



City of Palos Heights  
Recreation Committee  
Tuesday, July 12, 2022  
Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Key called the regular meeting of the Recreation Committee to order at 7:12 p.m. at the Palos Heights City Hall, 7607 W. College Drive. In attendance were Chairman Key, Alderman Bylut, Alderman Clifford, Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, Director of Lake Katherine Gareth Blakesley, RAB members Lisa Pesavento, Denise Hyker, and Lynda Schiappa, and recording secretary Tayler Swiedals.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Key moved to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2022 meeting as written, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**LAKE KATHERINE REPORT**

Director of Lake Katherine, Gareth Blakesley provided the Lake Katherine update:

- Lake Katherine had its balcony and lawn up for people to watch the fireworks on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July and the hay wagon and tractor in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.
- The herb garden soiree was held with 11 guests in attendance who enjoyed an intimate evening with dishes made from the herbs from the herb garden.
- Lake Katherine gave the butterfly program to the National Ovarian Cancer Foundation who had a survivors retreat.
- Bench repair and maintenance continues, along with weekly weed whacking and mowing on the trails.
- Summer camps started with the first week serving 4-6 year olds and 7-9 year olds at full capacity, the second week for 8-12 year olds being full with a large waitlist. There is a fishing minicamp happening this week.
- Lake Katherine gave a Natural Navigation Class at the Palos Heights Public Library where participants learned to use natural cues to help them navigate.
- The Solstice Canoe Kayak tour was held and timed at sunset, and participants got to see beavers, herons, snapping turtles, and various other animals.
- The first archery class was held with a full roster and another class scheduled for August 13<sup>th</sup>.

- A story time walk was installed in the Children’s Forest courtesy of Palos Fine Arts Committee using Jean Gnap’s “Little Turtle Gets Lost” book.

## **PARKS & RECREATION REPORT**

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

- **New Staff:** Nikki Gotsch is our new Community Events Manager. The position will be responsible for the coordination of various City events, marketing for those events, sponsorship, advertising, and additional programming needs. Nikki most recently worked for Lockport Township Park District. She started as the part time marketing and public relations assistant, moving into the full time Recreation Supervisor, and, most recently, the Facilities Manager. She has experience with sponsorships and marketing. Nikki has been involved in the South Suburban Parks and Recreation Association and is familiar with our Department’s staff. She is also a resident of Palos Heights. Nikki had her first day Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup> during our busiest week of the year.
- **Misty Meadows Update:** A significant amount of work was completed on-site during the month of June. The park will be called “Kendall Coyne Dream Big Park”. Within the last two weeks, concrete work has been completed, the site furniture footings have been installed, the pour-n-play surfacing has been installed, and landscaping will be installed later this week. Kendall and Michael were on site last month to put their handprints in the concrete, and JSD is moving forward with designing a bio plaque for Kendall and an informational plaque for the foundation. The delivery of the archway, swing bench, and shelter are postponed until the first week of September. We are holding 10% retainage until the project is complete, and are hoping to have a ribbon cutting ceremony near the end of September pending Kendall and Michael’s schedules and weather.
- **Pool Update:** Pool pass sales have over \$101,000.00 in revenue, daily visits have brought in \$90,000.00 in revenue, and about \$30,000.00 in concession revenue. Swim lessons started mid-June with 103 participants in our Saturday sessions and 80 participants in the current weekday session bringing in \$23,490.00 in revenue.
- **July 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Events:** The committee worked diligently to put together the event. There was an inflatable event in the morning with carnival games. The evening portion included: 5 food vendors, Kiwanis beer tent, a dj, and a live band. The event commenced with the fireworks show. The parade was held on July 4<sup>th</sup> with 46 participants and the sensory friendly zone at the end.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Request for motion to approve 3<sup>rd</sup> payment to George’s Landscape in the amount of \$30,932.31 for work completed on the Misty Meadows Park Project.

Alderman Key motioned to approve a 3<sup>rd</sup> payment to George’s Landscape in the amount of \$30,932.31 for work completed on the Misty Meadows Park Project, seconded by Alderman Clifford. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously. — **AGENDA**

- Request for motion to approve the addendum between the Parks and Recreation Department and Experimental Station for participation in the Link Up Illinois Link Match Grant Program.

Alderman Bylut motioned to approve the addendum between the Parks and Recreation Department and Experimental Station for participation in the Link Up Illinois Link Match Grant Program, seconded by Alderman Bylut. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously. --**AGENDA**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **RAB Ordinance Review:** Alderman Key explained that the Recreation Committee members and RAB members were sent a copy of the proposed ordinance for the RAB updates, and opened the floor for discussion. RAB member Lynda Schiappa presented the committee with a list of accomplishments achieved by the City in partnership with the Mayor, Recreation Committee, and the RAB including: bathrooms at PBO field, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July celebration and 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, Westgate Park, 911 Memorial outside City Hall, Girls' Power Softball program and field, Cal-Sag Trail, bike racks throughout the City, the Park Design Standards Manual, park renovation, maintenance plan, and rotation schedule, the tennis court renovation, the Rec center renovation, and Misty Meadow Park. Lynda also explained that planning for the long-term plan, strategic plan, the budget, and CAPRA have been at the forefront of discussions in past meetings. Lynda added that the RAB helped to create and develop the mission statement for the department. Lynda and Denise emphasized the great working relationship with the Recreation Committee and the accomplishments achieved because of this. Alderman Key expressed the appreciation from the City for the work done by the RAB, and does not believe any of the proposed changes will affect that work. Director Fairbanks explained that it was suggested to incorporate the bylaws of the RAB into the proposed ordinance and listed the changes as follows: 4 year terms with a maximum number of 2 terms with a year in between those terms, 2 year limits for the Chairperson and co-chair, the committee's focus will be on programming, meeting three times a year before each brochure comes out to give feedback for programming, agendas and minutes being part of the City's webpage, and incorporating staff and their involvement. The proposed specific duties of the board include: advising the Mayor, City Council and staff on programs and services currently offered by the City, suggesting future programs and services for the City to offer, review the rec programs and propose fees, advise staff on capital improvement suggestions to improve the Parks and Recreation department, assistance in seeking grants and funding, and volunteering for various City events throughout the year. Lynda Schiappa asked what the inspiration for the dramatic changes was. Lynda emphasized the removal of the word "parks" in the proposed ordinance, and explained parks and public spaces have been a main focus for the RAB in the past. Denise Hyker asked if the RAB will be addressing parks in the future. Director Fairbanks explained if there are proposals or suggestions for capital projects, there will be discussion at the RAB meetings, but parks will not be an ongoing agenda topic. He also explained the RAB will continue to be involved in the discussions in future park development. Lynda Schiappa asked that "parks" be added to the new ordinance, and explained that the proposed time off between terms disrupts continuity and does not see the benefit for the community. Lisa Pesavento asked if there was a model for the new ordinance. Director Fairbanks explained that he researched other advisory boards in the state and how IPRA runs their board. Lisa Pesavento asked that some examples be provided next time to compare the size of the communities in the data, and whether this model helped retain quality board members. Lynda Schiappa expressed concern for finding enough volunteers to have a quorum, and believes that the mandatory year off between terms will cause members not to return. Alderman Clifford suggested changing the dates and times of the meetings to increase the number of volunteers for the RAB. Lisa, Denise, and Lynda all expressed that they believe that the RAB needs to have more involvement than they currently have, and the proposal creates less involvement. Lynda

Schiappa expressed that 3 meetings a year will diminish the comradery between board members, and does not see ideas developing and being carried out with 3 meetings. Lynda Schiappa explained that some of the components of Palmer Park not following the design standards is due to the RAB not having meetings and communication and believes this will happen with future development if meetings are scaled back. Alderman Key expressed that the City acknowledges all of the hard work and time put into the design standards by the RAB, and will use Palmer Park as a learning lesson moving forward. Lynda Schiappa asked that "staff" be replaced with specific titles in the ordinance. Alderman Key stated that this ordinance will allow RAB to continue to have discussions regarding wish list items, but does not see a budgetary role for the board members. Lynda Schiappa expressed that she does not see this as forward movement, and believes the changes will stifle conversations. She also does not agree with volunteer hours being required for members. Director Fairbanks explained the importance of the RAB members volunteering at special events to provide the most beneficial feedback when planning for future events and programs. Lisa Pesavento explained that the CAPRA accreditation includes two standards referencing an advisory board role be in place to be met. Lisa expressed the RAB take their responsibilities very seriously, and have been proactive in following through with discussion topics and recommendations. Lisa Pesavento explained she views the responsibilities of the RAB as advocates for the advancement of programs, facilities, and services as stated in the CAPRA standards. She believes facilities should continue to be included in the ordinance to satisfy this standard. Lisa emphasized the importance of the submission extension the department was granted to complete the CAPRA accreditation, and sees the RAB as an integral part of this process to help meet the fundamental standards. Denise Hyker stated the RAB members would have liked to receive the proposal for review sooner than July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lisa Pesavento suggested that all committee members have a copy of the national standards to use as a resource and informational tool for meeting benchmarks. Alderman Key expressed that the expectations of the City are for the RAB to have access for communication with full-time staff. Alderman Key stated that all suggestions will be taken into account, and the Recreation Committee members will take the next month to review the suggestions made in consideration to the final ordinance.

- **OSLAD Grant Update:** Director Fairbanks received an email Friday stating that Governor Pritzker announced the recipients of the 2022 OSLAD Grant Cycle. The City was awarded \$282,100.00 for the Orchard Park development. The IAPD informed staff that the 2023 OSLAD Grant Cycle will be open within the coming months, and the department is encouraged to apply for the next cycle.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tayler Swiedals, Recording Secretary