

Parks & Recreation Committee

Minutes of the Meeting on
April 19, 2021

**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 Beth Rodgers.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present at 6:00 p.m. were Co-Chair Beth Rodgers, members Dale Janssen, Ed Cryer, Bob Kman, Marty Pavlik, Dan Kenney, Regina Robinson and Russell Knaack.

Also Present: Communications and Recreation Services Coordinator Amy Blank and Facilities Manager John Robinson.

Arrived late 7:00 p.m. were Co-Chair Ruben Pazmino and Village Manager Matt Walsh.

Members Absent: Dan Kenney

4. Approval of Minutes.

- a) February 22, 2021

Member Kman made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2021 Committee meeting; seconded by Member Cryer. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda.

There were no amendments.

6. Public Comment.

Resident Kiera Vizza-Milligan addressed two issues during her public comment.

1. Vizza-Milligan petitioned the Committee to consider creating a park in the Old Oak Estates subdivision. She mentioned that she thought the northwest corner of 143rd and Golden Oak property was for sale. The Committee explained that there had been an extensive park placement research project done a few years back and that Old Oak Estates was a top priority subdivision based on its lack of a public park – but that the challenge for that subdivision is that there is no longer any open land to place a park. The Committee also explained that the deal that was made with Goodings Grove School (to help pay for the cost of their updated school playground) was so that the public can have access to that park. Vizza-Milligan was aware that the Goodings Grove School playground is open to the public – but the issue

with that playground is that it is not available during school hours and it is still quite a far walk from the subdivision when one is walking with small children. She also expressed concern that that playground is not designed for toddlers or small children (which she has). Co-Chair Rodgers said that she would email Vizza-Milligan the study that was done a few years back so that she can see what research and work had been already done for park placement. The Committee encouraged Vizza-Milligan to check out the other parks like Goodings Grove (Village) park, Glenview Walk Estates park, and Stonebridge park – which includes a specific toddler area.

2. The second issue Vizza-Milligan brought to the Committee is a desire to see a woman's softball league in the Village. Co-Chair Rodgers told Vizza-Milligan to keep watching the Village's Facebook page because through our Recreation Services, there is a possibility for pop-up games/events and that is something we are trying to work on. Member Knaack explained that unlike other towns that have a dedicated (taxing body) Park District, the Village does not – so our ability to provide services and park programs like other towns is limited. The Committee also reminded Vizza-Milligan that the Village does not own any baseball field property. The Committee suggested she approach the Township to get more information about using the Township owned fields. The Committee also encouraged her to research the ability to organize games or gather players through social media or apps designed to create organized sport leagues.

7. Reports from Co-Chairs.

Co-Chair Rodgers reminded all about Kite event on May 2 and please remind people about the events and point residents to the Village's Facebook pages. Coordinator Blank added that is happening from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and that the Village is hosting Chicago Kite which will be bringing some large, nylon, professional kites to fly in Heritage Park (weather permitting). We will also have the Environment Committee out handing out information, the Homer Glen Junior Women's Club will be handing out seeds, we have the Forest Preserve District coming for a Garden Workshop, and will have food trucks on site.

8. New Business

a) Consider a Motion to Recommend Approval of a Disc Golf Tournament

Co-Chair Rodgers explained that this is the same kind of tournament that happened last year in Heritage Park. Coordinator Blank added that the disc golf organization (Thor) has requested having a hot-dog food cart on premise for the attendees and would like to open the sale of that food to the public.

Co-Chair Rodgers asked if there were any issues last year with the tournament. Manager Robinson said yes, last year Thor said he would empty the garbage cans and he did not – so there was extra garbage that then needed to be handled by Village staff the following day. Manager Robinson said that the tournament did produce enough garbage to warrant staff taking care of it on tournament day. The park does have animals and staff prefers that there isn't a lot of garbage sitting

around all night. Manager Robinson recommends that we have a staff person on site for the days of the tournament.

Co-Chair Rodgers asked Coordinator Blank if she is going to circle back with Thor about the organization of the tournament. Coordinator Blank expressed that the confusing part of having an outside organization fill out a Special Events Application is that there isn't a very specific process in place to manage this. The application goes to Chief Building Official Joe Baber. Does Coordinator Blank or Special Events Coordinator Sue Steilen need to be involved in this process? Who is coordinating the paperwork with the outside organization (permits, COIs, etc.)? Co-Chair Rodgers said she would speak with Manager Walsh and Official Baber about it and get clarification.

Member Robinson asked if there was a fee for the tournament attendees and if Coordinator Blank handles that. Blank responded there is a fee but that the Village does not handle registration, this is not a Village Event. Blank reminded the Committee that there was discussion at the last meeting about this situation – does the Village allow outside organizations to rent our facilities (including parks) and that question was not answered.

Co-Chair Rodgers remembers that the Board decided and that decision is that the Village will allow four (4) times for an outside organization to use the park (like a non-profit or a Village school 5K walk/run event). Co-Chair Pazmino added that he was under the impression that we agreed to do no rentals.

Co-Chair Rodgers remembers that the Board did do something about this and wants to go back and see what the ruling was. For now, the Board will be looking for a consensus from the Committee on whether or not to do this particular event.

Facilities only concern is that the park gets clean and the Board will need to decide how that is handled.

Co-Chair Rodgers recommends going to the Board with a consensus on this event and then at that time speaking about the unanswered questions – what are we charging (if anything) for “renting” the park, how are we handling cleanup and staff, etc. Co-Chair Rodgers asked if the maintenance staff has assumed a staggered schedule (so a staff member is regularly here on the weekends) and Manager Robinson said no. This was something that was discussed last year but never came to fruition. There has been no further direction on this. Manager Robinson prefers that a staff member isn't at the Village on Sundays (permanently). He is OK with a Tuesday-Saturday schedule that rotates. The hours would also have to be addressed. Co-Chair Rodgers pointed out that the disc golf tournament is scheduled for Memorial Day weekend.

The consensus was to move this to the Board, with the approval pending clarification of how the cleanup is going to go.

Member Pavlick added that if the Committee is agreeing to move this to the Board for approval, then the Committee is agreeing to renting out the Village facilities to outside organizations.

Co-Chair Rodgers said yes – we agreed to allow events for larger organizations like the school district, that is going to bring a lot of people to the park and be able to serve a large portion of our residents. We agreed we did not want to allow things like the rental of the pavilion for a wedding – that is a private, closed event.

Member Knaack said there is a difference between renting the pavilion and using the disc golf course – it's not quite a rental, because the park is still open and the public can access the park.

Member Pavlick said he understood, but still questions where does it start and where does it end? Can someone rental the tennis courts?

Coordinator Blank read back the notes from the last Committee meeting where it was said:

“Co-Chair Rodgers stated she discussed the topic with other Trustees and there was little support for private events to take place at this time. She added that the past disc golf tournament was an exception because it highlighted the new course and was also open to staff working with local schools on events...

Assistant Walsh clarified that the Village events was going to be approved by the Village Board, and this private event discussion would not go before the Board.”

Co-Chair Rodgers said it was discussed at length at the Board and that the Board decided they did not want to get into private rentals of the pavilion or tennis courts because that is too hard to manage.

Discussion then ended on this topic.

9. New Business.

a) Presentation of Park Message Boards

Coordinator Blank presented the idea of park message boards as a way to improve communication about events/programs/and park updates and asked the Committee for feedback.

Committee was interested in the idea and asked staff to research different options and prices. One concern is how durable the message board will be and how will it weather. Member Kman suggested looking into a more sturdy, high-end product, because it is his understanding that the lower-end products are not durable. He also suggested looking into boards that are weather-proof, especially if there is a literature rack to keep flyers or paper takeaways. Member Kman also suggested just getting permanent metal signs for the disc golf map. Coordinator Blank said that is an option and that we had ordered one already but there had been a change so it is no longer useable.

Co-Chair Rodgers prefers that if one is purchased we begin with only one to test it.

Member Cryer asked if there are warranty options for park equipment and Manager Robinson said that warranties are very short on park equipment because some of this equipment is really affected by UV light.

Coordinator Blank is going to research options and bring back to the next Committee meeting.

10. Reports and Communications from Staff.

a) Facilities Manager Update

We are getting the parks ready. The Village got a contract with a company that is going to do the weed and feed lawn maintenance which will help a lot to control the weeds and keep the parks looking good. Facilities has been going park by park and doing inventory of whatever needs repair. Evelyn's Gate Park had a number of things that needed replacing and those parts are ordered. Erin Hills needs a tree removed that has been damaged. Evelyn's Gate Park small pavilion was concreted this week and it looks great. Back fill and seeding will be completed next week.

Facilities uses two seasonal staff members. One came back from last year, but we are still looking for one more to hire.

Co-Chair Rodgers asked about Erin Hills burn. Manager Robinson said that we are not in the season for a burn. The company that we have used in the past is no longer in business. We will do it in the fall.

Security cameras – some are up and some are not. Co-Chair Rodgers asked for the security cameras to be placed on the agenda for next month so the Committee can get a full update on them.

b) Communications and Recreation Services Coordinator Update

Coordinator Blank updated the Committee on Special Events and Recreation Programs:

- Tulips in the park gets installed at the end of this week.
- The tennis and pickleball lessons are filling up – we've gotten enough registrations for the pickleball lessons to open up another session.
- Summer programs will be released in May. We are training on the CivicRec recreation software program now and should be up by end of May.
- Forest Preserve District partnership. There are 9 programs scheduled that the FPD organized and is managing – all free to residents of Will County.

11. Committee Member Updates.

Member Knaack made a comment that he would like the fence that divides the Township property from the Village property to be taken down. He doesn't see the need for it and would like all the public property to be open to the public.

Manager Robinson added that it is our fence but the problem is that in some spots that fence does need to exist for the safety of residents. There are some areas in between the two properties that would not be safe to walk through. There is a detention swale. Also, the football fields need to be maintained and the Stallions do not want crowds of people walking across the fields. The solution to this is a path and an entryway that adjoins the two properties and directs people on where to walk. This path is planned – and maybe it will finally be constructed with the new Township officials.

Co-Chair Rodgers suggested having a joint park meeting with the Township in July to talk about how to work together to have cooperation for all parks in the Village.

Co-Chair Rodgers shared that HomerFest is looking for volunteers – individuals and organizations. She encouraged Committee members to help to get volunteers for HomerFest.

12. Adjournment.

Member Kman made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Member Cryer. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Amy Blank
Communications & Recreation Services Coordinator