

**MINUTES**  
**DeKalb Park District**  
**Public Meeting of the Board of Commissioners**  
**March 1, 2018**  
**Ellwood House Visitor's Center**  
**509 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, DeKalb, IL**

**Public Meeting**  
**6:00 p.m.**

- I. Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call:** President Phil Young called the Public Meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** President Phil Young, Commissioner Keith Nyquist, Commissioner Patti Perkins and Commissioner Dag Grada. Absent: Commissioner Dean Holliday.

**Staff Members Present:** Executive Director Amy Doll, Superintendent of Parks & Development Mat Emken, Superintendent of Finance & Administration Heather Collins, Superintendent of Recreation Bill Ryder, Recreation Supervisor Rachel Schmit, Park Maintenance & Special Projects Team Leader Dave Kessen, and Accounting & Administrative Assistant Emily Bidstrup.

**II. Action on the Agenda**

Commissioner Nyquist made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Perkins. Motion carried by voice vote.

**III. Public Comments**

None

**IV. Old Business**

**a. Recreation Facility Usage Discussion**

Bill Ryder, Superintendent of Recreation, stated that there were 422 fitness passes sold and 6,000 visits to the fitness center at Haish Gym in 2017 which tells him that a fitness center is needed but staff are looking at the best place to put it. He asked the Board for their feedback on recreation facilities and programs. Commissioner Perkins stated she would like to hear ideas from recreation staff since they are the ones interacting with the public who use the facilities. Mr. Ryder believed they could better serve the senior and teen populations. Rachel Schmit, Recreation Supervisor, stated that DeKalb is over saturated with gyms and fitness centers and that Haish Gym isn't well known in the community so a name change might help. She stated that the facility needs a facelift and if more money were put into it, more people would come. President Young believed the District should look into creating a community center and doing a better job of making Haish stand out. He

asked if the lack of air conditioning in the facility is an impediment and asked what ways the facility could be improved. Ms. Schmit advised that an energy report had been done and lighting upgrades were recently made. Mr. Ryder advised that Haish isn't really useable in the summer so air conditioning would increase participation. He recommended surveying users of Haish Gym. Mr. Ryder would like to identify a use for the preschool room at the Sports and Recreation Center. President Young asked if anyone had a cost estimate, or patron input, for moving the fitness center from Haish to Sports and Rec.

President Young asked what the trends in baseball and softball currently are. Mr. Ryder advised that the game is not what it used to be and that the District does not need any more baseball fields. President Young asked if Mr. Ryder thinks the District needs another dog park. Amy Doll, Executive Director, mentioned adding that question to the strategic plan survey. Mr. Ryder said another one on the south side of town would be nice but there are bigger needs to be addressed. Commissioner Perkins would like to see the baseball fields be used for programs if they aren't being used for athletics. She also asked if there were dog obedience classes held at Haish and what programs are held in the art room. Commissioner Perkins mentioned the popularity of paint & wine parties. President Young thanked Ms. Schmit for her help with the successful daddy daughter dance.

Commissioner Nyquist asked if staff knew what programs Northwestern Medicine would be offering in their new facility and stated it would not be wise to duplicate their offerings. However, if any local facilities lose customers because of Northwestern's new facility then the District has a great opportunity to meet the needs of those customers. Mr. Ryder assured that the District is not offering the same types of programs and does not see them as a large threat. Commissioner Perkins asked if staff have looked into becoming Silver Sneakers facilities.

#### **b. Discussion of New Administrative Policy on Gifts**

President Young asked if staff followed this policy given the recent incident. Commissioner Perkins advised staff to be very cautious about using tax dollars for anything that isn't business. Commissioner Nyquist acknowledged the board would be held responsible for the policy and staff would just be told to follow it.

#### **c. Vehicle & Equipment Replacement Philosophy**

Commissioner Nyquist asked for clarification on a statement that was presented about auction prices. Commissioner Perkins asked if the vehicles are really in that bad of shape where they need to be replaced if staff are saying they would still bring a decent amount at auction. President Young stated vehicles need to be replaced before they are classified as poor and asked if there had been any more information found on leasing vehicles. Ms. Doll advised that she talked to a company who leases to Rockford, Joliet and Chicago Park Districts but the District's fleet is on the smaller end of what they would allow to lease. She has asked staff to compile figures for what they are spending annually on vehicle maintenance. President Young asked if the District needs to maintain a fleet of 22 vehicles. Mat Emken, Superintendent of Parks, advised that some vehicles only get used seasonally.

## **V. New Business**

### **a. Discussion of Administrative Policies**

Heather Collins, Superintendent of Finance, advised that the majority of the changes were to separate the policy from the procedure and to update the wording to provide clarity.

Commissioner Nyquist commented on the removal of the correspondence file policy and wanted to make sure it was still covered in the record retention policy. Ms. Collins advised that the District's attorney approved the removal. President Young asked for assurance from staff that all e-mails are backed up and information can be found years from now if the District were to be FOIA-ed. Ms. Doll assured him that is being done.

Commissioner Nyquist asked if public comment or correspondence is ever included in someone's personnel file. He also pointed out that the majority of the job descriptions include a required amount an employee should be able to lift and asked if that is a condition of employment. Ms. Doll advised that doctors who perform the pre-employment tests would be the ones to test that.

President Young asked if any part of the policies transmit authority from the board to staff. Ms. Collins responded no.

### **b. Discussion of Park Code 5.04**

Ms. Collins advised that the update would increase and list the bid requirements from \$20,000 to \$25,000. Commissioner Grada asked why a specific dollar amount needed to be listed as opposed to just stating the District follows the requirements from the State of Illinois. Commissioner Nyquist stated he would rather read an ordinance or park code instead of the State of Illinois' website.

### **c. Discussion of Ordinance 18-04 Declaring the Necessity of Use and Authorizing the Transfer of Property for the Benefit of the DeKalb Park District**

Ms. Doll advised that the school district has been interested in exchanging their property on the corner of Barb Blvd. and 1<sup>st</sup> Street near Kiwanis Park for the District owned Brook's Park located next to Brooks Elementary. She mentioned that ideally there would be an easement to make mowing easier. She stated that the school district is discussing the land swap with their board and if both boards are interested a vote would need to take place. President Young asked if a land inspection has been completed. Ms. Doll responded yes. President Young asked if the property would be included in the Kiwanis Park master plan if it becomes the District's possession.

### **d. Discussion of Intergovernmental Agreement with D428**

Discussed above.

**e. Discussion of Park Districts in Illinois**

President Young acknowledged that he has heard several elected officials comment on support for local government consolidation, and that there has been some suggestions that the DeKalb Park District should be eliminated and its assets merged into a department in a larger unit of local government. He asked the board for comments to show that they do not support consolidation of the Park District into another unit of local government. He read from several studies and articles on government consolidation and how there was no clear evidence that consolidation saved taxpayer's money or was more efficient. President Young continued by saying he thinks the stand-alone model for the park districts in the State of Illinois is an effective method of government, given the budget, staff and efficiencies he believed the community gets from a dedicated separate park district. He stated that it is the duty of the park board to act and vote on issues that are in the best interest of the public. He recognized that staff and the board have done a good job of taking care of problems in the past and that they have been fiscally responsible with tax payer money. He mentioned there has been a push for consolidation when there is overlap between agencies, but does not believe the DeKalb Park District has any overlap with other local units of government. He made it clear that he would never support the DeKalb Park District being consolidated with any other local governing body. Commissioner Nyquist commented that he believes people would say yes when asked if the quality of life is better in the community because of the DeKalb Park District. He seconded President Young's notion and would like to think of the District as a community and economic development tool because there is a tangible value to what the District does and what they are.

**VI. Adjournment**

Commissioner Perkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Nyquist. Motion carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

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Keith Nyquist, Board Secretary

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Date Approved