

Parks & Recreation Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
October 15, 2018

**Village of Homer Glen
14240 W 151st Street, Homer Glen, IL 60491
Community Room**

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Member Bob Kman.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present at 6:45 p.m. were Co-Chairs Beth Rodgers and Christina Neitzke-Troiike, members Dale Janssen, Cassandra Courtright, Ed Cryer, Bob Kman, Russel Knaack, Regina Robinson, John Walters, Mark Gawron and Thor Batchelor.

Also Present: Facilities Manager John Robinson and Administrative Analyst Matt Walsh.

4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

There were no amendments to the agenda.

5. Minutes.

- a) September 17, 2018

Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike stated that the minutes from the September 17, 2018 Parks and Recreation meeting were being presented for approval. Member Walters made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Cryer. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

7. Reports from Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Rodgers stated that she would provide her report when Heritage Park was discussed. Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike announced that her son has arrived home from the hospital.

8. Old Business.

- a) Presentation by Holiday Event Planning Team

Member Gawron reported that the event is approaching quickly and the planning team has made great progress. The timeline for marketing was discussed. A press release and flyer is nearing final approval. The action items have been assigned, and the planning team is working on them. Member Gawron met with Analyst

Matt Walsh and Facilities Manager John Robinson to discuss lighting Heritage Circle. Mr. Robinson stated that the Village has access to a number of generators for lighting purposes if the electric is not hooked up by December 1. Co-Chair Rodgers stated that the electricity would be active by then.

Member Gawron reported that the Homer Glen Arts Guild wants to sell ornaments at the event. Co-Chairs Rodgers and Neitzke-Troiike asked that the ornament be reviewed prior to sales, and that their 501 (c) 3 status is in place. Member Gawron responded that Community Relations Coordinator Sue Steilen is following up with the guild. Hallmark will be sponsoring and providing volunteers for the Letters to Santa table, and has expressed a desire to offer raffle items. Co-Chair Rodgers and Member Gawron agreed that the raffle tickets would have to be given out for free.

Mr. Robinson discussed some of his ideas for decorating Heritage Circle. Walt Konow from Konow's Corn Maze is going to meet with staff to confirm the hayride route. Mr. Robinson recommended that purchasing decorations after Christmas is ideal for pricing.

9. New Business.

- a) Consider a Motion Recommending Approval of the Park and Recreation Committee's 2019 Meeting Dates.

Motion by Co-Chair Rodgers, second by Member Batchelor to approve the Park and Recreation Committees 2019 meeting dates. The motion passed unanimously. All meetings, excluding February, will take place on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. The February meeting will take place on February 25, the fourth Monday of the month, to avoid President's Day.

- b) Discussion of Park Prioritization

Analyst Walsh presented a review of past park plans to begin preliminary discussion of prioritizing future park projects. The 2007 Master Parks plan identified ten (10) target locations for parks. Two (2) of those locations, Goodings Grove and Erin Hills, have had parks constructed and have since been removed from further consideration. In 2016, the Trust for Public Land analyzed park locations and population density to identify areas of need throughout the Village. There was some discussion amongst committee members clarifying the map provided by the Trust for Public Land and the locations that were identified.

Co-Chair Rodgers stated that the revenue source for park development (Motor Fuel Tax proceeds) has declined this year, and hopes that it will increase in the future. This, combined with Heritage Park construction, limits the ability to develop other parks in the Village. Prioritization may change by the time money is available.

Member Knaack expressed that the need for parks and the availability for money are different discussions. Analyst Walsh further explained the data collected for the spreadsheet. The discussion turned to Old Oak subdivision. Member Batchelor asked about the availability of space within Old Oak for parks. Member Knaack

stated that there are one or two lots available, and the lack of space makes developing there an even higher priority.

Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike agreed with Co-Chair Rodgers that the priorities may change over time when more money is available and asked Member Knaack how he wants to move forward. Member Knaack replied that he wants to take a more detailed look at the data and prepare a prioritization plan. Member Gawron proposed that the spreadsheet should include potential costs of land acquisition. Analyst Walsh explained the methodology behind the ranking and listed some options for what data to include. Members questioned the accuracy of some of the data, including number of houses.

Member Knaack mentioned a discussion from a prior meeting about balancing the need for a community park as compared to smaller neighborhood parks. The Board needs to be made aware of this need so that a plan can be made. Mr. Robinson raised concerns about park maintenance and the age of existing parks. Kingston Hills and Stonebridge Park may need to be replaced or updated in the next few years. Future planning of parks must also include maintenance and repairs of existing parks. Member Gawron agreed with Member Knaack about considering neighborhood park needs when discussing investments in developing Heritage Park.

Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike stated that she would keep each Board member updated on this discussion, and reminded the committee that the Facilities staff only has two (2) full-time members. There was some discussion about what share of parks spending should be spent on Heritage Park. Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike stated that the Board has had those discussions, and that the strategy has been based off of survey feedback from the community. Residents want to see Heritage Park developed. Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike offered to bring the discussion up to the Board again when a plan was made. Member Knaack proposed a joint meeting between the Parks Committee and the Board.

Co-Chair Rodgers stated that the Board should give some feedback to the committee on how to move forward. Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike recommended that the committee should delve more deeply in to the data. Discussion turned to specific park sizes and land availability. Co-Chair Rodgers stated that connectivity to the trails system needs to be part of the criteria. Member Knaack agreed, and stated that natural barriers and street crossings need to be considered as opposed to bird's eye distance.

Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike mentioned that the older subdivisions have not had parks in the past and wondered if there was a desire from those residents. Mr. Robinson mentioned that there are alternatives to building a new park, an example being the trail connection to Goodings Grove School Park. The committee discussed the number of homes in the targeted areas of need. Mr. Robinson mentioned the possibility that neighbors may not want a park if the Village buys a vacant lot in a residential area. Mr. Robinson stated that the Village currently owns two (2) lots, one in Glenview Walk subdivision, and one in Meadowview West subdivision.

Co-Chair Rodgers asked Analyst Walsh to share the spreadsheet with the committee for members to edit and review. Co-Chair Rodgers also proposed to revisit the item in January after the committee and staff incorporate ideas and reasoning behind prioritizing the parks. Analyst Walsh stated that there had been some staff discussion about creating a more formal park plan, and that he would share an updated spreadsheet with the committee. Co-Chair Rodgers asked Analyst Walsh to do due diligence for hiring a consultant to create a formal park plan. The committee agreed with the course of action.

c) Discussion of Heritage Park Access and Fencing.

Co-Chair Rodgers began the discussion by saying it was her understanding that the barbed wire was going to be taken down. Facilities Manager Robinson responded that he never received that direction. Member Walters stated that the direction at a past Committee meeting was to wait until after construction was completed to remove the barbed wire.

Mr. Robinson reported that there is a temporary opening in the fence between the Township Sports Complex and Heritage Park, and there has been some discussion about making that permanent. There are some concerns about interfering with Township activities. Co-Chair Rodgers stated that additional access points should be delayed until construction of the park is completed. There was some discussion about resident's requests to create private access gates to Heritage Park. Member Batchelor pointed out that there are a number of locations around the park that residents have cut holes in the fence. Mr. Robinson and staff have patched a number of holes.

Co-Chair Rodgers then reconsidered the decision on barbed wire. Co-Chair Rodgers stated that people that wanted to get in would find a way, and the barbed wire is not welcoming or aesthetically pleasing. Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked for a consensus on removing the barbed wire. The consensus was to remove the barbed wire and table a decision on the fence until the park is further developed. Mr. Robinson mentioned that the fence would be valuable for Homer Fest. Member Gawron raised the idea of creating a security plan for Heritage Park.

Co-Chair Rodgers brought up the trail connection to the 151st Street path. The Board approved an engineering agreement for the path and the project is moving forward. Co-Chair Rodgers thanked Members Gawron and Kman for identifying an ideal route connecting the path to Culver Park. Member Kman explained that the selected route had less traffic, was easier to navigate, and goes by Seneca Park. Member Courtright stated that more signs are needed at some locations.

10. Reports and Communications from Staff.

a) Heritage Park Update.

Co-Chair Rodgers reported that the ninja course is partially complete and the concrete work is nearly done. The contractor is behind schedule on some items, but is ahead of schedule on others. The sled hill is very large. There was some discussion about parking and walkways near the hill.

Member Batchelor provided an update on the disc golf course. The wild prairie section of Heritage Park, funded by a 319 grant, is larger than expected and does not allow for active use, including disc golf. Member Batchelor explained the challenges regarding interfering with the 319 Grant area. The design will need to change.

b) Facilities Manager's Update.

Manager Robinson reported that grass growth is slowing down. Co-Chair Rodgers asked about the status of Goodings Grove Park grass growth and asked that staff circle back with Frank Burla and Sons, the contractor for the park.

11. Committee Member Updates

Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked the Committee if she should invite the Board to come to the February Committee meeting to discuss parks prioritization. The Committee confirmed that would be fine. Committee etiquette was also discussed. Co-Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked members to be mindful of others when they are speaking.

11. Adjournment.

Member Kman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Co-Chair Rodgers. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Matt Walsh
Administrative Analyst