

# Ability Awareness

Minutes of the Special Meeting on  
May 9, 2023

Village of Homer Glen  
14240 W. 151<sup>st</sup> St., Homer Glen, IL 60491  
Conference Room 1

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:36pm after being moved from the Community Room to the Conference Room 1 due to an HOA meeting scheduled in the Community Room at 7pm

**2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**3. Roll Call**

Members present: Ex-officio Chair Neitzke-Troike, Member Adamczyk, Member O'Connor, Member McKenna, Member Crones arrived at 5:41pm.

Also present: Kris Pasquini, Events Coordinator, Trustee and HomerFest Chair Dan Trustee Fialko, and Debbie Stevens, Public Works Office Manager.

Members absent: Chair Nicole LaHa

**4. Approval of Amendments to the Agenda**

No changes made

**5. Approval of Minutes**

March 7, 2023

Member Member Adamczyk moved to approved the minutes from the March 7, 2023, meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Bob O'Connor. All were in favor, zero (0) opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Trustee Fialko suggested everyone take two minutes to review the minutes since not everyone had.

Member Member McKenna mentioned Member Bleck has stepped down per the minutes.

**6. Public Comment**

None

**7. Reports and Communications**

**a. Report from Chair**

Chair Neitzke-Troike said a few meetings back they had talked about doing Gala, then they decided to instead focus on wheelchair basketball idea in June or July then it was pushed to August and we have our Best Buddies in October so I don't want to put too much all at once so we need to focus on what the game plan is.

Member Adamczyk said it had been talked about doing the wheelchair basketball a little later like September, October-ish. Chair Neitzke-Troike said they have Best Buddies in October, but Member Adamczyk said that is only a few hours over there and doesn't involve us planning anything, we are just volunteering. "It depends on what their schedule is for wheelchair basketball and the school's availability if we want to do it in a school," she said.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike discussed reappointment to the committee. Everyone said they had filled out applications. We have a committee of seven. She would like to be chair and would like co-chair to be a resident. She said Chair La Ha had mentioned she would like to co-chair and Member Adamczyk was also mentioned.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said with the appointment of Beth Rodgers as co-chair that brought the committee up to eight so we could bring it back up, but I think even numbers seem odd because what if we have a vote that's 50-50?

**b. Report from Staff**

Liaison Pasquini passed out the committee's new business cards and reported that the swing plaque was ordered and should be mailed by this Thursday. Chair Neitzke-Troiike selected a cursive type.

Member Adamczyk asked if we were going to do a ribbon cutting for the benches and swing plaque?

Pasquini said we have the benches, but it's not been decided where they or the plaque are going. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she thinks it would be best to talk to the chair of the Parks Committee. Member Adamczyk thought we were waiting to hear back from Jen Vittori (Parks Operations Coordinator). Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she thinks we should see what Jen says about where we should put them and then take our recommendations to the Parks Committee.

Pasquini stated the village is hosting a Golf Outing on Wednesday, Sept. 14 at Old Oak CC.

She said the village wants to make it a fundraiser for non-profits that fall in line with the work of the Ability Awareness Committee and the Behavioral Health & Addiction Recovery Committee.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she would be happy to help and golf.

She asked, "Can we come set up a table? Is there an after-hours thing?"

Pasquini stated there would be a 9am shotgun start, continental breakfast, dinner buffet when everyone is done about 2pm. We'll have raffles, sponsors can be out at holes.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike questioned where the funds would go? So the money raised wouldn't technically go out our committee, it would go to different organizations? Yes, Pasquini said, explaining that otherwise we would just be raising money for the village if we give it to the committees.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said that is going to be an issue with a 501c3 tax write off. If, for example the MegaPlex wants to sponsor, they have to write a check to the village. We don't have a 501c3 not-for-profit that they would benefit from. She said, "That's why I started Homer Cares so people could write the check to there and Homer Cares could turn around and give the money away to whatever the committee decided. So they got to use it as a tax write off. I'm not saying to use Homer Cares, the point is if the people write a check to the village, a) it's bad on the accounting to write it to an organization and b) the person who is sponsoring doesn't get a tax write off. So people are more apt not to write a check or to donate ... That's why we held off on the Gala. We were going to do it in February and it was right before the election and we didn't want any issues."

Member McKenna mentioned a 501c3, the Tommy Finnegan Legacy Foundation, started by a parent who lost his child. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said but a 501c3 can't write a check to a municipality. Member McKenna said but what if we partner with this organization, they write to them because they do grant funding to families directly. So maybe this other organization could make sure it's a Homer family. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said it would have to be written in the memo specifically only what it is to be used for and I think they have to create a sub account. "If we partnered with this organization, they can't write a check to the village of Homer Glen and then Homer Glen give it to the family. They would have to give it directly to the family," she said.

Pasquini pointed out then that even people sponsoring the golf outing would have to write their checks directly to the organization. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said that's why we started the Homer Cares so people knew it was for Homer only. They used it for the Pop Top Challenge stuff when people would write checks. "Whatever money comes in, it just goes right back out," she said.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said now that she is Mayor she doesn't want to conflict it. "I would almost rather hand over the 501c3 to somebody. If the village wanted to adopt it as its own. I've always wanted the village to have its own not-for-profit. It's literally impossible. A lot of elected officials have their own 501c3. I just like to have the money go in and come directly out."

Trustee Fialko said he had been told the village is a non-profit after it had come up at HomerFest meetings. He said he was only going by what he was told, he didn't look into it myself.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she asked John Sawyers (the village finance director) and he said no it is not. She said wanted to donate her salary and he said she couldn't. She'd have to collect it and donate it on her own.

Pasquini said they will have to look more into this. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said if the village wants to take over Homer Cares she would be ecstatic because that was the point of it, but if they can't I'll hand it over to whoever is the AAC co-chair and sign a contract that says it follows through year-to-year with the committee members..."I personally would like to sign it over to someone, like the committee, so it's not in my hands."

This was tabled until the June meeting so the 501c3 and donation issues can be sorted out.

Member McKenna said if the money is going to go to HomerCares and AAC decides where it goes, recommended having our own grant.

Trustee Fialko, who had left the room briefly, returned and said per Carmen, we are a government, not for profit. We can take money in from the public and disperse it to a charity.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she wants to ask Sawyers.

Trustee Fialko said he would get Carmen and John together and make sure we're right before we say anything publicly.

**c. Report from Members**

Member Adamczyk said the other fundraiser for Shady Oaks, the one with the plastic bags, is that something the village could tie into? She asked if the village be interested in hosting a bin (for plastic bags for the Shady Oaks fundraiser)? She said the bin would be outside somewhere. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she would ask at the (board) meeting tomorrow.

Member McKenna followed up about the library because the committee had talked about possibly using the funds from Fest this year to purchase a piece of sensory equipment for the library. She talked to Claire Lund who then talked to Sherry (La Ha). She said the library has looked into a sensory room and would certainly consider it and appreciate our donation. They didn't have a specific idea, they are open to our ideas. It sounds like with the addition, they have the space.

Member Adamczyk said she could help with that.

Stevens asked what a sensory room looks like. Member Adamczyk said, "it could be whatever you want it to be. It could be a quiet area or a space with different things to do." Member McKenna said in libraries it's typically labeled and locked, you have to get the key at the desk.

Member Adamczyk directed McKenna to ask them if they have a space and if they do, we will move forward.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said last year I think between the two (AAC and Homer Cares), we raised \$4,000. "I think AAC raised about \$1,200 and then HomerCares gave us the rest to meet the swing. Assuming it doesn't rain, assuming people are going to do what they did last year, assuming Mike Carlson is going to bust his butt like he did last year with the bucket and stuff we could get between \$3500 and \$4000 again this year," she said.

Member Cronos said his comments were more Fest-related.

Member O'Connor said he had no comments.

## **8. Old Business**

### **a. Fest meeting minutes**

Kris reported that the April Fest minutes have not yet been prepared

### **b. Pamphlet**

Member Adamczyk said, "that's the pamphlet that Nicole was going to finish up. She started doing an AAC pamphlet that we could hand out. I don't know if it was even completed."

### **c. Beer Tent at Fest**

It was confirmed that the application for AAC and HomerCares was submitted.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she put it on Facebook seeking volunteers and asked if anyone on the committee wanted to take charge of the volunteers and schedule them for the times, get their email addresses, etc. Member Adamczyk said she would and Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she would help.

The time slots are 4-8 and 8-12.

Trustee Fialko mentioned that Elton Rohn is that night. He said It took him two years to get him here and he sells out everywhere he goes.

Member Cronos brought up the split-the-pot. He said Mike Carlson had brought it up at HomerFest meetings. "At the end of each band session we would do a split-the-pot, two or three that night," he said.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "we ran out of tickets last year because we lent them to another group and they were supposed to replace them, but they never did so we could only do it

twice, and we sold out right away. "So I'll make sure we get the split the pot tickets this year and we'll do three," she said

Member Crones said in working with the HomerFest Committee, Ability Awareness will take that on and get a little more formality. Coordinate more volunteers. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said that would be part of the cycle of volunteers.

Pasquini asked what the target is for volunteers? Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "I think Dan (Trustee Fialko) said we need 15 at most. We had like 38 last year. We had way too many last year. We got in trouble because they thought our committee was drinking while working, but what happened is they got off their shift or we didn't need them and that's all the shirt they had and they started drinking." She said she thinks the more volunteers, the better.

Stevens mentioned that the volunteer packet that gets sent out specifies which time periods require a certain amount of people.

Member Adamczyk said with the Salute to Soldiers on Sunday, with some of these people, if there are too many, we can always ask if they are willing to volunteer for the Veterans or the Special Needs Carnival.

Stevens asked when they start selling beer. The band starts at 4:30, but a lot of people were asking, 'hey why can't I have a drink while I'm walking around.'

Member McKenna said and others agreed that we should let people attending know about the early band.

**d. Ice Cream Social reschedule**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she thinks we should create an Ability Awareness calendar of all the events that we're going to do and then space it properly. "I think we should keep the months of May and June open because we are going to be working more with the Fest Committee," she said.

Trustee Fialko asked if they were coordinating anything for KiteFest on Saturday. Member McKenna said she was hoping to go. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said if you want to set up a little booth she has the table cloth cover. Member Adamczyk said, "that's why we talked about doing the poster board and having business cards and a pamphlet because when

Member Crones and I went to wheelchair basketball, we had nothing on the table, but a few fliers. That's why we wanted something."

**e. Pictures for Fest board**

Discussed out of order above

**f. Business cards**

Pasquini turned over to committee at beginning of meeting

**9. New Business**

**a. Homer Fest**

Stevens and Trustee Fialko then went over the map and where things are located.

The music, the Family Tent, the Kiddie Rides, the Information Booth, the Beer Tent, the paved walkway from parking, the extra walkway to be added, the rides, the games.

There was discussion about the temporary walkway off the south end of D Lot into the football field and how it should be created the best way for special needs day. Trustee Fialko said they should talk to Jen Vittori about what could be done and would be best.

Member Crones asked if they could get power to the Special Needs Day Check-in booth. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she has two swamp coolers that she wanted to put in there to help keep everyone cool, 20 amps total. Trustee Fialko said Jay Roti would help with that.

Stevens said the concession stand has bathrooms Trustee Fialko said they were having some sort of trouble with the doors, but we should have plenty of bathrooms. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she requested a real bathroom for the beer tent people so they can actually wash their hands after. Trustee Fialko asked if she saw the one last year? She said yes and added that one stall is perfect for the beer tent. Trustee Fialko said they are going to have the one with three stalls that's air conditioned and lights in it. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she would like it right behind the beer tent so they can go to the bathroom and wash their hands. "I prefer the flushing bathrooms," she said. Trustee Fialko said he will talk to them and make it work. "We'll get it for you," he said.

Member Adamczyk asked where the Heritage Corridor tent would be. Trustee Fialko pointed on the map. Stevens reminded that this is approximate. Trustee Fialko said HCBA has a new person who will be there working with Michelle (Kerfin). They are going to be handing out rain ponchos.

The conversation moved to handicap parking. Trustee Fialko pointed on the map where handicap parking will be. Trustee Fialko asked if something would be sent out the everyone who registers for Special Needs Day. Pasquini said yes, she found an email and map that she will update.



Stevens brought up prizes. She said in the past we've expected that each special needs individual gets two prizes. "Registration determines the number of prizes to get. We buy them from the same place the Amusement company gets them. Once we give the prizes to the game people they throw them up on the shelf with the other prizes. I always get asked about the leftovers, but once they go up on the shelf, we don't know."

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said last year they were told none of the games would take money. "We need to have a list of games the carnival offers, which games will be open or which ones we want open. We don't want anything with guns. Stevens said last year they did have one with guns and it was startling," she said.

Member Cronos said we should get all our questions together and meet with the Amusement company.

Trustee Fialko said at our last (HomerFest) meeting, we took a vote, and we are only doing this for Homer Township residents, which encompasses all of Homer Glen anyway. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "so the kids that live in Homer and go to the Lockport schools, too."

There was discussion about what schools should be included.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said when registration comes in, she will review the list.

Pasquini asked what she should put on the flyer. She read what she had on the flyer, "This free event is only for Homer Township and Homer Glen residents with special needs (and students who attend school with Homer Glen residents with special needs)." No one objected to the wording. She was asked to include "max of six family members."

There was further discussion about the toys, number to be ordered and where the toys should be—in a bag or on the shelf.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she will handle the prizes. She wants to get the tickets to see how many are given out. Member McKenna suggested giving them a container to put our tickets in.

Pasquini asked how many attended last year?

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said 350 total with 99 special needs guests.

Stevens showed the invoice from last year's toys.

288 toys for about \$500 were purchased last year so that's why we were short.

Stevens said the carnival just filled in.

Member McKenna asked if we couldn't just give the carnival money for the prizes?

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said we don't have a budget. We have to raise our own money.

She said, "for this year I think HomerFest should donate \$1000."

Trustee Fialko said, "I don't know why we couldn't spend up to \$1000."

Member Cronos said he would help Stevens get the toys.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike shared 2022 totals

350 guests

80 families

99 special needs people including 64 youth, 33 adults

51 special needs people from Homer including 33 youth, 18 adults

170 total people from Homer

Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked where Papa Joe's will be. Trustee Fialko said we don't have the vendor numbers yet, but Papa Joe's was in a tent last year so probably just a little bit east of the walkway to the main tent where they were last year. That should be indicated on the map sent out.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked if Stevens had talked to the Fest people to see if they would extend the bracelets for the adults with special needs? Stevens said she hadn't and asked if Chair Neitzke-Troiike had a number. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said 35. Trustee Fialko suggested we ask about that at our meeting with the Amusement company.

Stevens said she will show the carnival people the wristbands and stickers we will use to signify special needs participants so they know to honor them.

Pasquini showed the star wristbands that she found and asked if those were what was used. Chair Neitzke-Troiike affirmed. Pasquini also showed the smiley face tickets and asked if those were used for the game tickets. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "last year's were gray, but the smiley ones are fine. We will get separate ones for the adults who stay after the event."

Chair Neitzke-Troiike explained we had talked about asking if the special needs adults could stay after 4:30 so they can hang out with their friends later and not worry about money and tickets and all that, they can just go on with their bracelets. Stevens said Rob is the one who asked if we wanted to have a special needs day so he will be into it.

Trustee Fialko said he didn't know if they know that (Rob's) wife passed. He said, "She had ALS. He had a rough year last year." Stevens said she was in bed during Fest last year and within weeks she had passed.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said we have to do something for Rob that day to say thank you for allowing us to do this. "Secretly find out what he likes," she said. Stevens said she will ask Rob Jr. and his wife, Patty.

Discussion moved to signs.

Since we have no budget for signs, it was decided this year to make in-house signs and laminate them. "This ride is specially for you" and "This game is specially for you"

Member Crones suggested we have a draft of the signs to show the Amusement people at the meeting.

Trustee Fialko thanked Ability Awareness for coming to Fest meetings this year. He said, "it's worked out very well."

Member Crones moved the discussion to T-shirts. Chair Neitzke-Troiike questioned if the kids need them. Member Adamczyk said, "it makes it easy to identify them when they get on the rides. But not everyone wore them."

Chair Neitzke-Troiike took a poll on who wants T-shirts for the special needs individuals.

Member Adamczyk voted "yes."

Bob, Member McKenna, Member Crones and Chair Neitzke-Troiike voted "no."

Member McKenna asked about shirts for volunteers? Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she has a bin in her office with the green Ability Awareness shirts from last year so we can see what we have and order more of the same.

Pasquini moved discussion to Check-In.

"So when they check-in, they will get a wristband or sticker, two game tickets, a food voucher," she said. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she needs to talk to Papa Joe's to find out if they are giving food to the whole family or just the special needs person.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said last year we passed out bags with the T-shirts, Konow's passes, Arboretum passes, zoo passes, Chapstick, squeeze balls...

"So we don't need bags this year because we don't have anything to put in them," she said.

Trustee Fialko took the discussion back to prizes and games.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike suggested maybe ordering something specific to Homer Glen so we know exactly what it is "so if you're playing with a ticket you get this prize, if you're playing with money, you can pick your prize."

Chair Neitzke-Troiike suggested we find a prize that is separate from everything else. Member McKenna said she doesn't like it to be different.

Stevens said the game operators need to be given better direction. Member Cronos suggested creating a one-pager that explains to the operators what we're doing. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said if there is only eight games available, there are eight of us that we can each go to a game and explain and then two people to walk around during the event and make sure they are doing it correctly.

There was more discussion about how to handle prizes and keeping track of what we use. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she would take the lead on this.

Pasquini brought up Basset training. Trustee Fialko said they were just having the (HomerFest) Committee be Bassett trained. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said they already have enough Basset trained.

Pasquini asked about the display board that they wanted at their Check-in booth. She said she couldn't find any decent photos for it and no one else has sent her any. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "no, it's too much work."

Trustee Fialko said for the fireworks, they always have the little push thing. "Maybe someone from special needs could do it this year?" he asked. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she finds someone every year with special needs to do it. "And just for the record none of my kids have done it," she said, adding that she will take care of finding someone again this year.

Stevens said she would leave the map.

At the end of the meeting, Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked if we were going to have a professional photographer at Fest again. Trustee Fialko said no, instead of spending \$2,000, we opted to have staff take photos. Pasquini said her and Alana both take photos and will be doing so all weekend. Pasquini mentioned she had brought in Anna Thielen twice to take photos for Fall Fest and if Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked nicely she probably would do it for her if she doesn't have a wedding.

**b. Homer Fest Application for volunteering**

Discussed out of order under Beer Tent section

**c. Committee Member Panel and term limits discussion (max of 5)**

Discussed out of order at beginning of meeting

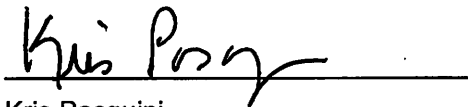
Chair Neitzke-Troiike mentioned that they will be recognizing the Dynasty Cheer team at tomorrow night's Village Board meeting. "They went to Special Olympics they competed

Team USA and took first place. We are doing a resolution and recognizing them for winning. Only one girl lives in Homer. We reached out to all the mayor's in all the towns that the kids live in and they all wrote letters to the kids to give to each one of them and they are also hosting the same thing we are at their board meetings. Walt donated \$100 for each girl, 17 girls, 7 coaches and a junior coach, so we gave money and flowers for each girl." She encouraged anyone who could do be there and added if anyone could run to Target tonight to buy gift cards that would be great because I can't, but if not, I'll go tomorrow morning.

#### 10. Adjournment

Member McKenna made a motion to adjourn, Member Crones seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 7:26pm

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris Pasquini", is written over a horizontal line.

Kris Pasquini  
Events Coordinator