

**OAK FOREST PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2025**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Charles Wolf, Vice-President  
James Katula, Secretary  
Joseph Pilch, Commissioner  
Roy Pruitt, Commissioner

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Joseph Cainkar, Attorney  
Joseph McDonnell, Treasurer  
Kirstin Dahm, Director

**ABSENT**

James Emmett, President

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Wolf called the regular meeting to order at the Oak Forest Park District Community Center, 15601 S. Central, Oak Forest, IL at 7:01 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon a roll call Commissioners Wolf, Katula, Pilch, and Pruitt were present.

**PUBLIC SESSION**

Commissioner Wolf opened Public Session, no one was present.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Director Dahm informed that Representative Bob Rita would be hosting the make-up Ice Cream Social in our parking lot on September 11 from 5:00-7:00pm. Director Dahm also informed that fall and winter activity registration opens August 25 for residents and August 27 for non-residents.

**PRESENTATIONS OF DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS AND OFPD FLAG FOOTBALL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2025.**

**CONSIDERATION OF BILLS – VOUCHER DATED AUGUST 14, 2025 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$152,281.80**

Commissioner Katula made a motion to approve the bills-vouchers dated August 14, 2025 in the amount of \$152,281.80; seconded by Commissioner Pilch. Commissioner Katula inquired about the amount of refunds for Girls Softball. Director Dahm informed that it was volunteer refunds for the program, and they are returned at the end of the season when the volunteer commitments are met. Commissioner Pilch inquired about the purchases from Shell Gas Station for concession supplies. Director Dahm informed that we typically buy our ice for the snow cone machines at the gas station down the road if we run out during a shift.

Roll Call Vote: Emmett – Yes, Wolf – Yes, Pilch – Yes

Motion approved.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING REPORT**

### **A. Directors Report**

Director Dahm informed that she has been working with PDRMA on our loss control review. A meeting to review the essentials of risk management form took place on Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup> and went well. Overall, the Park District has been doing well in preventing loss, and keeping up to date on best risk management practices. Director Dahm reported that Superintendent of Maintenance, Dave Beneventi, obtained quotes for seal coating for Don Burns Park, Harriet Park, Gingerwood Park, Central Park, and Gene Leonard Park. Based on quote returned, we will be going with Black Magic Sealcoating, who has worked with us many times in the past. Director Dahm informed that Park Place Coordinator, Ericka Vetter, has accepted a new role at Gaelic Park, and will no longer be working for the Park District. As it stands, Jennifer Gomolka will be taking over the Park Place Coordinator role, and has been training with Ericka for the past 2 weeks. Director Dahm discussed the hearing that was attended at Oak Forest City Hall on Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> in regards to the vandalism that took place at Central Park on July 7<sup>th</sup>. The defendant did not appear, so Director Dahm explained the damage that was done and the cost that the Park District had to absorb. Because of the amount of damage done, cameras have been purchased and installed on the back of the building to allow the Park District to better keep an eye on activities that take place back there. Commissioner Wolf inquired about an incident that happened at Convent Park August 10<sup>th</sup>. Director Dahm reported that someone had thrown a party at Convent Park where the baseball batting cages are located. Subsequently, that park was left covered in litter, and residents around the park were not happy about the noise level. Director Dahm informed that this park does not allow permits for rental, and that Oak Forest Baseball Association also does not allow permits for use. Moving forward signs will be purchased to place around the area that state patio area of batting cages is not for public use.

### **B. Treasurer's Report**

None.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **PRESENTATION OF DON GORMAN PARK MASTER PLAN FROM HITCHCOCK DESIGN GROUP**

Lara Barnas of Hitchcock Design Group introduced herself and coworker, Juliana Castillo. Lara explained the process of the OSLAD Grant and that this is a 50-50 matching grant. She explained that an applicant can receive up to \$600,000.00 in grant funds, so if you put in \$600,000.00 and receive the grant you get \$600,000.00, resulting in a \$1.2 million project. Lara informed that grants are due to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Lara informed that working with the Park District for the Comprehensive Master Plan helped give valuable insight

into what the community has requested and wants to see in the parks. She also discussed that this will be explored further at the Community Input Meeting for the Master Plan. One of the items that were brought up during the Comprehensive Master Plan were a splash pad or pool, so when Lara met with the Park District they looked at parks that could potentially work for an amenity like this. Through this discussion Don Gorman Park was brought up and it was decided that this park would be a good option because it already has a field house, it has electrical, and water already there. The park looked at as a whole, inventory was looked at, and then the condition of everything was assessed to help create a solid master plan for the entire park system. Lara informed that for OSLAD Grant purposes, they're looking at a condensed version of this master plan. The Park District is not able to get the full scope of the work for the cost, but we are looking at the components that are most desired in terms of the highest of the DNR in terms of having activity for recreational components. So, with the master plan, Hitchcock Design Group has designed a looping path through the park system, so it gives you a full loop. There's a specific way to go through this loop and it gives you one third of a mile. This loop also connects directly to the Forest Preserve of Cook County Regional Heritage Trail. Lara explained that the playground also needed to be renovated. Some of the playground components in there were past their useful life according to the DNR's useful life criteria of 15 years. So, we look at that and that's a great opportunity to put in a brand-new playground as one of the main components. We've been working with Burke playground systems. They are a playground manufacturer and we do have some pictures to look later on. Engineered wood fiber mulch is what we were looking at for the playground servicing. It is the most cost-effective playground servicing. We have it contained with a concrete curb. We also have a playground ramp, a concrete ramp into the space to make it an accessible space. Lara then discussed the new picnic shelter that will be rentable, a 30-foot by 44-foot picnic shelter that can accommodate up to 60 people. Just east of that there will be a set of permanent bag games. Those are made out of powder coated steel made by a site furnishing manufacturer. Lara informed that across from the picnic shelter there will be about an 880 square foot area for a splash pad with four separate components. This would potentially include an overhead component, a water table, a run through, and ground sprays, just some different components in the splash pad to be able to provide different types of play. Commissioner Pruitt inquired about the type of water system this splash pad would have. Lara informed that the system they are looking at is a drain to waste system that uses potable water. The water features will be on a timer and the Park District can designate how long they run for, and what hours of the day they will be accessible. Lara then discussed the improvements to the ball field and removal of the ball field to the south to create a soccer field. The soccer field for that area would be 300-feet by 120-feet. Improvements to the ball field would include upgrading the dugouts and improving the infield. Lara reported that the Master Plan also including updating parking in the east lot and with the on-street parking. After reviewing the proposed improvements for the Master Plan, Lara then reviewed what aspects of the Master Plan will hopefully be completed through the OSLAD Grant. Lara informed that we would be looking for the \$600,000.00 through the grant, which means what we currently have is a \$1.2 million project. Through the grant we are hoping to accomplish building the looped trail, installing a new playground, creating a splash pad, adding the picnic shelter with bag games, and adding a rain garden. Commissioner Wolf inquired about making changes to the current ball fields. Director

Dahm informed that this was not something that the District would be taking on through the OSLAD Grant. Director Dahm informed that we would be removing the front ball field in order to construct the walking path, however, the upgrades to the dugouts and infield for the north field will have to be something that the District works on in the future. Director Dahm also informed that the south field is extremely under utilized, and putting money into a field that is not functional or used is what created the idea of making that field into the soccer field, which is something we would like to do outside of the grant. Lara presented pictures that helped describe what they had been talking about. This included some splash pad components, new playground equipment, bag boards, rain garden with interpretive signage, a picnic shelter, soccer field, and ball field improvements. Lara then presented a playground design from Burke that had been decided on for the new play equipment. The new play equipment includes accessible swings, a nest swing, a spinner, a slide that comes down and loops around to a ramp that children run then run up, and a number of ground play panels. Lara reported that with the playground design we will be keeping all of the mature trees that are currently around that playground footprint. This will provide valuable shade while children are playing. Lara informed that in total to complete the entirety of the Master Plan upgrades we would be looking at a cost of about \$2.2 million. In an effort to keep costs low, the District will be completing a number of tasks that would have been taken on through the grant. This also helps keep costs lower when it comes to contingencies in the budget. Lara asked if anyone had any questions, and the commissioners were satisfied with the presentation, and thanked Lara and Juliana for their time and attending the meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF UPDATED VEHICLE BACKING POLICY**

Commissioner Katula made a motion for approval of the Updated Vehicle Backing Policy; seconded by Commissioner Pruitt.

Roll Call Vote: Wolf – Yes, Katula – Yes, Pruitt – Yes, Pilch – Yes

Motion approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF PHYSICAL FITNESS FACILITY MEDICAL EMERGENCY PLAN**

Commissioner Pilch made a motion for approval of the Physical Fitness Facility Medical Emergency Plan; seconded by Commissioner Wolf.

Roll Call Vote: Wolf – Yes, Katula – Yes, Pruitt – Yes, Pilch – Yes

Motion approved.

#### **APPROVAL OF WORK WITH DO-ALL FENCING FOR WAVERLY CREEKSIDE PARK IN THE AMOUNT OF \$11,780.00**

Commissioner Pruitt made a motion for approval of work with Do-All Fencing for Waverly Creekside Park in the amount of \$11,780.00; seconded by Commissioner Katula.

Roll Call Vote: Wolf – Yes, Katula – Yes, Pruitt – Yes, Pilch – Yes

Motion approved.

**APPROVAL OF SEALCOATING AT DON BURNS PARK, HARRIET PARK, GINGERWOOD PARK, VERGNE WAY PARK, CENTRAL PARK, AND GENE LEONARD PARK WITH BLACK MAGIC SEALCOATING IN THE AMOUNT OF \$19,419.00**

Commissioner Pruitt made a motion for approval of Sealcoating at Don Burns Park, Harriet Park, Gingerwood Park, Vergne Way Park, Central Park, and Gene Leonard Park in the amount of \$19,419.00; seconded by Commissioner Wolf.

Roll Call Vote: Wolf – Yes, Katula – Yes, Pruitt – Yes, Pilch – Yes

Motion approved.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Wolf inquired about a statement that the Park District made in regards to an event that was held in Oak Forest. Director Dahm informed that an individual created a fake facebook account and started spamming Park District posts insinuating that the Park District was involved in the event with the incident. Director Dahm informed that she was unsure of how many people had seen the post, and felt it necessary to clarify that the Park District found the events disturbing and were in no way involved or affiliated with the organization that held the event. Director Dahm stated that it is important that the Park District stands by the mission statement of the District, that we welcome individuals of all backgrounds in our parks and activities.

**ADJOURN**

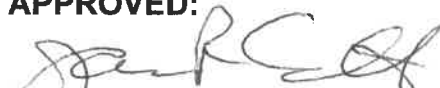
There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Pilch made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Wolf.

On a voice vote, the motion to adjourn at 8:06 p.m. was approved.

**ATTEST:**

  
James Katula, Secretary

**APPROVED:**

  
James R. Emmett, President