



**Board of Commissioners**

Dag Grada  
Brian Tobin  
Gail A. Krmeneč  
David Castro  
Doug Eaton

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**MINUTES**  
**DeKalb Park District**  
**Public Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**  
**June 27, 2024**  
**Hopkins Community Center, DeKalb, IL**

**Public Meeting**  
**6:00 p.m.**

**I. Meeting Call to Order:**

Vice-President Brian Tobin called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Roll Call**

**Board members present:** Vice-President Brian Tobin, Secretary Gail A. Krmeneč, Treasurer David Castro and Commissioner Doug Eaton.

**Board members absent:** President Dag Grada.

**Staff Members Present:** Executive Director Paul Zepezauer, Superintendent of Parks & Development Mat Emken, Superintendent of Recreation Chrissy Tluczek, Accounting & Administrative Assistant Jennifer Anderson, Wes Levy and Mary Frost (Lauterbach and Amen), and Dave Kesson.

**II. Action on the Agenda**

Commissioner Krmeneč made a motion to amend the agenda to strike Item 8, New Business, a. Action on Collective Bargaining Contract, and b. Action on Merit Pool Increase for Non-Collective Bargaining Employees for Fiscal Year 2025 (3/1/24-2/28/25), and approve the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Krmeneč, Castro, Tobin, Eaton. Nay: None. Absent: Grada. (4-0-1)

**III. Consent Agenda**

*All items appearing below are considered routine by the Board and shall be enacted by one motion. If discussion is desired, that item shall be removed and discussed separately.*

- a. Minutes of the Public Meeting of May 23, 2024
- b. Minutes of the Special Meeting of June 6, 2024
- c. Executive Session Minutes of May 23, 2024
- d. Executive Session Minutes of June 6, 2024

Commissioner Eaton made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Castro. Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Krmenech, Castro, Tobin, Eaton. Nay: None. Absent: Grada. (4-0-1)

#### **IV. Public Comments**

Several people affiliated with the DeKalb County Swim Team, including Linh Nguyen, LaWanda Lacey, John Sullivan, and Jessica (no last name given) spoke regarding downsizing the proposed redesigned pool lap lanes from 50 meters to 25 meters. They thought it was not a viable option for the swim team. It was suggested the District find an alternative solution that does not impact the 50-meter lap lane length and urged the district to reach out to local, county, state, and federal representatives for funds. Hopkins Pool is the only location the swim team can practice in a 50-meter pool, which is important for team training and program growth.

#### **V. Closed Session**

**The Board will enter a Closed Session to discuss:**

- a. **Collective negotiation matters between the public body and its employee or their representatives- 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)**

Commissioner Castro made a motion to go into closed session under Section 2(c)(2) of the Open Meeting Act, seconded by Commissioner Eaton.

Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Krmenech, Castro, Tobin, Eaton. Nay: None.

Absent: Grada. (4-0-1)

#### **VI. Reconvene Open Meeting**

Commissioner Eaton made a motion to return to open session at 6:21 p.m. Commissioner Castro seconded the motion.

#### **VII. Old Business**

- a. **Discussion on Hopkins Pool Replacement Project Update**

Stephen Nelson of Larson & Darby and Jim Leppert of IHC updated the Board on the latest pool design based on budget estimates received since the last Board meeting. They reviewed the latest plan with a zero-depth entry pool with 750-person bather load, a children's playset and play features, a 25-meter, 5-lane lap pool and now entry/exit stairs. The plan included a plunge pool into which the slide emptied, a change from emptying into the main pool, and the runout slide, although these items have become optional alternates based on pricing. There is an entry lifeguard building with a Fastpass window, pool equipment storage and the manager's office, which was moved to this location from the second level of the main building to save on stair remodeling costs. A preliminary plan was submitted to IDPH (Illinois Dept. of Public Health) for review. Based on the agency's feedback, because the family restrooms could not be counted as fixture, they must be separate. The janitors' closets were removed from the

previous plan. One of the two family restrooms was removed to allow for a relocated janitor's and storage closet. These changes should meet with preliminary IDPH approval. Mr. Leppert said the plan was at \$10.5-11M. For a base bid without the plunge pool and slides the District was looking at a cost of \$9.3- 10M. Commissioner Krmeneč asked for clarification on the numbers. Mr. Leppert stated it would be between \$9.3-10M without the plunge pool, slide tower, and 2 slides. They're worth \$1.3-3M altogether. Commissioner Tobin asked if we would still have the rough-ins installed. Mr. Nelson and Mr. Leppert responded in the affirmative, saying power would be run to the bottom of the slides area. They would work with district to size the panel that could feed future structures, which could be another entrance, concessions, splash pad or children's area. There would be conduit or power there to pull from. Commissioner Castro mentioned he had a really bad taste in his mouth after the last meeting. He said we had been entertaining a 50-meter pool, slides, and locker rooms. He said he wanted to recognize the public speakers-it does make a difference to swim in a 50-meter pool. We spent several months considering the 50-meter pool, the slides, and the amenities. Then there was a major hiccup with water main line, then finally concrete numbers, which are significantly larger amount than budgeted. Bad taste comes from within a month, with a tight timeline, we must make a decision to go with a new design or not. He was afraid that the Board wants to make this happen, but this is going to be in place for a long time. Either get it now, or we won't get it for a long time. We will get something. It's just not the same. He said he understands there is a huge amount of money difference. He asked Mr. Zepezauer, the new Executive Director, whether there were any alternatives. Commissioner Tobin then asked what would be a rough cost going back to the 50-meter pool with a similar design. Mr. Leppert stated that there has been so many iterations of the pool, he was trying to come up with a number. He briefly summarized the previous design iterations. He thought all in, looking at those numbers, probably well over \$12M, almost \$13 million with the rebuild. The drive was to continue to get it down to a goal that we're not at now. If we are talking \$10.5-11.3M, maybe we should revisit what it is we are doing for that kind of money. He thought last time the Board met the thought would have been we're not anywhere near our budget, make a decision on something you can't really afford and do it quickly. They want to do what is in the best interest of the district, they'll work to do what is needed. They just need the right direction. Commissioner Krmeneč stated that at the last board meeting, we decided collectively as a Board on the concept. She felt that the District was at the point of where we're either going to have pool or not. It's not going to be what every person in the community wants. We would love to have a \$16M pool with all the lap lanes and all the bells and whistles, but we do not have that kind of money as a park district. Last meeting, we as a Board

decided that was the plan that we were going to go with. She said she was refreshing everyone's memory, especially since the new Executive had not yet started. We also said we can't redesign into infinity because the longer we take with this, the more expensive things get. We closed the pool this year to start the construction process, although that was complicated by having to upgrade the mechanicals, the sanitary sewer, and the water main. She stated again that at the last meeting we agreed that was the plan and we could possibly do it money-wise. To talk about \$11M, we don't have it. We have discussed this over and over and over. We just can't. She said she would love to have everything. She said Doug might have been on a previous board when we first started talking about the pool, and perhaps Steve remembers this, but one plan had no lap lanes at all. It was a zero depth entry pool. This is a huge step to go from that to where we are now and what we can afford. Many people are probably are not aware that is where we were. This plan gives us a pool. Mr. Nelson indicated we are well into the 20s on pool options that have been done, admittedly some of which were meant to be part of the original study. Commissioner Eaton said he was not at the last board meeting, but was on the board 3 years ago. He said he and the Director both have a lot of catching up to do quickly. Mr. Nelson said at this point they are having weekly meetings, moving forward with this design, which is why they reached out to IDPH. From an engineering standpoint, the District is in a position to apply for a demo permit in July. The target is the end of August to submit to IDPH with the current design and this is how they're operating unless they hear differently. Commissioner Castro asked whether the Director had a perspective. Director Zepezauer asked for and received clarification from Commissioner Castro that what he wanted to know was how much the extra 25 meters would cost. Director Zepezauer said unfortunately it doesn't have simple answer until you go out to bid. Mr. Zepezauer added that he did have some concerns with the plan. He has had conversations with the staff and Mr. Nelson. He was comfortable that the plan presented was a suitable plan based on his limited knowledge, and also understood the concerns presented earlier regarding size. The value you get with the rest of the pool serves so many more people in the community with the zero-depth. It makes more sense to make it a family focused area and serve all ages. Moving forward, he recommended to continue with this plan and the demolition permit. For July's meeting, there could be a plan approval. Commissioner Krmenech stated that she doesn't want to go to 2026 and added there may be no pool if we keep doing this. Commissioner Castro asked the Director if we have exhausted all of our financial resources. Director Zepezauer responded that there are financial resources to do additional projects, but we have to limit funds for this project to where we are because we have other projects and facilities. With 744 acres, there is no shortage of places to spend money just to keep up maintenance.

Commissioner Tobin looked for confirmation that the slide and plunge pool would be an alternate bid. Mr. Nelson confirmed that it will be broken out as a separate bid, but all of the plan would be submitted to IDPH. Mr. Leppert added that the pool equipment building design is large enough to support it so it could be added in the future, if not now. Commissioner Tobin added that \$1.3M is nothing to sneeze at. Director Zepezauer said it's advantageous in a project of this size to have alternates so when reviewing the final numbers you can judge what's best for the District as a whole.

### **VIII. Financial Reports**

Commissioner Eaton made a motion to accept the monthly financial reports presented in June 2024, seconded by Commissioner Castro.

Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Kremenec, Castro, Tobin, Eaton. Nay: None. Absent: Grada. (4-0-1)

- a. **Monthly Paid Bills Listing**
- b. **Monthly Financial Summary**
- c. **IT Summary**
- d. **Board & Staff Travel Expense Summary**
- e. **FOIA Report**

### **IX. Open Comments from Commissioners and Director**

Commissioner Castro said he was really happy for Hopkins playground and courts. It looks nice and people were happy. He has played on the courts, and he has received positive feedback for Mat and his team. There was a small problem with the fence and within a day the team addressed it. He said this is a really nice investment by the community. Commissioner Kremenec wanted to recognize and welcome the Executive Director Zepezauer to his first Board meeting. She was happy to have him as well as Commissioner Eaton and have those roles filled. She addressed the people that attended the meeting because of the pool redesign, stating she knows they wanted the 50-meter pool, and the Board had wanted it, too. Money-wise, we have gone over it and over it and financially we can't do it. It's come to the point of having the pool or not. She felt having a 25-meter pool is better than not having a pool at all. She thanked the staff for the playground; it's been busy every day. The pickleball courts and landscaping look great. Lastly, she stated as a matter of record, that Paul Zepezauer, as our Executive Director, is authorized as a signatory on the District's bank accounts. Commissioner Eaton thanked the board members for the opportunity to serve alongside them. When he decided for to be considered for Commissioner, he reviewed the April board meeting and attended the May meeting. He respected the questions and observations they had and is honored to serve. He looks forward to getting reacquainted with staff he knew and with new staff. Commissioner Tobin said, regarding

the pickleball courts and playground, it is fun to drive through and see the park busy. He acknowledged that it has been a quick 4 days for the new director. He added that he swam in college, so he understands the need and want for a 50-meter pool. Financially, it's just not there. It's a shame, but we will do everything we can to get the pool up and going. The goal is to get the community back here swimming. He thanked Director Zepezauer and Commissioner Eaton, since the District has had a challenging few months.

**X. Adjourn Public Meeting**

Commissioner Castro made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Eaton.

Motion carried by roll call vote. Aye: Krmeneć, Castro, Tobin, Eaton. Nay: None. Absent: Grada. (4-0-1)

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

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Dag Grada, President

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Gail A. Krmeneć, Secretary