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City of Palos Heights  
Recreation Advisory Board Meeting  
Wednesday, September 28, 2022  
12:00 p.m.  
MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Recreation Advisory Board Meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm. In attendance were Paul Hunt (via Zoom), Gayle Greenwald, Denise Hyker, Lynda Schiappa, Angie Pope, Alderman Key, Alderman McGovern, Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Fairbanks, and Recording Secretary Lauren Koszola.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Gayle Greenwald made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 29, 2022 Recreation Advisory Board Meeting with amendments, seconded by Angie Pope

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

A. Recreation Update

- Youth Athletics: The Fall session of Sports Kids Inc. classes began the week of September 12-16. These classes include; basketball, tennis, flag football, track and field, volleyball, soccer, golf, and adult and tot multi-sport. In addition, the new Fall session of All-Star Sport classes began on August 30th. There are currently 33 participants registered for this session of All-Star Sport classes. All the first sessions of Fall classes will end the week of October 17-21. All-Star Sports: 33 participants. Sports Kids Inc.: 89 participants
- Tee Ball and Coach Pitch Leagues: The Recreation Department's Tee Ball and Coach Pitch League ended on Saturday, September 17. The league ended with 190 participants compared to 177 participants in 2021. All the participants received a medal after their last games.
- Mother/Son Bags Tournament: The Recreation Department ran its third annual Mother/Son Bags Tournament event on Thursday, September 22, at Meyers Park. 16 Mother/Son participants registered for this event. The top two teams received prizes.

- **Preschool:** Classes began the week of September 6. Our 4's full day is full with ten students, 4's half-day is full with seven students, and 3's half-day is full with twelve students for the 2022-2023 school year. Welcome back packets were mailed to students' homes with supply list, welcome letters, and emergency forms. A parent meeting was held on Wednesday, August 31, at 5:30 pm for the parents/ guardians to meet the teachers, see the classrooms, and drop off school supplies. The Palos Heights Library came in Tuesday, September 13th, and Wednesday, September 14th, at 11 am to visit our preschool classes for story time.
- **Early Childhood:** Little Sprouts will start on Tuesday, September 20. There are nine students enrolled in the 9 am to 10:30 am class. There are four enrolled in the 10:45 am to 12:15 pm class. We are still taking enrollments to ensure that both classes can run. Miss Angie's Music started on Wednesday, September 14th at Memorial Park. There are 40 participants enrolled in the class. This class will run until October 19th.
- **Birthday Parties:** The recreation department continues to run birthday parties at the recreation center. There were five birthday parties reserved for the month of September. These parties consisted of Nerf theme, Sports theme, Inflatable theme, and Tie Dye theme parties. 47 birthday parties have run this year, compared to the 35 total birthday parties from 2021. There are two other birthday parties reserved in October.
- **Farmer's Market / Winter Markets:** On Wednesday, August 10, the Farmers Market celebrated National Farmers Market Week and featured Ms. Angie's Music, Moraine Valley Community Orchestra, Palos Heights Public Library along with raffle prizes donated from vendors, crafts, Farmers market bag giveaways, temporary tattoos with the Day Camp staff and a balloon twister.
- **Kris Kringle Market:** The Recreation Department and the KKM committee have been working together to collect and process payments from vendors for the December event. There have been fifty applicants thus far. The Recreation Department will be coordinating all information as it relates to the marketing campaign for "Holiday in the Heights" to be sent in the October Utility Mailing. The Kris Kringle Committee asked the Recreation Department to secure some sponsors to help offset the cost of the event. The contacts which have been contacted are Joe's Italian Villa, Aurelio's, Medula/Chiro-One, Palos Health/Northwestern, and Clearwave.
- **Marketing Report:** The Community Events Manager made efforts to take more pictures at events and increase the traffic on social media sites over the past three months. The marquee in front has been utilized to market events and upcoming programs as well as the print media inside the Recreation Center and on REACH the television screens.
- **Staffing:** Staff has been working on hiring the administrative support supervisor position. Previously we posted this on the state association's job board, as well as, the city and department website and the Parks and Recreation social media accounts. This

rendered only a handful of applicants which we interviewed. We did make an offer but the offer was declined.

We restarted our search and uploaded the job description to Indeed where we were received over 40 applicants. Staff has reviewed the resumes and began interviews last week. We scheduled the top six candidates and have three as alternatives. We are hoping to make an offer by mid-October with start of work in early November.

Our Community Events Manager, Nikki Gotsch resigned this week due to some personal health issues. We wish her well in her future and her recovery. We will be posting this position by mid-October and hope to have a new staff member by the end of the calendar year.

#### B. Pool Update

- The pool season officially closed on Labor Day this year. The pool pass sales were over \$103,000 in 2022 (budgeted \$109,600), general admission was \$122,000 (budgeted \$110,00) and our swim lesson revenue totals was just over \$29,000 (budgeted \$25,000). Staff has begun cleaning, maintenance and storage of pool supplies. Last week the pool was partially drained. Staff is working on evaluations of part-time staff, as well as, the general evaluation's for pool pass holders to help plan for the 2023 season. Joe, is working on inventory and budget for bigger ticket items including shading for the slide and drain repair of the baby pool. He will prepare an end-of-the-year report that will be presented to the rec committee at a future meeting.

#### C. Misty Meadows Update

- As of mid-August the park has been open to the public for use. George's landscaping has finalized all contracted work except for the installation of two informational sign boards which are yet to be delivered. Staff recently received the main park sign, and we are coordinating with public works to install it. In working with Kendall and Michael as well as JSD architects, it was determined the official grand opening/ribbon-cutting will take place on Monday, October 17 at 3:30 PM (new date/time). The Mayor, Alderman Key will be on site to say a few words at the opening. Kendall and Michael will also say a few words. They are trying to coordinate providing some giveaways through their sponsors as well. Staff is preparing PR a statement and marketing for the grand opening. We will be sending invites to city officials, city committees, and local agencies to be a part of the event. Discussion about the park's grand opening day, time, and parking was discussed by the group along with landscaping at the park.

#### D. CAPRA Update

- There are currently no major updates with CAPRA as staff has focused our time to the time-sensitive OSLAD application this past month. Staff has met and discussed a plan for

completing the outstanding standards. The timeline and level of difficulty is being assigned to these standards. Matt, Lauren and Joe are working towards their completion. Matt has forwarded the current CAPRA standards to the City Administrator, as well as, the chair of the Recreation Committee, so they are again aware of the requirements needed to complete the standards. We will be scheduling our site visit with NRPA within the next couple of months for 2023. New for this round of site reviews is newly accreditations (us) will be an in-person site visit vs. the virtual option (only reaccruited now). This will require us to budget for travel, lodging, food, etc. for the 3-member site team that will come to Palos Heights next year.

Lynda requested the RAB see a list of CAPRA standards which need to be completed.

#### E. 2023 OSLAD Application

- IDNR opened the application for the OSLAD grant on August 3rd. The new maximum grant for this cycle is \$600,000 and the maximum award for projects was raised to \$1.2 million. Per the timeline of the Parks and Recreation Master plan, updating the pool was determined to take place within 3-5 years of the 2019 published date. It was decided by the Recreation Committee at the August meeting to move forward with applying for the OSLAD grant and begin a phased redevelopment of the Palos Pool. Staff secured Upland Design to assist with the preparation of the OSLAD grant application: including the narrative statement, Environmental Assessment Statement, EcoCAT report, and the Cultural Resources, Endangered species and Wetland report to name a few items required for the application. Staff has also secured Williams Architects to prepare a feasibility study, architecture assessment and concept design drawings of the bathhouse and suggested amenities from residents. Staff and Upland Design held a Community Open House on 9/7 to describe the grant, as well as, gather ideas to include in the redevelopment project. Some of the most requested items included updates to showers in both locker rooms, additional shading around the pool decks, deck lockers and a second slide. Upland and Williams prepared a concept with this feedback and a second Community Meeting was held at the pool on Tuesday, September 20th with additional resident feedback that will be included in the grant application. The closing date for the application is September 30 at 5pm.

The Director of Parks and Recreation showed the proposed layout of the pool bathhouse which will be submitted for the OSLAD Grant. A discussion was held about the update and the grant application. Lynda and Denise wanted to know how the Recreation Department told the community about the meeting as they were not aware of the meeting. Staff replied that it was communicated via direct email blast to pull pass holders, through social media postings and on updates for both the city and departments websites. They felt that the RAB should have been notified about the OSLAD Grant prior to submitting it and wanted to have the RAB included in the discussion leading up to the community meetings. Lynda has asked that the RAB and the Parks and Recreation Department Director start communicating better and that the RAB

be included at the ground level of these conversations and be part of the planning at the ground level and have conversations about it. Lynda expressed she felt more people could have attended the meeting if it was held at a different time and day as it was the start of school and that the community could have had more notice. The Director of Parks and Recreation expressed the timing of this OSLAD Grant Application was announced the day it opened and had a quick turnaround timeline for submission. The Recreation Department needed to take the lead on getting everything together but in the past the RAB has been included in past conversations on Misty Meadows and Orchard Park. Lynda wants to have more opportunities in the future and have more organic conversations to help the Recreation Department.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Lynda suggested the Little Learners Preschool could plan a trip to Lake Katherine to see the Turtles. Lauren said she will try and work something out to see if that can fit into the schedule this year.

Lynda asked for an update on the Feldner Property: Director of Parks and Recreation gave an update on the property.

Denise brought a new program idea about getting the community out and moving more. She brought an idea that Frankfort does. Recreation Department staff are going to look into how they can bring this idea to the forefront.

Lynda brought up some complaints she had from two community members about the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Celebration. She was told it was confusing on how to buy the wristbands early and that these individuals felt like it wasn't enough time. She also said the new time for the inflatables was confusing for people and that they were unsure what time it starts and where it was being held. She also said she never received a flyer from the regional newspaper. The Director of Parks and Recreation and Lauren both said they will take this into consideration for next year and that the flyers did go in the regional newspaper this year.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Recreation Advisory Board Ordinance Update**

- Based on previous concerns, at the September Recreation Committee Meeting Alderman Key looked to amend the Ordinance in two ways. First, change the number of meetings the RAB attends annually, to 6 instead of the 3 originally proposed in § 34.52 (c). Alderman Begley wished to also strike the language in prior to the "public recreation playbook at a time and place it shall designate", since it would not be applicable. Second, in the language of serving a 4-year term, there will no longer be a break in between terms. The member of the RAB will serve their 4-year term, and from there, at the mayor's discretion, that person could serve again for another term. The mayor overall will appoint members to this board, the same as all of our boards in the city. The appropriate version of the ordinance will be brought to a future meeting.

Finally, there was an agreement to strike § 34.50 (c) 4 and 5. New improvements to the ordinance will be given to all 8 Aldermen to discuss at the next city council meeting. Chairman Key motioned to have the city attorney draft the new improvements, which was seconded by Alderman Bylut.

Recreation Advisory Board members asked if they could get an updated copy of the ordinance to discuss. It was stated Tuesday, October 4 City Council will vote on this ordinance to be passed. Lisa Pesavento was unable to attend the meeting but ask Board Member Denise to read an email that was sent to the RAB and Director of Recreation. The email read as followed:

“I strongly urge that the RAB continues to meet monthly, that increased time and attention be directed toward CAPRA Accreditation criteria completion, and that more substantive CAPRA Accreditation updates be shared with the mayor, city council, Recreation Committee, RAB, PHP&R participants, and residents until Accreditation has been achieved and subsequently awarded”

Some Recreation Advisory Board members were concerned they haven't been part of the changes being made to the Recreation Advisory Board Ordinance and didn't understand the origin of the changes. Alderman Key explained to the members of the Recreation Advisory Board this all started with the Recreation Committee having concerns about the role of the RAB. He stated the discussion of changes were not initiated by the Director of Parks and Recreation, it was the Alderman on the Recreation Committee that did so. He stated during the process of the Recreation Committee discussing the possible ordinance change that both Lynda and Denise have had conversations with the Mayor and Alderman Key. Alderman Key felt the current state of the ordinance updates has to do with personality conflicts instead of the actual ordinances or best practices. The Director of Parks and Recreation and Alderman Key were a part of meetings with the Mayor and the City Administrator. Collectively this group came up with new ideas about the RAB and what the ordinances proposal states.

The Mayor, Alderman Key, and the City Administrator tasked the Director of Parks and Recreation to see what other cities and agencies do regarding their advisory boards. This helped the creation of the proposal for ordinances and what would be appropriate moving forward for our RAB. Alderman Key said the new changes to the ordinances had been brought to the RAB member's attention along with the Mayor and the Recreation Committee. The Recreation Committee agreed to the new ordinance and is moving forward to vote on it at the City Council meeting on October 4. Lynda said she feels like the RAB hasn't been a part of the conversation and has only been reported to. She doesn't feel like she has been part of the conversation and she doesn't want to be told that they have. She feels like the Members of the RAB should have been part of the process from the beginning, their opinions matter and that some of the members have been here longer than some of the Alderman and Director of Parks and Recreation. It was the RAB that worked hard to get to where the Recreation Department is today. She hopes from this day forward that the recreation advisory board and Director of Parks

Recreation can have better communication, do what is in the best interest of the community and what is best for the Parks and Recreation Department. Gayle suggested it was good that this was brought up today and we should move on and start working on moving forward.

Alderman Key stated he made it very clear in each meeting he had with Lynda and Denise he has been communicating with them about what was going on in the process of the new ordinance. He expressed everyone will see the updated ordinance once it is back from the lawyer and that he and the Director of Parks Recreation have shared all they could along the way with the members of the RAB. Alderman Key made it clear that the Director of Parks and Recreation is not going anywhere and changes are going to be made. Denise said her concerns have always been about how the RAB could work better with Matt. She is concerned because some meetings have been canceled and she felt things weren't being communicated. She stated she brought that to the Alderman's attention. Alderman Key made it clear he is fighting to keep the committee together and that we need to move forward and communicate better as a whole.

The Director of Parks Recreation will bring ideas and dates of when everyone should meet 6 times during the year. He will bring them to the RAB member's attention.

Members of the Committee expressed they would prefer Matt to be at the meetings over other recreation staff as he is the decision-maker. Matt agreed he would like to be in attendance for all meetings, but staff are fully capable and will fill in from time to time. Matt also suggested the members meet in the evenings occasionally along with during day time hours so that there is more opportunity for involvement in the future.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Lynda Schiappa made a motion to adjourn at 1:37 pm, seconded by Tim Cronin. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 1:37 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Koszola, Recording Secretary