



MEETING MINUTES

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Robert Crown Center, 1801 Main St.

6:00pm on Thursday, September 19, 2024

Members Present: E. Shevick, R. Bush, D. Bregman, M. Rosinski, K Terrell
N. Muboyayi

Members Absent: D. Michelin

Staff Present: A. Thompson, M. Callahan, M. Poole, J. Dorsey, L. Biggs,
N. Rodriguez, S. Walker, T. Carter

Other Present: K. Graves, K. Mcshan, K. Michelin, E. White, J. Michelin, M.
Michelin, G. Pryor, F. McArthy

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

K. Graves said a sandbar has formed at the opening of the Church St boat launch area into Lake Michigan which is severely hindering boaters from safely and effectively launching their vessels. This situation not only affects recreational boaters but also limits access for emergency services or maintenance crews who may need to launch from this point. One option would be dredging more than once per season. Another option would be to dredge deeper and farther out. Also, the arm on the entry gate has been up for the last two weeks allowing anyone to drive into the area that is for people that have paid to use the boat launch. There should be NO PARKING AT ANY TIME signs in the ramp area. Lastly, there is only one lane to use on the ramp. There should be at least one more lane to help with congestion.

K. Michelin spoke in support of the Honorary Street Name Sign application submitted by Council Member Bobby Burns and former Council Member Cicely Fleming, in honor of Donald Michelin, Sr.

E. White said she came to advocate for the pottery program held at the Robert Crown Center. The price has nearly doubled since last fall and it has become so expensive it's outpacing the price of the Pot Shop Pottery Studio that offers more. We've reached a price threshold where people aren't able to participate because it's so expensive. Please take a look at the price of the program and make sure that it stays accessible and affordable.

F. McCarthy said she hasn't been able to participate in Parks and Recreation Board meetings as much as she would like to and requested that the Board meetings be accessible online so people can call in. She participated in planning meetings for McCullough Park and Independence Park, and her concern is around the process for the planning; there is no final review process for the community. She understands too much feedback / involvement from the community can slow down the project but there are safety issues at McCullough Park that she continues to see happen as we develop our parks and there needs to be some sort of conversation or final way to provide feedback so we prevent those situations from happening. She gave examples of safety issues with development at McCullough Park and questioned why the consultant weren't able to identify these as potential hazards. She understands if we don't want to do an in-person final meeting but there has to be a way for people to provide some feedback on the final design; maybe post the final design online for feedback.

A Thompson read an email comment from C. Elliott strongly opposing jet ski rental off Dempster Beach.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Action: Motion Passed: To approve the July 18 meeting minutes with noted correction and to approve the July 25 meeting minutes as written.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Honorary Street Name Sign Application – Donald Michelin, Sr.

Action: Motion Passed: To recommend to the Human Services Committee, approval of the honorary street name sign designating Hartrey Ave, between Emerson St and Lyons St, with the honorary street name sign "Donald Michelin, Sr. Way".

Proposed Rule Change for Users of the Dempster St. Boat Launch

Staff has seen a large increase in the amount of recreational users launching from Dempster St. Beach, some of which need rescue assistance from the sailing staff or the Evanston Fire Department. Over the last several years, we have been implementing new safety initiatives and exploring other ways to improve the safety of all patrons along the lakefront. Staff recommends the Parks and Recreation Board approve the proposed rule change, requiring all users of the Dempster Street Boat Launch wear a USCG-approved life jacket.

Action: Motion Passed: To adopt the proposed rule that “All persons, regardless of age or swimming ability, must be wearing a type III, or better, USCG-approved life jacket when launching from Dempster St. Beach Boat Launch and while the vessel is underway”

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Jet Ski Rentals at Church St Beach Launch

The department was approached by Evanston resident G. Pryor with a proposal to start and operate a small jet ski rental service at Church St. Boat Launch as a new opportunity for lakefront users. The goal of this discussion is for the Board to provide direction on whether or not the City of Evanston should work with an independent contractor to provide such services. After discussion and input from residents who emailed their comments opposing the idea, there was consensus by the Board to not consider Jet Ski Rentals at Church St Beach at this time.

Intersection of Parks and Recreation / Public Works Greenways Division

S. Walker and N. Rodriguez explained the roll of the Greenways Division and how it intersects with the Parks and Recreation department.

E. Shevick asked if Greenways feel they have enough staff to complete all the duties they oversee. S. Walker said it's a challenge and they can always use more help. M. Rosinski asked if playground equipment is inspected annually and is there a check list. S. Walker said certified playground safety inspections are done annually in late fall but park maintenance staff also do periodic visual inspections while at the parks; and yes, there is a check list. N. Rodriguez explained the process for when playground equipment has to be removed do to safety.

M. Rosinski asked what about a maintenance plan to repair, replace, refresh park equipment so we don't have to totally renovate parks. N. Rodriguez said based on the current age of a good portion of the parks, it would be difficult at this point to try to refresh. R. Bush asked why they only do annual inspections. N. Rodriguez said with the current staffing they have, it's difficult to get a second inspection. E. Shevick asked why park maintenance was moved from Parks and Recreation to Public Works; does it makes sense to leave it there; and should we make a recommendation to Council to move it back under Parks and Recreation. S. Walker said the park maintenance staff performs many tasks other than park maintenance and cross over with other divisions in Public Works so it would be difficult to move it. R. Bush asked if Greenways prepare monthly/interim reports about the status of the parks or status on what staff is doing other than the annual inspection and work orders. N. Rodriguez said staff can provide monthly reports of maintenance tasks staff work on starting in March. E. Shevick ask if 311 calls supersede staff's inspection report work list. S. Walker said staff evaluates the 311 call and approach it from a safety aspect.

Tennis / Pickle ball Court Reservation Fees

Staff recently digitized the reservation system for the tennis and pickle ball courts. The fee to reserve a court per hour is \$20/R and \$26/NR; and has been since 2020. Some residents have suggested the \$20 per hour fee might be too high. Currently you can play pickle ball/tennis for free using the rack up system; however if you want to reserve the court ahead of time, guaranteeing your space (similar to a park permit) you can reserve space for a specific time. Staff is requesting the Board's feedback as to whether or not the \$20 fee should be changed. The fee will remain at \$20.

STAFF REPORT

CIP Monthly Update

M. Poole reported that City Council adopted a Memorandum of Understanding with the Evanston Environmental Association (EEA) to help fund and build the canoe launch along the Northshore canal channel by the Ecology Center. EEA has committed to raising the funds to build the canoe launch and the City will pay for redevelopment of the parking lot adjacent to the canoe launch.

A Thompson reported staff held neighborhood meetings at parks where dedicated pickle ball courts are being considered (Ackerman, Burnham Shores, Cartwright, Mason, James and Leahy); a meeting with tennis players and a meeting with pickle ball players. Staff received a lot of input that will be put into a report with recommendations for the Board's consideration and recommendation to City Council.

At last month's Board meeting L. Biggs presented a list of in-progress and planned renovation projects included in the draft 2025 Capital improvement Program (CIP) and received feedback from the Board. Today she presented a refined draft CIP report. On October 14 the proposed 2025 CIP will be presented to City Council to provide direction on priorities.

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

R. Bush noted that in the July 18 meeting minutes it says A. Thompson spoke with Public Works and the consultants (Green Space Strategic Plan) will come to the Parks and Recreation Board meeting before going to City Council. A. Thompson reminded R. Bush that at the last Board meeting she stated that she had a following up meeting with the City Manager and the consultants will not be coming back to the Board. The Board will have an opportunity to provide questions/comments for the consultant to respond. R. Bush said that's an inefficient way of doing things. There's no way the Board's commentary will have any input on the Envision Evanston 2045 report if the intent is for the strategic plan to be completed by March of 2025.

M. Rosinski agreed with R. Bush. She hopes they will slow the process down for the Envision Evanston 2045 report to get more public feedback.

E. Shevick noted that one of the responsibilities of the Board President is to go before the City Council once a year to summarize about parks and what the Board has been discussing. She hopes to be able to attend the October 14 meeting to talk about

priorities; Greenways staff needs to do more maintenance in-house; and to see if staff can be directed to see what it would look like if Greenways fell back under Parks and Recreation. It's hard to tell someone from a different division, that you don't have seniority over, to get park equipment removed or taken care of. She hopes the Board is okay with her discussing these items at the council meeting and asked them to share anything else they want her to touch on.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 8:28pm. The next scheduled meeting is 6pm, October 17, 2024 at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Center, 1655 Foster St