



City of Palos Heights
Recreation Committee
Tuesday, August 8, 2023
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Key called the regular meeting of the Recreation Committee to order at 7:04 p.m. at the Palos Heights City Hall, 7607 W. College Drive. In attendance were Chairman Key, Alderman Clifford, Alderman Begley, also present were Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, Superintendent of Recreation Rachel Bauer, Lake Katherine Chair Terry Horvath, 2 members of Power Softball, recording secretary Morgan Pukula and one member of the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Key motioned to approve the special minutes of the August 1, 2023 meeting, seconded by Alderman Clifford. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

POWER SOFTBALL FENCE

Matt Fairbanks stated the topic of the Power Softball fence at Community Park was tabled to the meeting tonight, and discussion that was previously had against the permanent fence. The staff at the Recreation Center are not opposed to the fence and are open to discussing the pros and cons of the project.

Chairman Key explained to the Power Softball representatives that there were members of the council who did not wish for the permanent fence to be installed. He stated that exploring temporary options at Community Park would gain interest among the other council members. Alderman Clifford added there were people that had concerns against blocking off one of the parks that has the most open space left.

Pat showed the committee that a petition was created and Power Softball was able to obtain over 500 signatures for the installation of a permanent fence. The petition was signed by citizens from across the country.

Pat expressed his disagreement with the committee and Jeff also stated Power Softball was not interested in a temporary fence. It was agreed that Power would also be funding the entire project and the maintenance of the fence at Community Park. Discussion was had about the budget the Parks and Recreation committee has agreed upon, and that if the city were to fund this project, the fence installation would be pushed to future years.

Chairman Key and Matt Fairbanks discussed with Jeff and Pat, that the new, proposed idea should be discussed with the Recreation staff and be brought back to committee before the city council meeting, for a resolution. Power Softball has raised \$5,000.00 of the total \$22,000.00 and plans to fund the entire project once it is approved by city council.

LAKE KATHERINE REPORT

Lake Katherine Chair Terry Horvath reported:

- Gareth and staff will be attending the ANCA Summit in Maine through August 21st-25th.
- The board is researching the recommendations and suggestions made by ANCA and strategically planning for future projects. The business plan is to follow the strategic plan.
- Lake Katherine has a new committee called the Community Outreach Committee. This includes staff and board members that plan on interacting with the community more often.
- Palos Heights Library acts as a partner to us and the Green Team meets to discuss environmental issues.

- A class was hosted for the Orland Garden Club. A retreat was held by the Ovarian Cancer survivors group and the District 230 administrators.
- We have attended the Farmers Market as well, presenting information about the lake and our programs.
- A name change could be in the future, where we would eliminate Botanical Gardens and simply be called Lake Katherine Nature Center.
- The board has a new member who will be a go to technical support person and be able to teach the members about new systems and programs. The board is also looking for a new member to join.
- Our educational programs are very well attended and the children's programs currently have waitlists. We have one educator, but are exploring the option of bringing more educators to our team.
- A family campout was hosted with 10 people in attendance.
- A sunrise kayak tour on the lake was well attended with 15 people who showed up at 5:30 am to watch the sunrise.
- An evening program we host called Sunset Sonata, includes musicians and enjoying the evening around the lake.
- The July 3rd fireworks were hosted at Lake Katherine. Terry stated there may be discussion about relocating the fireworks in the future due to viewing issues.
- We hosted a volunteer BBQ, showing our appreciation to everyone who keep Lake Katherine beautiful.
- Our fishing day had 20 attendees.
- Monarchs and Margaritas will be held on September 15th as an evening fundraiser for our Monarch Fest, which is approaching on September 16th and 17th. Reservations will be required.
- Meetings have been held between MWRD and our staff, discussing the boat house.
- Lake Katherine would like to thank the Public Works Department for their hard work on the grounds. They recently installed a new handicap door at the Nature Center.

Chairman Key complimented the growth of the herb garden. The lake is full of wildlife and it is a great place to enjoy in the city. Chairman Key also stated that meetings will be held to discuss negotiations on a new MOU. We want to incorporate the suggestions from the Association of Nature Center Administrators report in the new MOU. The extension of the parking lot will be included in the discussion, as well as new staff.

PARKS AND RECREATION REPORT

Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks gave the recreation report:

- **Recreation Update:** On July 17th, session 3 of summer camp started. There were 182 campers enrolled in this session. During this session, they attended the pool, Lincoln Park Zoo and Marcus movie theatre. The teen camp attended the pool, Raging Waves and Lincoln Park Zoo as well. Kiddie camp has attended the pool and the critter show. All ages attended the pool for the end of the summer pool party on August 4th. Our camp staff did an amazing job this year of tending to all the camp attendees. Our athletic camp completed their sports on July 31st through August 4th. There were 19 participants enrolled in this program. Staff ran a variety of different sports for the kids throughout the week. We also held a White Sox baseball camp that took place the week of July 17th through July 20th. The kids camp was taught by instructors who are affiliated with the White Sox organization and we had 65 kids who participated. We also held a soccer camp that took place between July 24th and July 28th with 21 participants. Tee ball and coach pitch league have recently begun and practices started the week of July 24th. There are 192 participants registered for the leagues this year. This is the highest amount of participants that we have ever had, and we are looking forward to a great season. The first games took place on August 3rd and 5th.
- **Pool Update:** The pool will be closing on September 4th, Labor Day. The managers, lifeguards and pool staff have done a great job of making sure everything runs smoothly.

As of July 26th, we had over \$126,000 for our pool pass sales, compared to just over \$103,000 in 2022. In addition, as of July 26th, the pool has brought in \$101,000 in daily admissions and \$45,000 in concession sales. Swim lessons has brought in just under \$29,000 with 426 participants.

- **Orchard Park Update:** At the July 19th City Council meeting, the two submitted bids were opened for construction work. JSD reviewed both packets to ensure all documents were correct according to the bid outlines. The special recreation meeting on August 1st approved the low bid and JSD recommended Hacienda Landscaping. They were awarded the project at the city council meeting that night. We are in the process of doing reference checks but are currently working on drafting the contract. We hope to begin the project at the end of this month or beginning of next month. We are looking to have a Grand Opening in late spring of 2024, and they should be finished with work by the end of the calendar year.

We have ordered the components for the spray pad through the co-op purchasing and have also finished the order for the shelter, the park site furnishings and games through the co-op. In ordering through the co-op we saved money, time going through the bid process and placed our name on the docket for future orders.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Chairman Key motioned to approve payment #7 to JSD Landscaping in the amount of \$5,078.63 for permits, bidding/contract execution and grant administrative work completed on the Orchard Park Project, seconded by Alderman Clifford. On a voice note, the motion passed unanimously – **AGENDA**

OLD BUSINESS

- a) Park Design Standards approval – October 18th 2011, the original park design standards were approved by the recreation committee. It started through RAB and was created to formalize what the parks looked like, what colors would be present, what style of materials and structures would be in the parks, etc. Over the last year, the recreation staff updated page by page as needed and added additional games that were added throughout the 10 years. RAB confirmed all the updates and design standards. One change to the design standard was removal of pricing. Pricing has and will continue to fluctuate throughout the years and does not need to be noted. Chairman Key requested a list of the updates to present to council.
- b) Alderman Clifford expressed concern on Veteran's Park that has not been completed with the installation of a slide. Matt explained that the slide is ready to be put in, but is simply waiting on Public Works to install it.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Morgan Pukula, Recording Secretary