



City of Palos Heights
Recreation Committee
Tuesday, January 10th, 2022
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Key called the regular meeting of the Recreation Committee to order at 7:05 p.m. at the Palos Heights City Hall, 7607 W. College Drive. In attendance were Chairman Key, Alderman Bylut, Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, City Administrator David Strohl, Lake Katherine Director Gaerth Blakesley, Lake Katherine Chair Terry Horvath, and recording secretary Morgan Pukula. Alderman Begley and Alderman Clifford joined at 7:25 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Key moved to approve the minutes of the December 13th, 2022 meeting, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

LAKE KATHERINE REPORT

Gaerth Blaksley provided the Lake Katherine update:

- Our fire and wood event was at capacity with 20 people in attendance. Participants wood burned and etched images on reclaimed wood, which could be used as tree ornaments.
- We were at capacity for our solstice hike with participants hiking in the children's forest for a camp and toast to the sun setting on the shortest day of the year.
- Our naturalists went to Chicago High School for an agriculture lesson and helped judge the science fair.
- We updated our tree and shrub database entry from 2021 through 2022.
- We held two candle making classes at full capacity.
- Site maintenance continued including fence repair, signs installed about dangerous ice, trash and pickup.
- Christmas tree drop off area where Public Works will chip when they start up the machines in March.
- We sent out city official invites to come to Lake Katherine to learn about upcoming events, programs and projects.
- Lake Katherine Restoration and Equity Project started with grant funding from Nicor Gas. First, we need the contractor, Tall Grass Restoration Group to remove buckthorn and honey suckle from east of Harlem to close to the senior center. They started this project this week. This will be followed up with planting of native plants in springs. This is year 1 of a 2 year grant of \$30,000.
- We had a meeting with Sag Moraine Native Plant community, as they are looking for ways to partner with us; including grant funding and adoption of the natural areas.
- We also had a meeting with the "Do Good Movement" and discussed yoga retreat partnership programs throughout the coming year.
- We will be meeting with Trinity College to discuss offering classes with their SALT (Seasoned Adults Learning at Trinity) program.
- Lastly, we will be meeting with Tinley Park Library as they have approached us to host classes for them as well.

PARKS & RECREATION REPORT

Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, provided the Parks & Recreation update:

- **Recreation Program Updates:** We held our Noon Year's Eve celebration on Friday December 30th from 10am – 12pm. We had about 150 participants at our sold out event. There was a DJ, pizza, crafts and games and we ended the event with a balloon drop. Our musical theatre and stars division hosted their show Elf Jr. on December 9th and 10th at Chicago Christian High School. The Friday show had 249 tickets sold and the Saturday show sold 390 tickets. Our total ticket revenue for both shows was \$6,262.00. Participants in the show were eager to sign up for our upcoming show this month. We had an additional 6 birthday parties in December and ended the year with 67 total party reservations compared to 35 in 2021. Currently we have 4 registered for January. Our winter sport camps that we hosted were soccer, basketball and volleyball with a total of 54 registered kids. We work with Sports Kids Inc. where we have a 70/30 split with them; our agreement with them is special considering most contractuales are 80/20. Our soccer camp had 20 kids, basketball had 21 and volleyball had 13. Our youth basketball league registration was opened in early August and while regularly promoting it we concluded the deadline on January 9th. We did have to close some of the age groups off early due to the amount of registrations and how it affects the gym space and capacity for games and practices. The league will begin their week of practices January 23rd and continue for an 8-week period. The league is for boys and girls grades K-8th and currently we have 473 participants registered between all of the divisions with 32 kids on our waitlist. We have a total of 7 divisions and our most popular is the boys 1st and 2nd grade (120 kids), with girls 1st and 2nd grade (80 kids) following behind. In 2021, the league ended with 389 participants.
- **Ice Rink:** During the second week of December the seasonal ice rink was set up for use for the community, the weather was great the following week so we were able to open it December 21st-27th. On average, there were about 10-12 participants using the rink each day over the Christmas weekend. The rink has been closed since right before New Year's, due to the warmer weather but we do hope to reopen it with colder weather before we close near the end of February.
- **Orchard Park Update:** A meeting with Laurie from JSD via Zoom was held on January 4th to discuss the project where we talked about the background of the land and the purchase, the creation of the master plan with Upland Design and how they helped us with applying for the OSLAD grant. Laurie thought that an efficient timeline for JSD to put together construction plans, refine some of the design, electrical engineering design and permitting would put us going to bid sometime in early May. This would still allow for construction during the spring and beginning of summer months, concluding sometime later in the fall for the completion of the project. The park would then be open, but the splash pad would not be until next spring. Laurie requested information on utilities from Public Works which they were able to provide and I sent over to her, as well as CAT plans from Morris which we received and sent as well. We discussed the cost of the project and what it was initially supposed to cost back in 2022 when we applied for the OSLAD vs. the cost of supplies, materials, labor now in 2023. Laurie stated she would prepare an updated opinion of probable construction costs during the construction document creation and would reach out to IDNR to see what flexibility we have altering the master plan submitted for the grant versus any possible increase grant funding, assuming there will be a difference from the original projected cost. She stated she does not think they will provide any extra money from the grant since they had a budget year, but there may be flexibility if we felt we could pull back from some amenities to correlate with the projected cost.

NEW BUSINESS

- Request for motion to approve Intergovernmental Agreement with School District 128 for use of rooms at Independence Middle School for the summer camp programs. There are no financial obligations attached to this agreement.

Matt explained to the committee that this would be the third year where we share an agreement with school district 128 to use additional gym space over the summer months for summer camps.

Chairman Key motioned to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with School District 128, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously. –

AGENDA

- Request for motion to review and approve proposal of Parks and Recreation employee benefits from Section 2.16 of the City of Palos Heights Personnel Manual.

Chairman Key and the Aldermen agreed to continue this to next meeting when more information is presented.

- Request for motion to review and approve proposal from Association of Nature Centers Administrators for overall review and evaluation of operations, governance and finances for Lake Katherine.

Gaerth spoke about reviewing the governance and relationship between Lake Katherine and the City of Palos Heights. The discussion was had about how effective the relationship is or if there are things we can work on together. We would be bringing in a peer consultant to evaluate our relationship, our overall organization and operations and evaluate our financial position. Nature Center Administrators was the last group to evaluate the relationship back in 2004, so we were able to reach out to them again. During the process, there can be comments made from the aldermen, members of the Lake Katherine board and members of the public. The evaluation is over a 3-day period where they can make recommendations in a verbal presentation and then after 30 days, they will send a written document of recommendations to the city. The baseline cost is \$3,750.00 on top of each ANCA member who would cost an estimated \$475.00 for lodging, food and travel expenses. We budgeted \$10,000 for this project, but we do not anticipate the costs adding up to that amount.

Alderman Bylut motioned to review and approve the proposal from Association of Nature Centers Administrators for an overall review and evaluation of operations, governance and finances for Lake Katherine, seconded by Chairman Key. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously. – **AGENDA**

- Request for motion to approve hiring J&M Displays Fireworks in the amount of \$18,000.00 for the July 3, 2023 Independence Day Celebration.

Alderman Begley motioned to approve the hiring of J&M Displays Fireworks in the amount of \$18,000.00, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously. – **AGENDA**

- Request for motion to approve Vermont Systems Inc. payment for the annual contract in the amount of \$9,817.93 for use of the RecTrac Computer System.

Chairman Key motioned to approve the payment to Vermont Systems Inc. in the amount of \$9,817.93 for use of the RecTrac Computer System, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously. – **AGENDA**

OLD BUSINESS

Alderman Begley asked for an update on Dream Big Park. Matt and Chairman Key stated the landscapers were able to install the berms and the issue of drainage was taken care of.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Key moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderman Bylut. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Morgan Pukula, Recording Secretary