



City of Palos Heights
Recreation Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 9, 2021
7:00 PM
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Key called the regular meeting of the Recreation Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Palos Heights City Hall, 7607 W. College Drive. In attendance were Chairman Key, Alderman Bylut, Alderman McGovern, Alderman Clifford, City Administrator Dan Nisavic, Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks via conference call, Director of Lake Katherine Gareth Blakesley, Superintendent of Recreation Lauren Koszola, Superintendent of Facilities Joe Smith, IT Coordinator Chuck Hankus, and Recording Secretary Jessica Swiedals.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Key moved to approve the minutes of the December 8th, meeting as written, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

LAKE KATHERINE REPORT

Director Gareth Blakesley provided the Lake Katherine update:

- Staff have been hosting pop-up shops to gain interest in the gift shop. Lake Katherine has also offered snow shoe rental which has proved to be popular this season.
- Education programs are running and have been able to expand to allow for increased attendance and to allow students to come learn inside. During Tier 3 mitigations, all programs were held outside. All programming will cater to what mitigations are in place at the time.
- Staff and volunteers have been busy clearing buckthorn and honeysuckle as well as getting up to date on herbicide testing.
- Phase 4 has allowed facility rentals to resume with bookings already taking place.
- Staff have been working in the nature center painting, removing tanks and replacing parts. Lake Katherine has partnered with the Do Good Movement which is a yoga organization, for the installation of a meditation garden in the Children's Forest. The organization provided a \$5,000.00 donation for this project,
- Lake Katherine received a Schoolyard Habitat Grant to install a pollinator garden in the Children's Forest. This year staff will be replacing arbors around the waterfall and replanting parts of the waterfall, as a good amount of clearing has been done around it. Fencing will be replaced around the waterfall, and maintenance will be done around the entrance sign near Route 83.
- Staff held a MLK Day of service which was open to the public. Numbers had to be limited but areas near the bike trail were able to be cleared. Staff will be meeting with volunteers who manage the gardens to ensure they have what they need moving forward into 2021.
- Lake Katherine have been planning the Monarch Butterfly Fest for 2021. This event will look different than in years past as there is a need for pre-registration, timed entry and limited capacity. For this year's event there will be a fundraiser followed by a two day event. Staff are focusing on making this an overall experience for visitors with extended time in the butterfly tent as well as being able to release a butterfly while visiting inside the tent.

- Lake Katherine held their Paint and Wine night and had twenty people registered for this event. There are plans to host an adult event each month, with events already planned until October of this year.
- Staff are planning other special events such as an Easter Egg Hunt and Earth Day event that will have pre-registration as well as timed entry.

PARKS & RECREATION REPORT

Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, Superintendent Lauren Koszola and Superintendent Joe Smith provided the Parks & Recreation update as well as the Annual Parks and Recreation Report:

- **Recreation Report-**The Recreation Department has been able to increase programming with the new mitigations that were put in place. The athletic programs such as t-ball, coach pitch and indoor soccer were able to finish their seasons. The Recreation Department started a new program during the pandemic named Fun Day Care where students are able to come to the Recreation Center during school hours and e-learn. This program at its height had sixteen students. Summer Camp was held this summer with thirty eight kids enrolled. This camp looked different then camps in the past however, the participants social distanced and spent time outdoors and the camp overall was successful. Pre-school is running with seventeen students enrolled. The students are accustomed to wearing masks as well as social distancing. The Recreation Department was able to host twenty special events during the pandemic. These events included concerts and movies in the park, a drive through Santa meet and greet, a drive through Trick or Treat event as well as hosting our weekly Farmer's Market and many more.
- **Fitness Center and Pool Report-** At the beginning of 2020, staff created member engagement programs that generated interest in the fitness center however, during the pandemic the facility was closed and re-opened on June 26, 2021. The fitness center underwent physical changes including the removal of hard to clean equipment, spacing of machinery to ensure social distancing, and the installation of plexi-glass to further help distancing. The number of patrons allowed in the fitness center at one time has been limited to fourteen and four track members are able to reserve a slot during each session time. Each session is one hour and thirty minutes followed by a half hour of cleaning before the next session starts. The fitness attendants have been taking great pride in their jobs and it reflects in the cleanliness of the facility. During the lockdown many members put their memberships on hold and are now re-instating their memberships and starting to resume using the facility. During the months of December and January, a discount was offered to new members resulting in about forty new memberships, many of whom paid in full for the year. The fitness center offers personal training and the personal trainer, Tyler Freitag has been busy despite limited capacity. Tyler is very popular at the Recreation Center with the front desk getting calls weekly with compliments about him. The Recreation Center is now part of the Silver Sneakers program with about fifty members. The pool opened on July 13th creating an already shortened season, however, over 63% of time slots were sold and the pool ended the season with a revenue of \$30,449.00. Staff were happy to be able to open the pool for the residents as many pools in the surrounding areas did not open at all. Last year the admission was capped at fifty people per time slot. This season staff are hopeful to get the pool opened on time and with an increased number of patrons allowed in.
- **Palmer Park-** Usage was turned over to the Recreation Department at the end of 2020. Public Works will install the park sign and there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony in March with details to follow. A financial status report has been submitted in early January per the OSLAD grant requirement. The concerns of the RAB regarding the oversight of the park standards were submitted to the Recreation Committee and based off of that meeting and a meeting with the City Administrator Dan Nisavic, it was decided that gradually over time items in question will be replaced and repurposed at Lake Katherine. Research has been done to ensure that this oversight does not happen again the future with the plan of creating a procedure within park standards that can be used during the planning and

creation of all parks and facilities throughout the city. This procedure will be in the newly created strategic plan and will be included in CAPRA standards.

- **Orchard Park-** Staff received preliminary construction documents in early January. These documents have been shared with Public Works and Building and Zoning for review of city code and construction standards. This will be a two part project with the barn being the first of the two. If available, grants will be applied for to fund this project however these grants are on hold until 2022.
- **Misty Meadows-** During the City Counsel meeting in October of 2020 JSD was the firm that was approved to work on this project and create what will become of the Misty Meadows property. During the initial meeting there was discussion of a small neighborhood park or tot-lot with ADA features. In January JSD met with Director Fairbanks as well as City Administrator Dan Nisavic via Zoom to review concept schemes. JSD then followed up in early February with revised concepts which are included in the monthly Recreation Committee meeting packet for review. These concepts will be presented to the RAB as well as City Counsel and are not final plans. An onsite community meeting will be held in spring to gather input of what the space may look like from residents of the immediate area. The continued development of COVID-19 as well as budget will be factors in the timeline of this project.
- **CAPRA-** Staff are continuing to work on assigned standards. Staff met to narrow the timeline as well as assign additional standards. Staff will be meeting twice a month moving forward, once to share progress and once to check in. The internal goal is to complete this process by summer. Campfire Concepts will be assisting with strategic planning as well as branding and marketing. Director Fairbanks was selected to be a part of a virtual site visit in Pincrest Florida in July to gain more insight into what staff can expect at the site visit for the Palos Heights Recreation Department in 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Motion to approve Integral Construction Payment #4 in the amount of \$62,295.21 for work completed on the Palmer Park project, pending receipt of waivers.
Alderman Key motioned to approve Integral Construction payment in the amount of \$62,295.21 for work completed on the Palmer Park project pending receipt of waivers, Alderman McGovern seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. - **AGENDA**
2. Motion to approve payment to Campfire Concepts payment in the amount of \$4,250.00 for work on a Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan and Branding Style Guide for the Parks and Recreation Department.
Alderman Key motioned to approve the payment to Campfire Concepts in the amount of \$4,250.00 for work on a Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan and a Branding Guide for the Parks and Recreation Department, Alderman McGovern seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. -**VOUCHER**
3. Motion to approve the payment to South West Special Recreation Association (SWSRA) in the amount of \$44,299.00 for the second installment for the 2020-21 membership contribution.
Alderman Key motioned to approve the payment in the amount of \$44,299.00 to the South West Special Recreation Association for the second installment of the 2020-21 membership contribution, Alderman McGovern seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. -**AGENDA**
4. Motion to approve Audio Visual Systems INC. (AVS) payment in the amount of \$9,177.25 for A/V equipment, installation and training for the Orchard Room.

Alderman Key motioned to approve the payment to Audio Visual Systems INC, (AVS) in the amount of \$9,177.25 for equipment, installation and training in the Orchard Room. Alderman Clifford seconded the motion. On a voice vote, the motion passes unanimously. –**AGENDA**

5. Motion to approve the intergovernmental agreement between the Recreation Department and School District 128. The Recreation Department will be utilizing areas of Independence Junior High School for the Summer Camp Program. There will be no financial obligations attached to this agreement.

Alderman Key and the Recreation Committee agreed to this arrangement and this item will go to City Counsel for full approval.

Discussion- There was discussion of the payment to SWSRA and how the denomination is determined. There are seven agencies that belong to this organization and the value of the properties in the town will determine the amount the agency will contribute, with Palos Heights being the second highest in the group of agencies. The benefit of this partnership is the ability to utilize the Special Recreation funds to update facilities and parks as well as programming and inclusion.

OLD BUSINESS – none.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Swiedals – Recording Secretary