



## Wilmette Park District **Board Brief**

Updates of interest from your Wilmette Park District Board of Park Commissioners

### **Public questions on board vacancy and Gillson projects**

At the August 9 park board meeting, the public comment section was divided into two parts before and after presentations for the Gillson Comprehensive Plan and the Lakeview Center Renovation Project.

In the first public comment, a representative of the League of Women Voters questioned the reasons behind changes to the process of filling a vacant board seat as compared to the process taken in 2015. These questions were answered during the New Business discussion, as the board closely examined the process for filling the vacant seat.

In the second round of public comment, the board was asked to clarify proposed updates to the sailing beach; provide examples of new programming that would be held in a renovated Lakeview Center; and general concerns were voiced regarding the Lakeview Center project.

### **Public feedback guides way for Gillson Comprehensive Plan**

Representatives of the Gillson Comprehensive Plan presented on the project at the August 9 meeting. Andy Tinucci of Woodhouse Tinucci Architects opened the presentation with a recap of the scope of public input and feedback gathered over the course of the project. “We heard loud and clear in June that we should continue to engage the public,” he said, “and with the board’s help we developed an additional community engagement plan.” Prior to June 14 all community outreach had been done online, but the last 2 months afforded valuable in-person opportunities to gather public input with Wilmette residents.

A summary was given on the 6 key park themes, and representatives from the Lakota Group expanded upon these 6 themes with specific data and feedback gathered from the public. Tinucci followed up these topics with the open-ended



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#### **Wilmette Board of Park Commissioners**

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President

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**Julia Goebel**  
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**Cecilia Clarke**  
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**Patrick Duffy**  
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**Allison Frazier**  
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**Kara Kosloskus**  
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question at the end of the survey asking “what is your vision for Gillson Park?” The most common responses to this question were to maintain the natural character of Gillson, and to let it remain as it is.

Next steps for the Gillson Comprehensive Plan are to spend the following month analyzing the feedback and putting together input findings and focused ideas for another round of public input.

## Presentation introduces the process for Lakeview Center Renovation Project

Immediately following the Gillson presentation, Andy Tinucci presented on the Lakeview Center Renovation Project at the August 9 meeting. The facility is perfectly situated in the park to serve as a central hub for the park, but after changes in the park and its use, the Lakeview Center is no longer serving Gillson as well as it once did. Tinucci listed the numerous assets the building offers including views, access to the park, beach and neighborhood, and valuable programming space. He then explained how these assets are undervalued or obstructed by inaccessibility, underutilized space, dated finishes, and poor function.

Opportunities for public engagement include a forum on August 12 and 16, and an online survey to gather feedback on how people use the Lakeview Center.

Details can be found on the Wilmette Park District website at:

<https://wilmettepark.org/lakeview-center-renovation-project>.

After the initial public input phase, designers will then take the feedback, gain input from the board, refine the plan and determine which project phase to move forward.

## Park board responds to details and feedback for Gillson Comprehensive Plan

At the August 9 meeting, the park board took a moment for open discussion with Gillson Comprehensive Plan representatives to discuss the plan and clarify points. Vice President Goebel pointed out that *restoring the dune landscape* and *native accent plantings* were popular items in the survey feedback, while two extremely necessary items, *infrastructure* and *drainage*, were overlooked by the public. When questioned why this may be, Andy Tinucci succinctly explained, “You need to think about why people come to the park – people don’t come to the park for drainage, but if the roads were to fail and no one could use the park, then people would take issue with it,” he explained. “Not specifically because of the drainage or condition of the roads, but because it prevents them from doing what they love to do.” His point being that it isn’t a present concern or naturally valued feature that people will notice or care about until it impedes their ability to use the park.

President Murdock emphasized that while the board has no intention of rushing the process, they are interested in having an idea of capital spending by November to plan for work to begin in 2022. Tinucci responded that he does anticipate having this information ready for budget planning in November. “If

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we can bring these ideas back to you and we get good ideas on the table and rebuild the trust, it will be easier to see the path forward,” said Tinucci.

“To clarify for the public, I don’t want to see an increase in the pavement in the park,” said Murdock. The other commissioners echoed this sentiment. Vice President Goebel said she is hopeful that “the next set of plans available for discussion in September will be much more aligned with the desires of the public.”

## **Board in support of programming-focused improvements to Lakeview Center**

At the August 9 meeting, Commissioner Kosloskus asked if traditionally there are programs held at Lakeview in the winter and Director Wilson explained that winter programming at Lakeview is slim because the setup of the facility does not allow for great accessibility. Commissioner Duffy commented, “I think given the demand on our other facilities, having another space to utilize for programming will be a benefit.” Kosloskus seconded this opinion and expressed that her own priority would be the programming space over renovated bathrooms. Commissioner Frasier agreed that her priority is infrastructure and that the Lakeview Center deserves as much improvement as other features of Gillson.

## **Golf and Parks & Rec. Committee report progress for current projects**

Commissioner Duffy reported on both the Golf Operations Committee and the Parks and Rec. Committee at the August 9 meeting. The Golf Operations Committee had further reviewed several proposed projects including an additional room divider inside the clubhouse, an expansion of the bar area of the restaurant, and an extension for the patio deck to the north. The Golf Cart Path project will resume the first week of October.

The Parks and Rec. Committee made progress in the last month by connecting with a Disc Golf course designer to begin identifying parks where a potential course could be installed. The committee has been working to reduce the garden plot wait list and identify new plot locations. The main topic of discussion; however, were the Community Playfield Bathrooms.

The park board reviewed 3 different configurations varying by the facility structure, the pump location and the attached covered picnic shelter. With varying cost between the 3 concepts, the board weighed the pros and cons of each configuration. The board reached a consensus on moving the existing pump station closer to the bathroom site to improve the visuals of the park. “Moving the pump closer to the building, out of the center of the park is priority,” said President Murdock. The Parks & Rec. Committee will prepare new layouts and costs projections taking into consideration the new pump location for the board to review in September.

## **Pickeball and Paddle projects gain momentum**

President Murdock presented the Centennial Committee report at the August 9

meeting, starting out with Pickleball and the recommendation that the discussion be brought before the Capital Committee of the Whole meeting later in August. The committee is looking at a number of locations at West Park for Pickleball courts. The Pickleball Interest Survey showed strong support for the sport with an even divide between current players and people who do not play but would be interested if there were local courts.

Following up was the discussion of expanding the Platform Tennis facility. The committee recommended installing a larger deck for the Paddle Hut as well as looking into adding two more courts in the future as demand well exceeds capacity.

## **New Business: bid approvals and board vacancy**

Topics of New Business at the August 9 meeting saw the bid approval of the Maple Park Playground Renovation, as well as the bid for the tennis courts at Gillson Park. The meeting then focused on the discussion of the board vacancy following the resignation of Commissioner Shissler on August 1 .

With a board vacancy officially declared, the park board closely reviewed and discussed the policy and process for vetting candidates. It was determined that applicants will fill out a questionnaire which the park board will put through a 2-part blind-reading ranking process. Commissioners will then hold phone interviews of the candidates, followed by a final round of in-person interviews where the board President and Vice President will host the Q&A.

Details and application instructions can be found on the Wilmette Park District website at: <https://wilmettepark.org/park-board>.

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To read the full minutes from our past Board meetings, click [here](#). Minutes are posted after they are approved at a subsequent meeting.

Next Board meeting: Monday, September 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Village Hall at 1200 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette. All meetings are open to the public. Details will be posted on the [Park Board](#) page on our website.

Meetings will be available on Channel 6 locally for Comcast subscribers. View a live meeting online [here](#), or view previous meeting recordings [here](#). *Please check our [website](#) for updates.*

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