

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT  
DECEMBER 15, 2020  
7:00 P.M.**

[View recording of meeting here:](#)

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**ATTENDANCE AT MEETING**

Board Members Present:

President Michael Reid  
Vice President Khemarey Khoeun  
Commissioner Michael W. Alter  
Commissioner Susan Aberman  
Commissioner Minal Desai

Others Present:

Executive Director/Secretary Michelle J. Tuft  
Superintendent of Business Services William G. Schmidt  
Superintendent of Facilities Jon Marquardt  
Superintendent of Parks Corrie Guynn  
Superintendent of Recreation Breanne Labus  
Executive Administrative Assistant Ann Perez  
Marketing and Communications Manager Jim Bottorff  
Risk Mgt. and Special Facility Manager Scott Runkle  
Park Services Office Mgr./IT System Support Dima Kirland  
Julianna Oh, Skokie resident  
Regina Yonan, Skokie resident

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Reid called the regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Due to the remote attendance, President Reid confirmed that each board member could see and hear the board meeting.

**COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS**

There were no citizen comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL**

Commissioner Aberman moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The Consent Agenda consisted of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 17, 2020, bills payable for the month of November/December 2020, Treasurer's Report, and Staff Reports.

**2020 CAMP REPORT AND 2021 CAMP FEE PROPOSAL**

Superintendent Labus presented an overview and highlights of 2020 summer camp during Covid-19 restrictions. Camp was very different this year. There were fewer participants, full time staff worked as camp directors and counselors, and there were no field trips. Staff was creative and innovative creating new camps like Teen Cycle Camp and Science Explorers,

along with the standard camps offered in the past. Positive feedback was received through surveys and direct compliments to staff via emails. Ms. Labus summarized the 2021 camp budget and recommendations for fee increases. In 2021 camps will be offered for nine weeks consisting of three, three-week sessions. There will also be an additional one-week of camp at the end of summer. President Reid liked the idea as it gives parents more flexibility. Vice President Khoeun said it was very helpful and offered more options to parents. Commissioner Aberman thanked Ms. Labus for the excellent summer camp summary. Commissioner Aberman said the residents appreciated the opportunity to have some type of summer camp for their children and were thankful it was provided. Commissioner Desai said everyone was really impressed when they saw campers and staff in the parks maintaining social distance. Staff did a really good job.

Commissioner Alter moved to approve the camp fees as proposed. Commissioner Desai seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

### **2020 AQUATICS REPORT AND POOL FEE APPROVAL**

Superintendent Marquardt said it was a challenging summer and introduced Mr. Runkle to present the 2020 Aquatics Report and proposed 2021 pool fees. Mr. Runkle summarized and highlighted the 2020 pool season at Skokie Water Playground. Prior to opening the pool Mr. Marquardt, Mr. Runkle and Executive Director Tuft had many discussions interpreting the Covid-19 guidelines and ultimately made the decision to open the pools on July 15. Staffing was reduced by 50% with only three new lifeguards hired in mid-August due to staff returning to school. 30% of the pool sessions were sold out. There was no Aquatics Camp this year. Staff was able to teach private swim lessons which were very successful. Mr. Runkle discussed the capital projects at Skokie Water Playground and Devonshire Aquatics Center and thanked Park Services staff for their assistance. Mr. Runkle discussed the 2021 pool season. The hope is to increase participation and offer swim lessons at Devonshire Aquatics Center from 5 – 8 p.m. Mr. Runkle said fees will remain basically the same in 2021.

President Reid said the pool did not close like some other park districts with any Covid-19 issues. Mr. Runkle said staff was very diligent with sanitizing and social distancing. Commissioner Aberman said Mr. Runkle did a fabulous job making people feel comfortable at the pool and the bathrooms were very clean.

Commissioner Desai moved to approve the 2021 pool hours and fees as proposed. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

### **WEBER/PARK SERVICES SOLAR PANEL UPDATE**

Superintendent Guynn reminded the Board that a last month's meeting options were discussed for the Weber/Park Services solar panels. The district could own the panels outright or have a leasing agreement with no liability or cost through a Power Purchase Agreement with Realgy Energy. After careful consideration it was determined to move forward with the Realgy Energy lease agreement. The agreement includes the installation of solar panels at Weber Leisure Center and Park Services at no cost to the district. After one year the district will own the solar panels at Park Services. Installation will depend on the permitting process and weather and start within two months or so. When completed, the district will have three facilities utilizing solar panels: Emily Oaks Nature Center, Park Services, and Weber Leisure Center. Vice President Khoeun said once completed this will be a huge marketing opportunity to show the district is "Going Green".

No motion for informational purposes only.

### **STAFFING UPDATE – MANDATORY FURLOUGH DAYS**

Ms. Tuft explained the proposal for mandatory furlough days for full time staff. Ms. Tuft and the administration staff have been working hard to keep staff employed during the pandemic. With the Tier 3 mitigations announced on November 20 most of the programming was shut down. To maintain equity among staff with reduced workloads Ms. Tuft is implementing mandatory furlough days for some full-time staff. The number of days were determined through an analysis of the individual staff's workload. Some staff will be required to take one or two furlough days a week through January. If Tier 3 restrictions continue the furlough days may continue into February.

Staff can use their vacation or personal days for the furlough days and continue to receive their pay. They can also choose to take the days without pay. Staff will be notified individually and will work with their supervisors to schedule the furlough days to ensure operations are not affected.

The furlough days will not save the district any money as most staff will choose to receive pay by using vacation and personal days. By drawing down the vacation/personal days staff will not be carrying over vacation time into next fiscal year.

There are a few staff that do not have enough vacation/personal time to cover the furlough days. Ms. Tuft asked the Board to consider making a temporary change in the district's leave policy to allow using sick days once vacation/personal days have been exhausted.

Commissioner Alter said these were great ideas and will keep staff motivated. "Kudos to Ms. Tuft."

Vice President Khoeun asked if staff were to get Covid-19 and did not have paid time to cover their time what would happen. Ms. Tuft said there are 80 mandated sick leave hours for Covid-19 through December. It is anticipated that the sick leave will be extended into 2021.

Tot Learning Center teachers, Park Services staff and Busines Services staff are not required to furlough at this time as they have been continuing to work at full capacity. Tomorrow a letter will be sent to all full-time employees and those who are required to furlough will have a deadline to schedule the furloughs.

Vice President Khoeun expressed concern that some staff may come to work ill because they do not have enough paid time off. Commissioner Aberman said unfortunately people do come to work knowing they are ill. Ms. Tuft said if she hears or sees an individual is sick or not feeling well, she instructs them to go home immediately.

Vice President Khoeun moved to approve a temporarily policy change that allows full-time staff members who have used all vacation and personal leave to use up to 10 of their earned sick days during mandatory furlough days. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The next regular meeting of the Board of Park Commissioners will be held virtually on Zoom on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. if Tier 3 mitigations are still in place.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Desai said staff has done a great job on events and activities. The community loves it. She enjoys seeing the Facebook postings.

President Reid said staff is doing a terrific and innovative job with the Santa zoom calls, gingerbread house decorating and all the other events and activities.

The Marketing Department has done a great job highlighting stories and profiling different parks. The scavenger hunt was very successful with 20 families participating.

## **DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS**

Ms. Tuft said the district should be hearing if the PARC grant was approved for the Skatium renovation project very soon.

Ms. Tuft and Mr. Guynn met with the Village of Skokie staff regarding Tecumseh Park in downtown Skokie. The Village would like to make it a destination park and are considering expanding the park east to the bike path and adding a piece of artwork that would also be playground equipment. This may take a few years to come to fruition, so staff plans on renovating Tecumseh Park as planned.

Commissioner Aberman expressed concern about the Com Ed cables at Tecumseh Park. It is the biggest issue with expansion and renovation. Ms. Tuft said the cost to bury the cables could cost over a million dollars and the district cannot afford to do this work. The Village will take the lead on this project as they may have funding available.

President Reid asked about the triangle property area on Niles Center Road east of the Edens Expressway becoming part of district property. Staff has not heard anything and will follow up with the County.

Ms. Tuft spoke about an anticipated property swap request from Lubavitch Chabad synagogue. The synagogue owns property at 8729 Karlov and may be interested in swapping that property for part of Seneca Park. Vice President Khoeun said it is something to be explored. Ms. Tuft stated the swap would only be done if there was no cost to the district.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioner Aberman asked about the status of diversity training. Ms. Tuft and Mr. Marquardt have been interviewing equity facilitators and have narrowed it down to two and will be selecting the facilitator shortly. The cost of the training is approximately \$15,000 and the plan is to begin in April 2021.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice President Khoeun moved to adjourn the regular meeting. Commissioner Aberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, all Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

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Mike Reid  
President

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Michelle J. Tuft  
Secretary