

Parks & Recreation Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
April 18, 2022

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

1. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Co-Chair Nicole La Ha.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**3. Roll Call.**

Present at 6:00 p.m. were Co-Chair Nicole La Ha, Co-Chair Reynders, Members Marty Pavlik, Russ Knaack, Dale Janssen, Dan Kenney, Bob Kman, Regina Robinson.

Also Present: Communications and Recreation Services Coordinator Amy Blank, Superintendent of Parks and Facilities John Robinson.

Member Ed Cryer arrived at 6:05 p.m.

4. Approval of Minutes.**a) March 21, 2022**

Member Kman made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2022 committee meeting; seconded by Member Janssen. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

No amendments to the agenda.

6. Public Comment.

John Walters – Resident Walters came to speak about the relationship the Village had and has with Tria Architecture. As a former Parks and Rec Committee member he was always suspicious of the relationship and how Tria continued to get work as add-ons. He is concerned that Tria is still billing the Village for services that have not been rendered. He understands that one recent bill will be coming to the Parks Committee for review and encourages the committee to take a close look at it. He has done some FOIA requests looking for what Tria is actually doing was not able to find supporting documents or invoices for the recent bills. Tria is saying the bills are “per contract”. He encourages the committee and the Co-Chairs to look closely at all bills before approving payment of them.

Co-Chair Reynders did respond by saying there is language in the contract with Tria that they are to be paid alongside the payments to Austin Tyler and HR Green, which happen over a period of time. What is happening now is that Tria is requesting their 2nd and 3rd payment, even though the 2nd and 3rd payments to Austin Tyler have not yet gone out. We have to legally abide by the contract.

Tom Patraitis – Resident Patraitis lives at the corner of 151st and Eagle Ridge Drive. In his opinion, there is not enough parking here at Heritage Park and he is not happy that when the Village has events – especially events like HomerFest – people park in the neighborhoods. He wanted to know if parking in the neighborhoods is the plan for overflow parking.

Co-Chair Reynders explained that the committee is aware of our lack of parking and the committee does have plans to continue to build parking.

Resident Patraitis said it sounds like to him that Heritage Park is going to be a community center, not just a park. He feels like not enough communication was done with the residents and that they did not have enough opportunities for input. He prefers that Heritage Park stay a park and that special events go somewhere else. He doesn't want to be a parking lot for community events.

Jessica Miller – Ms. Miller, a resident, came to the meeting with her daughter Charlotte who has CP. They came in support of the proposed 2-5 and 5-12 playground for the Active Core and is in support of playgrounds that are fully accessible. She shared a statement from Charlotte about her experience as a person living with CP and playing at a playground. She explained that she often felt left out because she was not able to access all parts of the playground like other kids. She encouraged the committee to build a playground that is completely accessible to all. She shared how when at fully accessible parks with able-bodied children, those children also enjoyed the playground. Making parks that are fully accessible, do not take away from the experience of able-bodied children.

7. Reports from Co-Chairs.

No Report from Co-Chair La Ha.

Co-Chair Reynders shared that she is working with the Environment Committee and the Homer Glen Junior Woman's Club on a Seedlings Event happening May 22 in the Active Core Sensory Garden. Second and third graders are invited to register (registration is limited to about 20) and come out to the sensory garden and help plant herbs and other plants in the planting boxes. Registration is online. Co-Chair Reynders would like to plant some pollinators. Kids will get a seedling to plant and take home.

1. Old Business

- a) Update on RFP for Active Core playground equipment (2-5 and 5-12).
Superintendent Robinson shared that we only received one bid back from the RFP. This is the same company that did the Glenview Walk Park and came in right at budget at \$224,000. Drawings of the proposed park were shown to and the design summary was shared with the committee. The proposal includes two mother and child swings, a small 2-5 area, and a larger 5-12 area with some inclusive components, like a wheelchair swing and touch/game/puzzle components on the ground panels. The larger area did include some larger slides that are not inclusive

(they are accessed only by a ladder, not a ramp). The entire playground has pour-in-play surface and includes canvas shades.

Superintendent Robinson explained that the Village has used this company in the past and in our experience the equipment is high quality. He also explained that what they proposed is what they proposed, meaning if the committee wants any changes outside of minor color or panel changes, the committee will have to go out to bid again.

The committee liked the design but desired more inclusive features. An informal vote was taken and the committee was split with half of the members liking the proposal as is and the other half wanting to see a proposal that is fully inclusive. There was much discussion over what that means and how it could potentially be accomplished.

The committee is interested in hearing from the builder to see if there are options to slightly change the design to include a ramp that make the slides accessible. Superintendent Robinson said he will go back to the builder with that question and report to the Co-Chairs his findings.

He cautioned the committee that if they desire a ramp to reach the slide at the height it currently is, the builder will likely need much more feet of ramp – as ramps increase in height at a much slower rate than stairs or a ladder. An increase in ramps, means an increase in area, which means an increase in pour-in-play, which likely means an increase in cost.

Superintendent Robinson suggested the committee consider doing an “all-inclusive” park at the Stonebridge Park location when it needs to be renovated (in the next year or so) and/or doing an “all-inclusive” park in conjunction with the splash pad when the splash pad/playground/parking lot project is designed and/or building something at the Goodings Grove location when it is renovated.

Co-Chair La Ha shared that she likes a lot of this design. It offers some ramps, which none of our other playground equipment has. It offers the mother and child swing, some nice shade, and it seems to be a lot of park for the budget. She echoed the committee’s desire to have Superintendent Robinson ask the builder if there is any way within the current budget to also include some more accessible ramps.

Superintendent Robinson said he will ask the question, but if the desire is to have an all-inclusive park now he recommended to the Co-Chairs to look at the budget and see how much more they can stretch the budget for this project to get it done now, rather than in piecemeal sections here and there.

b) Discussion on Veterans Memorial Concept for Heritage Park.

Member Knaack shared that the gentleman he spoke of previously in regards to the Veterans Memorial is named Greg Stevens and he works at Touch of Green. Co-Chair Rose said she would reach out to Mr. Stevens about designing a Veterans Memorial.

Co-Chair Reynders shared that she went to the Veterans breakfast at the beginning of April and received feedback from the veterans in attendance. One thing they stressed was to include something for the war dogs and nurses. She took the feedback and came up with a general design. Coordinator Blank took the layout design and did a quick drawing of Co-Chair Reynder's concept. The committee reviewed the layout design and illustration of the concept.

The concept is a circular design with the center being a focal point memorabilia, which is surrounded by some landscaping so that people don't climb on or hurt themselves on the memorabilia. Coordinator Blank added a small retaining wall surrounding the memorabilia where people could sit. Then, surrounding the center focal point is a circular path of brick pavers. The brick pavers are to be available for sale for those who want to sponsor a brick with their loved one's name on it. On the outskirts of the brick path is all of the flags of service, plus the American flag. Each flagpole has a plaque near the ground that includes the service branch seal and motto. The circular pathway is also flanked by four benches, and eventually bronze statues. The first two that are desired to be included are the statues that honor the war dogs and nurses.

Co-Chair Reynders said she included \$250,000 in the budget for this project. She would like to move forward with an RFP and would like Superintendent Robinson to find a memorabilia piece.

Member Kman made a motion to approve concept design that Co-Chair Reynders created and to move forward with an RFP for the Veterans Memorial; seconded by Member Kenny.

Member Kman - Yes

Member Pavlik - Yes

Member Janssen - Yes

Member Kenney - Yes

Member Robinson - Yes

Co-Chair Reynders - Yes

Co-Chair La Ha - Yes

Member Cryer - Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

a) Review and possible recommendation of Special Event Application from Love Smiles Org.

Coordinator Blank explained that this is an application that was submitted to the Village requesting use of Heritage Park and the Parks and Rec. Committee are to review applications and make recommendations to the Board. This organization is a non-profit, the event is a fundraiser, and it is assumed that the event would be open to the public. The organization is requesting to have a bike race in Heritage Park – using the “D” parking lot (where the Market in the Glen is held). It is assumed that the parking lot would need to be closed for the event, so the Village Parks staff would need to be involved in some way.

Coordinator Blank reminded the committee that this topic (park rentals) has been discussed before and the committee did make some recommendations. Those recommendations still need to be incorporated into the official Village Ordinances, which was something that the former Interim Village Manager was working on before he left, but did not complete. So, we continue to not have any rental protocol in place.

Member Kenney made a motion to approve the special events request from Love Smiles to use Heritage Park; seconded by Member Kman. A vote was taken:

Co-Chair Reyners – No
Co-Chair La Ha – No
Member Cryer – No
Member Pavlik – No
Member Janssen – No
Member Kenney – No
Member Kman – No
Member Robinson - No

2. Reports and Communications from Staff.

a) Parks and Facilities Superintendent Update.

Superintendent Robinson shared that the parks staff is getting everything ready for outdoor maintenance. They did some over-seeding in the area where the soccer fields are. They also normally do weed and feed in the neighborhood parks. They won't be doing the weed killer in Erin Hills this year, because they are restoring the grounds after ATVs tore them up last year. The staff is also getting the equipment ready.

They put out a call for three seasonal maintenance workers and were able to hire two. Superintendent Robinson is still trying to get a custodian on staff for the Village hall. The board did hire a cleaning service but they are only coming every two weeks, which is not enough for the office and the Village hall public spaces.

b) Communications and Recreation Services Coordinator Update.

Coordinator Blank gave an update on the park entryway signs. Eight have been ordered and are planning on being delivered and installed within 10-12 weeks.

For soccer in Heritage Park, registration is open and 80 kids have registered. They will be practicing on Tuesdays from 3:45 – 7:45 p.m. with games on Sundays, sometime between 1 and 6 p.m.

Finally, Coordinator Blank shared that she has decided to leave the Village effective May 6, 2022. She will miss being a part of the Parks Committee and wishes the committee well!

3. Committee Member Updates

Member Kenney shared that he hasn't forgotten about the property in Old Oak Estates (on Ondondaga) that the Village has and was mentioned that it could be a potential space for a park. He shared that he was recently in Florida and enjoyed hiking on elevated walkways (because the ground is swampy). He thought that may be an interesting solution for that property which tends to be wet. He'd like the committee to consider ways to use the land as public park space that doesn't necessarily include a traditional playground. Perhaps it could be fort-like with ramps and platforms.

Superintendent Robinson explained that as long as a structure is intended for "walking paths" pretty much anything can be done – but if even one "play" element is added, then it becomes a "play structure" and there are very strict guidelines about how play structures can be constructed, etc.

12. Adjournment.

Member Cryer made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Member Kman. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Amy Blank

Communications & Recreation Services Coordinator