment. A one year abatement bonus is applied for any applicant who qualifies as a minority or female owned business. Eligible properties are retail, service, and mixed use. 4. Employment Expansion – Designed for industrial and office developments. The abatement period is based upon the number of employees. Mr. Blakeman distributed a handout that provided a collection of several of the largest projects that have utilized this program. SuperValu's warehouse was one example. He stated that one benefit of having multiple agency partners would be shorter abatement periods. 5. Historic Structure Rehabilitation – Promotes the redevelopment and preservation of existing buildings. It provides an incentive to list properties as Local Landmarks. The abatement period is three years for Local Landmark properties with an additional year for those having National Registry status. 6. Tourism Development – Re-branding of conference center program. Encourages facilities that can enhance tourism. The abatement period is three years. All programs automatically qualify for the Illinois Sales Tax Exemption. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Blakeman stated Parkland College agreed to participate in the Commercial District Enhancement and Employment Expansion programs. He speculated CU-MTD would consider the same. Mr. Blakeman reported he was scheduled to meet with the Unit 4 School Board and Champaign County Board. All of the proposed programs are new. He reported that in order to achieve set goals, the programs have more qualifiers than previously.

Mr. Blakeman stated historic structures must be a Local Landmark or National Registry Landmark and meet a set of criteria. One criterion is the building must be at least 50 years old. Mr. Knight stated that older structures may qualify under one of the other programs as well. Mr. Blakeman stated there are several buildings downtown with landmark status.

Mr. Blakeman stated he believes the area of the new Enterprise Zone map to be slightly larger than the previous one, with the State of Illinois setting a maximum of 12 square miles. The new programs will be for 15 years with an additional 5 year option.

Mr. Blakeman reported Bristol Park was included in the Enterprise Zone map.

Mr. Blakeman stated that since the Virginia Theatre is owned by the Park District, it is not tax generating. A designated zone not-for-profit organization could raise money to put towards a project. If any business within the Enterprise Zone donates to the not-for-profit, they would get twice the tax benefit.

Mr. Blakeman stated there is no allocation cap. Mr. Knight stated the tax abatement is not cash out-of-pocket but it is forgone revenue until the future. He stated programs would be assessed annually and changes made as needed. Mr. Blakeman stated the shorter abatements were made to be more attractive to other taxing partners.

It was the consensus of the Board to participate in all of the Enterprise Zone programs. An intergovernmental agreement and resolution is to be presented for adoption at a future meeting.

Internal Park Paths Study

Mr. Crump presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. He stated that as outlined in the Strategic Plan, one of the objectives listed is "Continue to develop system-wide trails." One of the methods to achieve this is adding loop trails. Mr. Crump reported that currently the Park District is in the process of construction or has pending construction at Spalding, Centennial, and Human Kinetics Parks. There are four other major areas that will require planning: 1. Heritage Park – a path around the west side of the lake that would join with the existing Greenbelt Bikeway. 2. Zahnd Park – a path would serve the playground and venture through the park possibly joining the YMCA trail system. 3. Beardsley Park – an older park having a crosswalk and many aging amenities that need to be removed or replaced, with the possibility of a path being incorporated. 4. Eisner Park – presently there is a plan for the park with the exception of a path system.

Mr. Crump stated the Board authorized \$100,000 in the fiscal year 2014-2015 capital budget for path and trail improvements. He then presented parks that planning staff believe could support a path system: Hallbeck, Powell, Dodds, Garden Hills, Hazel, Millage, Noel and the Champaign Bark District (dog park). The Garden Hills path could connect with the Bloomington Road sidewalk. There is no sidewalk on the east side of the park. Mr. DeLuce reported the Garden Hills neighborhood group has been active regarding its desire for a path. President Petry commented that people use a path and a sidewalk differently. Mr. Crump stated sidewalks are usually 4 feet wide and paths are at least 6 feet. Commissioner Solon stated she was in favor of connected trails. She also expressed concern regarding the cost of maintenance and clearing the paths in winter. Mr. Crump stated that when doing snow removal, the recreation centers are done first, then parking lots. One mile of trail takes approximately three hours to clear. He reported that an average snowfall of four inches would be cleared within 18 hours. Mr. DeLuce reported that one of the trends observed at NRPA conference was installing fitness equipment on trails. Mr. Crump stated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) funds may be used for paths. Commissioner Kuhl stated she did not want to create trails to simply add miles but wants to add effective miles. She commented she was also interested in paths in larger parks and connectors. Mr. Crump stated the path planned for Human Kinetics Park would not be concrete but crushed stone, since the property is not owned by the District. Discussion ensued.

It was the consensus of the Board to move forward and attempt completion within the next two years on paths at Spalding, Human Kinetics, Heritage, Garden Hills, and Bark District Parks. The shoreline erosion issue at Heritage Park is to be solved before installing a path there, and a suitable resolution with the City of Champaign should be sought. It was the consensus of the Board for the dog park path to have the lowest priority and be done near the end of the two year period.

Mr. Crump will present more definitive plans with cost estimates at a future Board meeting.

President Petry was complimentary of the report and information presented.

Possible Trail Connections

Mr. Crump presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. He outlined three potential trail additions: 1. North Champaign Trail – There is a 400 foot segment southeast of the Menard's parking lot that the Park District could install immediately. It would extend the trail south to Town Center Boulevard. 2. Pipeline Trail – A Windsor Road to Curtis Road extension would add an additional mile. Right-of-ways would need to be confirmed with several farmers and the Legends Golf Course. 3. West Springfield Avenue – Obtaining the strip of land south of the railroad tracks would be needed. If this happened, a 0.94 mile trail could be installed. It would begin where O'Malley's Alley Trail currently terminates. Discussion ensued.

It was the consensus of the Board for staff not to actively pursue any of the trail additions presented at this time but to remain current on any developments affecting them.

New Business

Approval to Set Maximum Tax Rate for Final Extension

Ms. Wallace presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. She stated that at the October 8, 2014 Regular Board Meeting the Board approved a resolution estimating taxes to be levied for FY15-16 in the amount of \$11,587,170. It was the consensus of the Board at that time for the levied tax rate after tax caps not to exceed 0.7510. Staff recommended the Board not take action to set a specific maximum tax rate, and allow staff to accept the final legal extension when received in April 2015. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner McMahon made a motion to set a specific maximum tax rate of 0.7510. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Solon. The motion passed 4-1 with Vice President Griggs opposed. President Petry supported the motion but preferred that the rate be set at 0.7395.

Approval to Extend Contract for Auditing Services

Commissioner Solon made a motion to approve retaining Martin, Hood, Friese & Associates for one additional year to conduct the audit of the financial statements for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2015, then issue a request for proposal in October 2015. The motion was seconded by Vice President Griggs. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion Items

IMRF Additional Payment

Ms. Wallace presented the staff report and responded to questions from the Board. She stated that \$600,000 was budgeted to pay towards the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) unfunded liability. Doing this would save the Park District approximately \$1,025,000 in interest over a 30 year period under the same conditions. The full unfunded liability balance as of December 31, 2013 was \$859,148. Since the Park District is paying 7.5% interest on the unfunded amount annually, the Financial Advisory Task Force Committee suggested paying off the balance. Ms. Wallace stated doing this would also reduce the monthly contribution rate beginning in 2016. The additional \$259,148 could be funded from IMRF Fund excess reserves. Discussion ensued.

Treasurer Wackerlin stated he was in agreement with the Financial Advisory Task Force Committee's recommendation of paying the full amount of the unfunded liability or close to it.

It was the consensus of the Board to place the item of paying the full IMRF unfunded liability balance of \$859,148 as of December 31, 2013 on the November 12 Board meeting agenda for consideration.

President Petry requested the Financial Advisory Task Force Committee attend a future study session so the Board could hear their observations. It would also be an opportunity for the Board to express its appreciation to the committee. Commissioner Kuhl also requested that the Board receive the information from the Financial Advisory Task Force Committee meetings.

Douglass Park Update

Mr. Crump gave a construction update on Douglass Park and responded to questions from the Board. He reported the concrete circulation path is complete to the north side of the spray park. The portion from the spray park to the library remains unfinished. Mr. Crump stated the structure framing of the picnic pavilion is complete. The roof should be completed before the end of the week. He reported the new ball field infield mix has been installed and graded. The material will be "wintered over" to allow for settling before installing bases, pitching rubber, and home plate. Mr. Crump reported the water spray ground pad has been completed and all the features that spray water are installed. The City of Champaign should provide the water tap before the end of the week and the spray ground will be tested before winterizing. The installation of the playground is continuing and be completed by the end of next week. The sidewalks and safety surfacing will follow. The light poles are due to be delivered the second week of November and should be installed quickly once they arrive. The outdoor fitness equipment is expected to be delivered the first week of November. Park District staff will do the installation of it shortly after that or early next spring. Mr. Crump stated he anticipates the Dodds Company to meet the goal of having their work completed by November 21.

Mr. DeLuce stated a ribbon cutting ceremony was planned for the spring rather than having it at the end of November. There will be an abundance of turf work to do because of the wet ground. He commented the project has lost 11 working days due to poor weather.

Ms. Wallace gave a financial update on Douglass Park and responded to questions from the Board. She stated the project budget was \$1,017,498. The expenditures to date were \$397,289.

Centennial Park Master Plan Update

It was the consensus of the Board to move this item to a future meeting agenda.

Comments from Commissioners

None.

Executive Session

Commissioner Solon moved as set forth below to convene in Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Vice President Griggs. The motion passed 5-0. Upon roll call vote, the vote was as follows: Commissioner Solon – yes; Commissioner McMahon – yes; 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; 120/2(c)(6) for the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body, and 120/2(c)(11) litigation affecting the public body.

Reconvene into Open Session turn to Regular Meeting

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

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Solon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMahon. The motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Approved:

Joseph A. Petry, President

Cindy Harvey, Secretary