

# **Ability Awareness Committee**

Minutes of the Meeting on  
June 6, 2023

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

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by member La Ha at about 6:50pm with Chair Neitzke-Troiike detained in a special meeting in the Board Room.

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

**3. Roll Call**

Members present: Member La Ha, Member Adamczyk, Member O'Connor, Member McKenna, Member Crones.

Also present: Kris Pasquini, Events Coordinator; Sherry Kozel-La Ha, Executive Director of the Homer Township Public Library, Trustee Dan Fialko (arrived 7:05pm).

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

Added i. Brochure under Old Business

**5. Approval of Minutes from Special Meeting May 9, 2023**

Motion made by Member Adamczyk. Seconded by Member McKenna

Member Adamczyk said under New Business, the number of toys purchased for 2022 HomerFest should be 288 not 144.

Under Old Business, she suggested striking out the last two sentences.

Member La Ha asked why she wanted to take that out. Member Adamczyk said she didn't think it was necessary. Member La Ha said she'd check with Christina before striking it.

Member Adamczyk asked if it could be made clearer who said what either by tense or by adding quotes.

Member La Ha then moved to table the minutes until clarification can be obtained. Motion was seconded by Member Adamczyk. All were in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

**6. Public Comment (3-minute limit please sign in prior to starting the meeting)**

None

**7. Reports and Communications**

**a. Report from Chair**

Held off until Chair Neitzke-Troiike arrives

**b. Report from Staff**

Pasquini said her report was related to HomerFest so she will wait until that section.

**c. Report from Members**

Member McKenna introduced Sherry Kozel-La Ha from the library who she invited because the committee had talked about using the money raised in the Beer Tent at

HomerFest toward some sort of sensory item in the library for the community to benefit. Addressing Kozel-La Ha, Member McKenna said last year we raised, “we think about \$4,000.” Member La Ha chimed in and clarified, “\$5,275.” Member McKenna continued to explain how the committee had purchased a special needs swing for the park and the committee’s plan every year is to purchase something for the community to use with those funds. With the library’s new addition, if they were interested in having a sensory space, the committee would like to help.

Kozel-La Ha said they have investigated the idea. “We have 3500-square-feet coming in the youth area and 1500 in a sunroom area to the front so we saw this outreach as maybe a win-win for the community that we would have some ability to do sensory and literacy combined opportunities.” She presented print outs of some of the bigger ticket items on their wish list and talked about the new space and some of the things they are currently doing for patrons with special needs.

Of the items presented, the committee gravitated toward the bubble wall.

Kozel-La Ha said our understanding of the people that have them (bubble walls) is the kids just love them. It relaxes them. She said a lot of the library space is loud, busy space...“we’re used socially as an active center so we don’t want to say ‘go into that room. We want it to be a core activity center, but we know that youth that need a sensory cool down or items that can calm them.”

Member McKenna said she looked at Orland Library online and essentially it’s a locked room where you have to check out a key to use the space, which doesn’t feel super inclusive. Kozel-La Ha said she was just there for a meeting about a month ago was told the sensory room is never used.

Member La Ha said having to use a key is a barrier and she likes the concept of being open.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike and Trustee Dan Fialko arrived from their other meeting at 7:05pm (15:33 minutes into recording).

They were brought up to speed on the library discussion and shown the bubble wall.

Member Adamczyk said she was going to play devil's advocate. She said she liked the idea of having it open to everybody, but also wanted to be cognizant of those people who need a little bit of a quieter space, which is why she asked how big it (the space) was. Maybe the more active, noisier things could be on one side of the room and maybe one corner a quieter section, she suggested just to keep that in mind.

After some further discussion, and consensus being the bubble wall, Chair Neitzke-Troiike suggested for Fest a big photo of the bubble wall and a large sign to color in fundraising totals.

Kozel-La Ha excused herself from the meeting after mentioning the library's upcoming shred event.

Member Adamczyk said most of her stuff had to do with Fest so she deferred.

Member O'Connor had no report

Member Crones said his report would be under Fest

Member La Ha had no report

Moving back to item 7a, the **Chair's Report**, Chair Neitzke-Troiike said the committee got \$3000 donated by the Amusement company for the toys

Trustee Fialko said that Debbie Stevens was the one who steered the cart to get the donation. She said Debbie, Karen and Austin drove out and shopped and spent \$2180 pre-tax. She said she called and thanked her and she said it was one of Juanita's favorite things to do was to giveaway stuffed animals to special needs kids.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike showed the animals and the tag that says Provided by AAA Amusements, Homer Glen and AAC.

Trustee Fialko asked, "Did you guys have the tags made or who put the tags?"

Pasquini indicated she did.

Trustee Fialko said, "good...we tagged all of them?"

"Not yet," Chair Neitzke-Troiike said.

Pasquini said she wanted to get them approved and to figure out how many animals they were going on.

Trustee Fialko said, "I know we started off with that increase from \$500 to \$1000 from the Fest...Chair Neitzke-Troiike interjected and said "we just talked about getting a dunk tank."

Because Rob's wife passed away from ALS, his contribution to the Fest from now on, which has always been \$10,000 or more, will be in wife's name (Juanita) who supported Special Needs Day from the beginning. He said the Fest committee is going to get Rob a plaque honoring his wife and suggested perhaps AAC do the same.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said since the Fest is doing a plaque, she didn't think AAC should do the same, "but Karen met Sharon, who knew Rob and Juanita really well and said all that he'd really like is..

Member Adamczyk interjected and said she asked Sharon if she had any suggestions on what we could do for Rob. Sharon said he's lonely and suggested taking him out to lunch or dinner.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike suggested doing a gift card and giving it to him with the plaque from the Fest Committee.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "we can take the gift card out of what we raise this year and then I think it would be nice, since she passed from ALS, that if we make a donation in her name to whatever organization she likes for ALS."

Trustee Fialko said, "he would love it."

Member Adamczyk said she would still like to take him out somewhere.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said, "of course, I think we should do it as a committee, for sure" in addition to the gift card.

"We have a Chesdan's gift card for \$500," Chair Neitzke-Troiike said.

Trustee Fialko said suggested both committees take Rob out to dinner together.

Since the committee is not using the \$1,000 from the Fest Committee for toys or T-shirts, Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked about a dunk tank. Trustee Fialko said BI Rental has a dunk tank and they might give it to us for free. Member La Ha offered to sit in the dunk tank. There was discussion on who to get to go in the dunk tank, cost, and logistics.

## **Old Business**

### **a. Festival toys and prizes**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said there are big prizes and small prizes so we need two different tickets. Pasquini said she will get a second ticket. Chair Neitzke-Troiike explained how it will work. She said each special needs individual will get one of each size toy. Volunteers will man each of the four games. If they turn in a “small” ticket, they get a small prize. If they turn in a “big” ticket, they get a big prize. The person with the tickets gets a prize whether they win or lose. Someone who comes up and pays cash to play wins gets one of the carnival prizes. If they lose, they don’t get a prize. She asked what if someone is crying because they are a relative of someone and they want a prize?. Should we give them something like this?, she asked holding up the red, white and blue light-up wand, which Karen said cost less than a dollar. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said there are 204 wands, 314 stuffed animals.

### **b. Branding**

Trustee Fialko talked about the importance of keeping the HomerFest and Homer Glen brand consistent on printed and promotional items.

Member La Ha asked if the committee is wearing the shirts from last year for bartending.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said yes, she has some in a bin in her office and more were ordered. Pasquini said 10 of each were ordered in sizes S-2X.

### **c. Donations**

Discussed above

### **d. Food tickets**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said Papa Joe’s and Joey’s Red Hots is sponsoring the food. The Village is providing the water. She showed the food tickets Pasquini made. She said every person that comes will get a food ticket. They can use it at one or the other. Papa Joe’s is giving a slice of pizza and water, Joey’s is giving a hamburger, cheeseburger or hotdog and a water.

She said there will be no bags this year since we don’t have all the trinkets that we had in the past. Wristbands go on everybody.

Trustee Fialko asked if the committee wanted the other vendors open, too, or just Joey's and Papa Joe's?

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said just Joey's and Papa Joe's because it would be confusing.

Member La Ha asked if there would be any "mom" drinks available during the afternoon? Trustee Fialko suggested he and Chair Neitzke-Troiike talk about that.

**e. Number of games and rides**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said there would be four games, but we didn't know how many rides yet.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said Member Adamczyk is handling the volunteers. She said they have more bartenders than they need, but they need more for the carnival portion.

**f. Wheelchair basketball**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said they are planning on moving forward with that but no further discussion at this time.

Member La Ha brought up the parade and asked if the committee was going to participate. After discussion, it was decided not to participate this year.

Trustee Fialko chimed in to let the committee know that this year the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts will be coming at from 10am-Noon every morning to clean up Fest grounds.

**g. Park bench and swing plaque**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she went through the Parks minutes and talked to Jen Vittori, Parks Operations Coordinator, and Dan Kenny from the Parks Committee. She said Dan said he believed it wasn't a matter of whether they wanted it or not, they wanted any furniture that was in the park to match the rest of the park. So basically, they weren't a fan of the rainbow color of the committee's benches. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she got a call from Vittori a couple days ago and she said they

(the Parks Committee) absolutely don't want it in Heritage Park. She said she then went to Village Manager Carmen Maurella and he agreed it should go by our swing.

"There's two benches, one could go by the swing, and we have a second one, and especially because they are rainbow, we understand the meaning behind it, but we have a tulip in the park that's a rainbow and it gets destroyed every single year so I'm thinking maybe we reserved one closer to the Village Hall just to see how the first one goes because I don't want them destroying both of them. Because if it is to happen, at least we'll have one that we can save."

Member La Ha pointed out, "we did the colors for the different causes. Each cause ribbon has a color. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she thinks we should have a plaque and part of it should say, "this bench is rainbow for...so people know."

Member La Ha said, "our thought process was very pure, it wasn't political in nature."

Chair Neitzke-Troiike suggested the second bench be put on the patio outside her and Carmen's office. Member La Ha asked about putting it at another park. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she thinks the Parks Committee didn't want them in any parks. She said she hadn't told the Parks Committee yet, she was waiting until Carmen came back (from vacation) to do that.

#### **h. Golf outing**

Pasquini said no update as they had been working on Fest. She said it's Wednesday, Sept. 14, 9am shotgun start (which should be Thursday)

She added, we do have 76 special needs individuals signed up. Mostly Homer Glen and Lockport. A couple from NL and Orland, but she needs to check the addresses.

#### **i. Brochure**

Member La Ha said she has to work on it. Chair Neitzke-Troiike said we wanted to have something for Fest to hand out.

Trustee Fialko reminded the group that it needs to be run by the Events team to make sure it aligns with our branding.



Pasquini asked to confirm the AAC does not have a logo. Member La Ha said no they had just decided to use the tree logo and Ability Awareness Committee with same type of font.

There was brief discussion of potentially using the T-shirt artwork for the logo.

## **9. New Business**

### **a. Appointment of vice chair and members**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she would like everyone to come back.

We have six members so we have room for one more. She told Member Adamczyk to tell her friend she could still apply.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said the Vice-Chair would run a meeting if the Chair could not attend. Consensus was to make member Adamczyk Vice-Chair

### **b. Meeting time and schedule**

Meetings will remain on the first Tuesday at 6:30pm except for July, which will be moved from July 4 to July 11.

### **c. Committee reports at meetings**

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said it would be good for someone from the committee to come to the Board meetings and give a report during public comment. 6:30pm, second and fourth Wednesdays

### **d. Special Needs Day volunteer sign up**

Member Adamczyk asked about volunteers for carnival. Usually we get teenagers to help, she said.

Pasquini said she will create a sign up for Special Needs Day for 10 high school kids from 1:30-4:30pm on VolunteerSignUp.com and push it out on social media and Special Needs Day on HomerFest page.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike asked about the deadline to sign up for Special Needs Day. Pasquini said the flyer indicates July 16. There was discussion about the numbers registered and why they didn't want too many people.

Chair Neitzke-Troiike said she and Trustee Fialko had talked about capping it at 250 people at one point, "but we are already there," she said. Trustee Fialko suggested moving up the deadline, but Pasquini said it was printed on the

flyer. She said she would let Chair Neitzke-Troiike know if we got a big influx of registrations.

**e. Gift for Rob's wife**

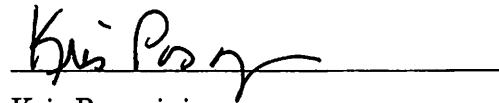
Discussed above

**10. Adjournment**

Member La Ha made a motion to adjourn, Member Adamczyk seconded the motion.

All in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned at 8:13pm

Respectfully submitted:

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

Kris Pasquini

Events Coordinator