

MINUTES
DeKalb Park District
Public Meeting of the Board of Commissioners
January 14, 2023
Ellwood Visitors Center, DeKalb, IL

Public Meeting
10:00 a.m.

I. Meeting Call to Order:

President Patrick Fagan called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Roll Call

Board members present: President Patrick Fagan, Vice President Dag Grada, Secretary Gail A. Krmeneč, Treasurer Joel French, and Commissioner Phil Young.

Staff Members Present: Executive Director John Shea, Superintendent of Parks & Development Mat Emken, Superintendent of Finance Mike Rock, Superintendent of Recreation Andrea Juricic, Accounting & Administrative Assistant Jennifer Anderson, Cindy Slinkard, and Mike Siefken.

II. Action on the Agenda

Commissioner Krmeneč made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Grada. Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Krmeneč, Young, French, Grada, and Fagan. Nay: None. Absent: None. (5-0-0)

III. Public Comments

Mathew Beamsley thanked everyone for all they do and their friendship. Keep up the good work, you're making an impact. The parks are the foundation of a town, and that creates value. Its families, parks, and community.

IV. Old Business

None.

V. New Business

a. FY 2023 Budget Workshop

All Funds Overview

Commissioner French asked whether there would be a salary survey in the future. Director Shea indicated IPRA does one every year. He and Mark have been comparing that to our position salaries and will approach the board if we are not comparable. Commissioner French also commented that were a few red flags listed under suggestions/concerns on the audit. One was the fluctuating cost of golf, which he understands because of pricing deals. He added that the much larger DeKalb County government, which uses the same auditing firm, had no concerns listed in their audit. Director Shea said some of the things, especially

golf, are concerns from the prior year. At the beginning of the FY being audited, bank reconciliations were not being done on a regular basis when there was a temp in the position. Those have been fixed since Superintendent of Finance Mike Rock assumed that role. Many other concerns have already been fixed, since this audit was for FY 22, and it has been almost 12 months since February 2022, which is when the previous fiscal year ended. Commissioner Krmeneč asked whether the Director anticipated an audit extension this year, since we requested extensions the past 2 years. Director Shea answered negatively. The sooner we approve the Sikich auditing contract, the sooner we are able to get on their schedule. Commissioner Krmeneč said Director Shea mentioned we were on target as far as budget goes. The FY 23 MSI report includes a “budgeted” column and an 8 month “actual” column. She wanted to clarification on whether the budget was based on 8 month actuals or projections and whether we’re on target as of 8 months ago or now. Director Shea said we are on target with revenue. We use the monthly financials and 8 month actuals to look at programs. Staff then use those numbers, estimated programs revenue and expenses to give a year end estimate with projections through the end of FY23. Commissioner Krmeneč added that she wants to ensure the board receives the MSI reports quarterly, which the Director said that is planned and the last quarter will be when the budget is completed in February 2023.

Fund 10 General

10-01.

10-12. Commissioner Young asked whether the natural area specialist position is only an arborist. Superintendent Emken said an arborist certification would be nice, but the focus is more on overall vegetative care, not just trees. Many people in that area specialty have both qualifications. Commissioner Young further inquired, with the Nature Trail and the Encap contract concluding, whether this person would take the lead on that work, to which Mr. Emken responded affirmatively. He indicated the work would continue on keeping out invasive species and seeding with native seed. President Fagan asked about the wage for the individual, to which Superintendent Emken stated this is a Level 2 position. Commissioner Krmeneč said she is glad to hear we are planning on a natural areas specialist and hopes we continue to move in that direction. She inquired if that person is on board, will we still contract out that type of work. Mr. Emken indicated there was 1 year left on the pollinator project and 2 years on the phase 3 of nature trail restoration. The full time position and another seasonal would focus would on these areas. Mr. Emken clarified that the natural areas specialist and a seasonal worker would actually be performing work. Commissioner Krmeneč also asked about the signage and landscape beds, which are often planted with annuals, which require a lot of work. She asked whether we’ve considered natives or a mix of natives that would require less watering, no repeated planting. Mat Emken responded that is the direction we are trying to move. Some areas will still need

splashes of color, like the wedding garden, but overall we're heading toward using more perennials and native plants. Commissioner French added that considering how expensive contracts are, the naturalist position and additional staff could replace the contract work and we could save a lot of money. President Fagan mentioned 3 years ago, it was cheaper to contract out. Now we are flipping back over to where we were twenty years ago.

There was a short break in the meeting from 10:55 to 11:04 a.m., at which time the meeting resumed.

10-62.

President Fagan questioned how sales income increased from \$6,000 to \$25,000. Director Shea responded that in 2022 that were a lot of rentals booked during COVID that were moved forward. Commissioner Young asked whether increasing food options at Music at the Mansion would be done internally with staff or with food trucks. Director Shea shared that last year we tried to get food trucks, but there were minimum requirements for sales, that if not met, then the District would have to pay. We've thought of bringing equipment from the golf course to be able to offer food, but we will need a food permit. We will still consider food trucks if we can. Ms. Slinkard added that we plan to get a small grill to offer more options. Commissioner French said it seems the clientele want snacks and cheaper prices. President Fagan mentioned being careful about political and church signs at our rentals. Ms. Slinkard agreed. Commissioner Young asked about the usage of Hopkins Shelter. Jennifer Anderson said it is only open seasonally, April-October, since there is no heat. We are booking out through 2023 and many of the rental rooms are booked every weekend.

Fund 20 Recreation

President Fagan mentioned the importance of Haish gym and the need for it on that side of town. People have been going there for years, and while it does not make a lot of money, it is there for the people. He brought up sponsorships, and said he doesn't think we utilize them as much as other park districts. He also mentioned that last year after the fireworks he was approached by the mayor who wants the fireworks elsewhere. He may be the only person. Mr. Fagan thought it was a dead subject, but the mayor called the other day to discuss the idea. Be prepared that they might do something else, and not give \$7,000 towards the fireworks. Director Shea indicated the District pays the bill for 4th of July (\$15,000), and they reimburse us. So we budget that amount in full. Mr. Fagan again recommended that we get sponsorships to help cover costs. President Fagan asked about competition with NIU, specifically the summer camps and the option for working with NIU. Superintendent Juricic said we have tried to reach out and partner with them on other projects. NIU sets a price and they want us to pay "x" amount. At this point, the cost outweighs the benefits. In other areas, such as

Polarpalooza, we approached them about a partnership to utilize their ice skates. President Fagan mentioned it would be a good opportunity for NIU, since they do it to teach their people, and then we would have to less people to hire. Ms. Juricic said for certain groups, it works well, some groups at NIU are more open than others. For outdoor education, if we have snow, NIU would send volunteers to help with snow shoeing and skiing. Commissioner Krmeneć said regarding the camp, it is worth asking what they plan to charge, and is there a differential, perhaps a discounted rate for university faculty and staff. Maybe the park district would be able to set up some type of reciprocal agreement, where we could provide the camp for that amount and NIU could work with us on staffing. Be creative. She also mentioned that she thought people may not know that Haish gym has new fitness equipment and that maybe the District needs to look at how we market Haish. Perhaps look at what the private fitness clubs do, with first month free. Commissioner French agreed. He added that sponsorships alone could be a full time position. As a business owner, he gets calls all the time, usually from third parties. Commissioner Krmeneć said if we are going to ask for a large sum of money, for example from a Meta or Amazon, that request should come from the board president and executive director. Director Shea added that the new marketing position is a part time starting point and hopefully will evolve to full time. Ms. Juricic mentioned that a lot of businesses have been good for items such as cupcakes, water bottles, etc. but we need to up the game. President Fagan said we have to be proactive on all of this. Commissioner Grada said if one person is working on sponsorships, then efforts are coordinated.

Fund 21 Insurance

Fund 22 Audit

Fund 23 FICA

Fund 24 IMRF

President Fagan stated it has come to his attention that “insurance” should be “risk management” because we are in a pool for property casualty. Whenever you’re in a pool, there could be an assessment, so it’s important to keep reserves up. The rates have dropped. But most government entities go out and test the waters every three to four years. Considering we’re in a pool and do not have a guaranteed cost, it’s worth doing our due diligence. Director Shea stated that the PDRMA rate went down. Cyber security is no longer covered in their base coverage. The price is made up of an overall lower rate plus the added cyber security. President Fagan said cyber is what medical malpractice was 25 years ago; it’s getting to the point where sometimes you can’t buy it.

Fund 25 Museum- Commissioner Krmeneć asked if the landscaping includes the large tree replacement around the mansion. Mr. Emken indicated that tree replacement typically comes out of the capital budget and we do add some trees at this site every year. Commissioner Krmeneć said she thought that the tree replacements seemed very small. Mr. Emken indicated we usually buy 3 inch

caliper trees, which usually results in healthier trees. She said she understood, it's just that there is such a big gap there now. Commissioner Young asked whether the lightning device is scheduled to go in before the bad weather period. Mr. Emken said he has done a little research and Brian Reis provided him documents before he left. He would like to get that quoted out and approved right away.

There was short break from 11:59 a.m. to 12:05 p.m., at which time the meeting resumed.

Fund 26 Special Recreation

Fund 40 Debt

Fund 50 Golf

President Fagan asked what percentage of golf revenue comes in from GolfNow, to which Director Shea indicated everything, except junior leagues. There are times where GolfNow has hotdeals: they sell at cheaper rates and they keep that revenue. President Fagan then asked how much their cut is. Director Shea said they only get the credit card processing fee, but with the agreement they are able to sell a certain number of discounted rounds per day and they receive those proceeds. Ms. Slinkard indicated it is two at each course. Director Shea added that these are non-prime time spots. Director Shea indicated that when he started, the agreement included carts, but now it doesn't. President Fagan asked how many users with private golf carts pay to use their carts on the courses. Ms. Slinkard said maybe 6, and she receives some backlash for the charge. They are using our course, and she reminds people that the price hasn't changed. Commissioner French inquired about the status of the bridge that has been out. Mr. Siefken said it is budgeted for replacement in this year's capital spending. Commissioner French added that the high school golf coach is ecstatic about how many younger people are coming out for golf. Mr. French also mentioned the idea of lockers for the younger golfers and a bike rack so they could golf whenever they wanted. Commissioner Krmeneč commented that from where we were to where we are now, it is exciting to see how much has been done in just a few years. President Fagan added that is only because you all work together.

Fund 60 Aquatics

President Fagan asked about the cost of a scale and whether Sycamore had one. Director Shea said theirs was already gone. Commissioner Krmeneč asked about the plans for concessions since Big Ds pulled out last year. Superintendent Juricic said they should have a new vendor for presentation at next week's board meeting.

Capitals

Commissioner Krmeneč asked about the maintenance vehicles, saying we approved ~\$100,000 last time. Director Shea said that was for 2 trucks, but we also talked about buying a used truck. She thought that was for the mechanic's truck, which is not listed in the packet as a purchase. Director Shea indicated was listed as zero, but it is included under the truck replacement, with the remainder going to the mechanic's truck. Mr. Emken pointed out that the mechanic's truck

could be found on the CIP form. Commissioner French mentioned that one common denominator is that it's hard to get seasonal staff. He asked if we could up some wages for hard to fill positions. Commissioner Krmeneč commented on the capitals for lighting replacement, saying we don't need them everywhere, especially when parks are closed at a certain time. We shouldn't light them if they're closed. She inquired whether the District takes full advantage of the Com Ed grants programs. Isn't geothermal coming for Ellwood house? She thinks there is a Com Ed geothermal grant program, too. We should be looking into future technology for projects. The SRC will need a new roof. The energy costs for that building are fairly high. Perhaps we could investigate using solar panels on the roof to generate our own power, acknowledging she didn't know whether it was possible. Include wind technology, too. We should leverage every single grant opportunity or any pilot projects in which we can participate.

20-year outlook

Commissioner Young asked whether there would be more information on the pool at the next meeting. Director Shea indicated that Mr. Nelson will attend the January 19 meeting, with a cost estimate breakdown. Commissioner Krmeneč thanked the Director for putting the outlook together, which was an immense amount of work. It provides a much better idea of what we are facing in terms of the park district as whole, not just the pool.

VI. Open Comments from Commissioners and Director

Commissioner French said thanks for the hard work. Commissioner Krmeneč agreed. She added that she knows how much went into preparation, and we appreciate everyone's work. Commissioner Grada thanked the staff, saying that we are crunching 4 months of work into 3 hours of talk time. Commissioner Young also thanked the staff. He referenced the term "kick the can down the road", and has seen that with three pool scenarios in the past. If we don't address the pool soon, it will be priced to the point where if you have a \$15M or \$20M pool, there will be no capital for any other capital improvements. Today we found a feasible plan. President Fagan agreed and said we missed an opportunity doing this a few years ago. This idea is doable and one we can afford. Thank you again to everyone. Director Shea said hats off to staff. A lot of time and effort went into this. For the pool, we need to make a decision sooner than later. Might be hard pressed to say we'll have a pool summer of 2024.

VII. Closed Session

a. Personnel- 5 ILCS 120/2(c)1

Commissioner Krmeneč made a motion at 1:32 p.m. to go into closed session under Section 2(c)(1) of the Open Meetings Act, seconded by Commissioner French.

Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Krmeneč, Young, French, Grada, and Fagan. Nay: None. Absent: None. (5-0-0)

VIII. Reconvene Open Meeting

Commissioner Krmeneč made a motion to return to open session at 1:35 p.m.
Commissioner Young seconded the motion.

Motion carried by voice vote.

IX. Adjourn Public Meeting

Commissioner Krmeneč made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by
Commissioner Young.

Motion carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.