



ST. CHARLES PARK DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Pottawatomie Community Center

November 19, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

Call to Order

The St. Charles Park District Board met for a Regular Meeting at Pottawatomie Community Center on November 19, 2024. At 6:32 p.m., President Bob Thomson called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Administrative Assistant Jenny Santos called the roll.

Commissioners present: Bob Carne, Dr. Brian Charles, Jim Cooke, Peggy McCarthy, Bob Thomson and Steve Ward

Commissioners absent: Karrsten Goettel

Administrative staff present: Director of Parks & Recreation Holly Cabel, Superintendent of Parks & Planning and Deputy Director, Superintendent of Recreation Mike Kies, Superintendent of Finance & Administration Ashlee Wallace, Information Technology Manager Jeff Essig, Public Relations & Marketing Manager Erika Young, Golf Course Manager & PGA Golf Pro Ron Skubisz and Administrative Assistant Jenny Santos

Other staff present: Outreach Ambassador Pam Otto, Administrative Assistant to Park Operations KC Hyer, Assistant Superintendent of Outdoor Education Chris Gingrich, Manager of Farm Programs & Interpretive Services Alison Jones, Nature Programs Supervisor Emily Shanahan

Consent Agenda

Mr. Cooke moved and Ms. McCarthy seconded that the St. Charles Park District Board of Commissioners approve the Consent Agenda items, including the following:

- Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting on November 5, 2024
- Approval of Bills as of October 31, 2024

Account	Amount
CORPORATE FUND	\$ 352,527.83
RECREATION FUND	\$ 51,166.34
LIABILITY INSURANCE	\$ 2,950.00
REVENUE FACILITIES	\$ 48,139.80
NORRIS REC CENTER	\$ 163,541.74
SPORTSPLEX	\$ 10,525.24
CAPITAL	\$ 813,357.17
Total	\$ 1,442,208.12

- Approval of Cash and Investment Report as of October 31, 2024
- Approval of Revenue Expense Reports as of October 31, 2024

A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Carne, Charles, Cooke, McCarthy, Ward and Thomson. Nay: none. The motion carried.

Public Appearances

None

Administration and Finance

Presentation of Resolution 2024-11-01 Honoring Outreach Ambassador Pam Otto

President Bob Thomson read aloud the resolution honoring Outreach Ambassador Pam Otto for her 17 years of service to the St. Charles Park District community. Ms. Otto is retiring on December 20, 2024 and the Commissioners thanked her for sharing her passion for nature with patrons, colleagues and the community.

Green Team Report

Outreach Ambassador Pam Otto reviewed the goals the Green Team met in 2024, including: educating employees on environmentally options for winter salting and safe lighting for migrating birds; producing three videos on green lawn care practices to educate employees; supporting a community-wide Earth Day event at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center; and offering discarded playgrounds to Kids Around the World. She also previewed the 2025 goals and shared a video the team produced to create interest in the Styrofoam recycling program the team will implement in 2025. Mr. Carne was particularly intrigued by the “leave the leaves” video to educate employees about the impact of raking up leaves on the ecosystem.

Primrose Farm Annual Report

Manager of Farm Programs & Interpretive Services Alison Jones presented an overview of programs that were held in 2024 at Primrose Farm. She spoke about the challenges created by the construction of the Education Center for programing over the course of the last 12 months. The largest program at the farm is the Animal Adventures, which is a series of opportunities for participants to interact with the farm animals. Participation was down in 2024 due to the construction, less eggs laid and staffing. School programs, however, saw an increase of 300 participants over 2023, with Farmyard Friends being the most popular field trip. More Girl Scouts participated in badge programs in 2024 than in 2023. There was record demand for farm camps for every age range. Overall, smaller programs are more successful and there was a total of 4000 registered participants in programs. Additionally, the number of casual visits to the farm continue to increase. Although there was one less rental in 2024 than in 2023, the rental revenue was higher. The farm stand is operated by Elder Oaks Farm, LLC and is open two afternoons a week and one Saturday from May through November. Ms. Jones recognized the staff and volunteers of the Farm and thanked them for their hard work and support this year.

Mr. Cooke asked Ms. Jones what additional animals she would like to see at the farm. Ms. Jones said she would like a working horse team, sheep and a farm dog, although the space at the farm and pasture size limit additional animals. She would like to incorporate regenerative grazing into the farm’s operations to reduce the need for mowing and trimming. Ms. McCarthy asked whether D303 students were participating in the field trips and Ms. Jones said not yet. They used to before COVID, but curriculum changes and a bus driver shortage have impacted the school district’s

participation. Mr. Ward asked if she would like to get a cider mill and Ms. Jones would love to get one to show the process of making cider.

Hickory Knolls Discovery Center Annual Report

Nature Programs Supervisor Emily Shanahan presented an overview of operations and programs at HKDC in 2024. Construction finished in April and Ms. Shanahan thanked everyone on staff that came together to make HKDC what it is today. Summer camps were a huge success this year with 61 more campers than in 2023. The End of Camp Celebration included campers and their families from all 8 weeks of camp, which gave families the chance to meet the animals, watch turtle races, dunk their counselors and face paint. School programs served 2,382 students from 32 schools. Programs aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. One very successful program provided all the West Aurora kindergartners a STEM experience. Public programs included Nature Playschool, No School Nature Days, Wee Wonders, Twinleaf Tales, Art of Nature, hikes and campfires. More than 750 people enjoyed special events at HKDC, including the January Jamboree, Maple Magic, Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt and Hike, Trick or Treat on the Trails, Woodland Santa and Flashlight Candy Cane Hike. Scout programs and birthday parties continue to be popular with different opportunities for scouts to earn badges. Acorns to Oaks is the new nature-based preschool that serves 25 students and meets three mornings a week. Plans for next year include a program for 3-year-olds on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The HKDC is popular with visitors for its free Animal Ambassadors programs and Hanging with Hickory Friends. HKDC staff take their expertise into the community to assisted living facilities, school science nights and after school enrichment classes. Programs are also held in partnership with other agencies and businesses to share the love of nature with the community.

Ms. McCarthy noted that she was impressed with how busy HKDC was despite the construction and Ms. Cabel reiterated that she was amazed how HKDC and Farm showed growth during the year, despite the obstacles of construction.

Chris Goodrich, Alison Jones, Pam Otto and Emily Shanahan left the meeting at 7:29 pm.

Parks Usage Report

Superintendent of Parks & Planning Laura Rudow introduced Parks Assistant KC Hyer to the Board of Commissioners. She explained that Ms. Hyer's job is crucial in ensuring pavilions and boat racks get rented and that she is an essential part of the team that makes the parks department shine. Ms. Hyer shared pavilion rental statistics for 2024 and compared them to the past two years. There are 12 pavilions that are rented to the public from April 1st through November 1st. 467 pavilion rentals exceed those in 2023 by 47. Several large special events were held in the parks this year, including MS Walk, Walk to End Alzheimer's, Tour de Cute, Fox Valley Marathon, Hops for Hope and Pickle Fest. Ms. Hyer reviewed the purpose of Special Use Permits, 37 of which were granted for the consumption of alcohol or the ability to perform cash transactions. The Ferson Creek boat slip rentals provide scullers, kayakers and canoeists a space to store their vessels. It's a very popular amenity with a waiting list. The boat launch at Boy Scout Island is accessible from April to December and requires a fee to access the launch, whether in the form of a daily admission or a season pass. 710 visitors paid the daily admission and 66 season parking passes were sold. Ms. Hyer thanked all the park staff for their hard work in keeping the parks so beautiful and pristine and her colleague Monica Ramos, who shares time between the Recreation Department and Parks.

Mr. Carne asked that the affiliate groups be given a free pavilion rental for either their kick-off meeting or end-of-season celebration. Ms. Hyer said the groups are already using them for these purposes. Mr. Carne wondered if the boat rack system would work at Mt. St. Mary and Ms. Rudow responded that most kayakers do not like to get in the river below the dam. Ms. McCarthy suggested Five Islands Park and Ms. Rudow agreed that might be an option for another rack.

KC Hyer left the meeting at 7:46 pm.

Adoption of 2024 Tax Levy Ordinance 2024-11-01

Ordinance 2024-11-01 is the Annual Tax Levy Ordinance for the Fiscal Year Commencing January 1, 2025 and ending December 31, 2025 for the St. Charles Park District, Kane and DuPage Counties, in the amount of \$13,521,903.

Mr. Carne moved and Ms. McCarthy seconded that the St. Charles Park District Board of Commissioners adopt the 2024 Tax Levy Ordinance 2024-11-01. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Carne, Charles, Cooke, McCarthy, Ward and Thomson. Nay: none. The motion carried.

Ordinance 2024-11-02 Abatement of Tax Levy & Ordinance 2024-11-03 Disposal of Property

Annual Abatement Ordinance 2024-11-02 abates the 2024 tax levy for debt service on GO Bonds Park Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2018. Ordinance 2024-11-03 authorizes the disposal of personal property owned by the St. Charles Park District. Items being disposed of include items from the Information Technology department such as laptops, phones and peripheral equipment.

Mr. Carne moved and Mr. Carne seconded that the St. Charles Park District Board of Commissioners approve Ordinance 2024-11-02 Abatement of 2024 Tax Levy and Ordinance 2024-11-03 Disposal of Personal Property. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Carne, Charles, Cooke, McCarthy, Ward and Thomson. Nay: none. The motion carried.

Intergovernmental Agreement with South Elgin

Ms. Rudow reminded the Commissioners that the five-year intergovernmental agreement with the Village of South Elgin will expire in February 2025. The agreement outlined the ways in which the District would contribute to the playgrounds that are within both the District and the Village's jurisdiction. She reviewed that during the course of the agreement, the District contributed planning services, solicitation of community feedback and funds for Arbor Park and Thornwood Grove Parks. Although part of the original agreement was to acquire some of the Village's natural areas within the District, we did not take possession any of the natural areas and have no plans to do so. Ms. Rudow shared ideas for ways in which the District can contribute to the projects within the Village's new five year master plan. Mr. Cooke asked if Ms. Rudow has talked to the Village regarding her ideas and Ms. Rudow said she had and received positive feedback from the Village's Director of Parks and Recreation. The Commissioners asked Ms. Rudow to revise the agreement for renewal.

Recreation

Associate Group Agreements

Mr. Cooke moved and Ms. McCarthy seconded that the St. Charles Park District Board of Commissioners approve the 2025 Agreements with the following Associate Groups: Bachelors 'n' Bachelorettes, Campton United Soccer, Chicago Soccer Academy, Fox Valley Maoris Rugby

Club, Fox Valley Mixers, Lightning STC, St. Charles Baseball Association, St. Charles Canoe Club, St. Charles Celtics, St. Charles Chess Club, St. Charles Girls Softball Association, St. Charles Storm Basketball, Strikers Fox Valley Soccer Club, Tri Cities Soccer Association and Tri City Youth Football. A voice vote was taken. Unanimous aye votes were cast and the motion carried.

Parks, Planning, and Facilities

Primrose Farm Agricultural Land Lease

Mr. Cooke moved and Mr. Carne seconded that the St. Charles Park District Board of Commissioners approve the 2025 Primrose Farm land lease with JW Farms in the amount of \$19,100, due in two equal installments on March 10 and August 10 of 2025. A roll call vote was taken. Aye: Charles, Cooke, Goettel, McCarthy, Ward and Thomson. Nay: none. The motion carried. A voice vote was taken. Unanimous aye votes were cast and the motion carried.

Requests for Use

Ms. Rudow asked the Board to consider an additional request for use from Random Acts Matter for the use of Baker Community Center on December 7th to host their first annual Gingerbread House Contest along with the two requests listed on the agenda: 1) St. Charles Police Department requests the use of Pottawatomie Park for the purpose of hosting their annual Polar Plunge event on Saturday, March 8, 2025, and 2) The St. Charles Arts Council for the use of the fencing around the tennis courts and skate park at Mt. St. Mary Park on which to install 100 banners Thursday, July 17-September 28, 2025.

Mr. Cooke moved and Mr. Ward seconded that the St. Charles Park District Board of Commissioners approve the requests for use as stated. A voice vote was taken. Unanimous aye votes were cast and the motion carried.

Special Reports

Fox Valley Special Recreation Association

Mr. Thomson reported that the November meeting was postponed.

St. Charles History Museum

Mr. Carne said the museum thanks the District for promoting their Gala that is December 13 at Baker Hotel.

St. Charles Park Foundation

Mr. Ward said the November meeting will be the next evening.

St. Charles Arts Council

Ms. Cabel said the Arts Council is hosting its Art of the Dessert on November 25th at The Graceful Ordinary and that they held a strategic planning session.

St. Charles Business Alliance

Ms. Cabel shared that the SCBA used Placer AI to count 82,000 visitors during Scarecrow Fest. They are preparing for the Holiday Shop Crawl and the Holiday Homecoming parade.

St. Charles Housing Commission

No report.

St. Charles River Corridor Foundation

No report.

Baker Community Center

No report.

Fox River Dam Task Force

The next meeting will be in February 2025.

Director's Report

Ms. Cabel shared that the Holiday Luncheon will be December 13th and all Commissioners, past and present, are invited. Although Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving week are business holidays, most facilities will be open on Friday due to no school. Ms. Cabel shared that Smith PT will not be renewing their lease at Sportsplex. Mr. Kies added that Smith PT is consolidating their operations to another location. The District will put out a RFP to solicit other physical therapy businesses to lease the space. Ms. Cabel asked the Commissioners to sign up for a time to sign the holiday cards and wished them a Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Comments

Bob Carne: Mr. Carne spent some time with a professional baseball player who was very impressed with Sportsplex and suggested it be open to the public for long pitches. He also asked if the District would be interested in a large red Santa chair that could be used for holiday events.

Brian Charles: Dr. Charles wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Jim Cooke: Mr. Cooke wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

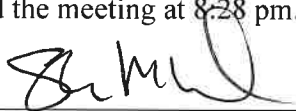
Peggy McCarthy: Ms. McCarthy wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Bob Thomson: Mr. Thomson shared that former St. Charles East High School runner Bob Liking won his fourth Big 10 Individual title. He complimented the staff who gave presentations this evening. He also said he really liked the improvements made to the Board room. He congratulated Pam Otto for being honored this evening.

Steve Ward: Mr. Ward reiterated Happy Thanksgiving wishes to everyone. He thanked Ms. Rudow and her team for their presentations tonight. He added that he was happy to see construction happening at Fox Chase Park.

Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Ward moved and Ms. McCarthy seconded that the meeting adjourn. President Thomson adjourned the meeting at 8:28 pm.



Secretary

Date Approved: December 10, 2024